

# ST BOTOLPH'S CHURCH

BARTON SEAGRAVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

*(Registered Charity Number 1130426)*



PRESENTED TO THE

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

18<sup>th</sup> May 2026

# St Botolph's Church

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**St. Botolph's Church Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

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**Agenda for Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Vestry Meeting at 7:45pm

Annual Parochial Church Meeting at 8:00pm in church

Opening Prayers and Welcome

Vestry Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025
3. Matters Arising
4. Election of Churchwardens

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024
2. Matters Arising
3. Election of Deanery Synod Members
4. Election of Parochial Church Councillors
5. Electoral Roll
6. Finance Report
7. Appointment of Independent Examiners
8. Chairman's Report
9. Annual Reports
10. Safeguarding Report
11. Any Other Business
12. Date of Next Meeting

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# St Botolph's Church

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## **Minutes of St Botolph's Vestry Meeting**

held in Church House on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.45pm

Present: Rev Mark Lucas (Chair) and 61 parishioners.

The meeting opened with a hymn – How Great Thou Art and a prayer.

### 1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from: Helen & Darren Laughton, Neville & Beryl Read, Veronica Loo, Diana Griffiths, Jim & Chris Roughton, Veronica Loo, Rod Clarke, Judith Clarke, Lindsey Burch, Jane Griffiths, Judith Edwards, Angela McClatchy, Ali Gosling, Peter and Carol Jackson

### 2. **Approval of Minutes from the Vestry Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024**

A Keach proposed and Paul Gosling seconded that the minutes of the last Vestry Meeting be approved as a true record. **Agreed unanimously**

### 3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

### 4. **Election on Church Wardens.**

Rev. Lucas expressed his thanks for all those who have served as Church Wardens many of whom have gone above beyond in their efforts. He gave particularly thanks to Peter Jackson who is standing down this year.

Nominations for the positions of Churchwarden had been received for:

- Carlton Willis proposed by Paul Gosling seconded by Julie Lucas
- Paul Gosling proposed by Heather Knighton seconded by Tim Bland

There being no other nominations they were **appointed unanimously**. Rev Lucas prayed for them.

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## Minutes of St Botolph's Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in Church House on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 8.00pm

**Present:** Rev Mark Lucas (Chair) and 62 parishioners.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were the same as for the Vestry Meeting.

### 2. Approval of Minutes from the APCM held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024

Adrian Keach proposed and Paul Gosling seconded that the minutes of the last APCM be approved as a true record.

**Agreed unanimously.**

### 3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 4. Election of Parochial Church Councillors

There were seven vacancies on the PCC, four nominations had been received.

- Tim Acland – proposed by Paul Gosling seconded by Heather Knighton
- Helen Laughton proposed by Heather Knighton seconded by Helen Tilney
- Bob Edwards proposed by Paul Gosling seconded by Julie Lucas
- Peter Jackson proposed by Heather Knighton seconded by Paul Gosling

**Appointed unanimously.**

### 5. Electoral Roll

There are 200 people on the electoral roll – this is a decrease of 56 people from last year. This doesn't reflect the number of people attending services and the drop is partly explained by the fact that a new roll had to be written this year.

Rev Lucas expressed his disappointment at the number of who have signed up and there was a discussion about why this was the case and what the implications may be. It was felt that there were still people who didn't understand the purpose of the roll and others who felt excluded because they had not been baptised. There was a discussion about adult baptism and Rev Lucas confirmed that baptism by full immersion is an option and will be pursued.

### 6. Finance Report

D. Wright (Treasurer) presented the accounts for 2024.

There was an overall deficit of £13,582 against the planned budget, this was made up of:

- Surplus on Restricted Funds of £500
- Deficit on Designated Funds of (£13,468)
- Deficit on General Fund of (£614)

## St Botolph's Church

Movement of Funds Statement for 2024					
Funds	Opening Balance	Income	Expenditure	Variance	Closing Balance at 31/12/24
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted	130,269	43,425	42,925	500	130,770
Unrestricted	234,239	18,046	31,514	(13,468)	220,771
General	(40,953)	214,341	214,954	(614)	(41,567)
	323,555	275,812	289,393	(13,582)	309,973

The current running costs for the church is £727 per day. DW gave a presentation on the three-year trends in the main cost centres. A break down of the accounts was included in the APCM report.

The initial budget proposal for 2025 was presented as follows:

	Actual 2024	Budget 2025			
	Outurn	General Fund	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Income	275,812	213,652	13,740	40,175	267,567
Expenditure	289,394	213,652	37,050	97,034	347,736
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(13,583)</b>	0	<b>(23,310)</b>	<b>(56,859)</b>	<b>(80,169)</b>
<b>Funding from Reserves</b>					
General Fund	(614)	0			
Unrestricted	(13,468)		23,310		23,310
Restricted	500			56,859	56,859
<b>Funding Surplus/(Shortfall)</b>	<b>- 0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

The PCC have not been able to agree the budget due to the predicted deficit. This deficit is due in large part to the number of regular givers who now give to The Standfast Trust rather than to the PCC. It is too soon to know what the full impact of this change in giving patterns will be so the PCC will return to this at their next meeting. Parishioners asked the following questions:

- Could a grant from the Standfast Trust could be used to off set some of the costs, specifically the missions budget?
- Should parishioners who have switched their giving to the Standfast Trust change back to giving to the PCC?
- Should we reduce the amount of Parish Share we pay?
- What is the difference between the Standfast Trust and the Ephesian Fund.

In response, Rev. Lucas explained that the Standfast Trust had been set up to promote gospel ministry in Barton Seagrave and beyond. As such, it has the support of the PCC but is completely independent and that although there is every likelihood that they will give a grant to the PCC, this cannot be guaranteed. Individuals will need to decide what is the right thing to do with their giving.

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The Ephesian Fund is a national fund established by the Church of England Evangelical Council. Paying the Parish Share to the diocese via The Ephesian Fund ensures that the money is ring fenced and can only be used to support parish ministry. Legally, the Parish Share is a voluntary donation and the PCC had agreed to pay the proportion of the Parish Share that covers our costs, the balance is given to Standfast Trust. Rev. Lucas did not feel that this position would make it more difficult to appoint a new incumbent when the time comes. The finances of both the Standfast Trust and the Ephesian Fund have to published on the Charity Commission website.

In response to a question, Rev. Lucas explained the role of Church Commissioners. None of the money generated from the £10billion investment fund they oversee comes to parishes or incumbents.

## 7. Appointment of Independent Examiners

It has not been possible to appoint an independent examiner at this point. The PCC will ensure that this is done as soon as possible.

## 8. Chairman's Report

Rev. Lucas' report had been included in the APCM booklet.

Rev. Lucas talked about the so-called 'Quiet Revival'. Verified results indicate that there have been statistically significant increase in the proportion of adults going to church at least monthly. Among 'Gen Z' (those born between 1997 – 2012) numbers have risen from 4% in 2018 to 16% last year and, unusually, this growth is being led by men.

Many who are coming into church know very little about the Bible but are seeking truth and the growth is primarily in churches such as the Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and Conservative Evangelicals who all put a strong emphasis on living as a Christian.

When God does something like this we have a responsibility to help. Rev. Lucas read Eph 4 with its reminders of what it means to be a Christ centred church:

- We are to 'bear with one another' even when people get on our nerves. That means we need to be patient and to love one another.
- What matters is the glory of God. People are given to the church to lead, to preach, to be evangelists, to be shepherds and many other roles which should work together to build the body of Christ. Our aim should be that all grow up to be like Christ.
- Being rooted in Christ helps us stay firm when false doctrines threaten to blow us off course. LLF is a symptom of a deeper problem. Many leaders say that the CofE is not a confessional church, despite what is stated in the 39 Articles. They have abandoned scripture. We need to ask ourselves, when does a church stop being a church? If it is not a church, it is not worth being part of. If it is, we need to give it everything while we can.

Rev. Lucas drew attention to a leaflet that had been distributed that listed the many ways people could serve the church and asked people to consider what they could do.

He also drew attention to the challenge of Hanwood Park and the need to take the gospel to the many people moving onto that new estate. Things are happening in our nation and we need to pray that somewhere can be found to plant a church. We also need to pray that God will lay it people's hearts to be part of that plan and that a good leader, someone called and gifted for that purpose, will be found.

There was one final challenge, that of stewardship. It can be difficult to talk about money but part of being a Christ centred church is to give and each of us should take that seriously.

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## 9. Annual Reports

Verbal reports were given by Rev. Andy Clark (Associate Minister) and Helen Tilney (Children and Families Worker) in addition to those in the APCM booklet.

Rev. Clark followed up Rev. Lucas' comments about the 'Quiet Revival'. At St. Botolph's there have been a number of young people who have come into the church in some way with no previous church background. There have also been great encouragements at Bishops Stopford as seen by the number of students who chose to take communion when it was offered.

We should also be encouraged by the young people who have been part of one-eighty and LINK and have now moved on to full time Christian work or are actively involved in churches and Christian Unions at university. Helen Tilney reminded us that children are the church of today but also the church of the future. Children's work continues to be very active. There are currently 32 volunteers working across different aspects of children's work who work together to introduce children to the greatest love of all. There are usually 25 – 30 children every Sunday in Promise Land and over 25 coming to St Bots Tots.

## 10. Safeguarding Report

The Parish Safeguarding Officer thanked people for their commitment to safeguarding. Safeguarding done well will facilitate ministry within the church. The PSO is now able to deliver safeguarding training and encouraged everyone to attend.

## 11. Any Other Business

There was no further business.

## 12. Date of next meeting

Still to be decided

There was a time of pray in small groups, a hymn was sung and the grace was said.

The meeting closed at 9:05pm

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## 1. Rector's Report 2025

*God is good and, in His abundant mercy, he has continued to bless us.*

Some highlights of 2025:

- In our Sunday morning sermons, we continued looking at Peter's first epistle. During Lent we returned to our series in John's gospel at the passion narrative. We then looked together at Daniel 1-6. Before Advent and Christmas we began a short series considering the sacraments (baptism and Holy Communion) and other related doctrines (marriage, the Bible, and the Church).
- On Sunday evenings we completed our studies in Zechariah then on to Haggai. After Easter we spent the rest of the year looking at Hebrews. The congregation take the preaching of God's Word seriously and are always attentive. It is encouraging to receive feedback from sermons.
- During Lent we worked through Wallace Benn's new book, 'in His Words' focussing on the passion narrative of John's gospel. This provided the opportunity to go a little deeper into this 'holy ground' in tandem with our morning series.
- God continues to bless us with real growth over the year. Every congregation again significantly larger by the end of the year than it was at the start, and the growth continues. This is God's grace in action. We do our best faithfully to teach and live the Scriptures in everything we do.
- Our weekly Thursday morning service continues to be a blessing with a good number of people meeting regularly each week. There is a real sense of community at this service, many now consider it their spiritual home.
- As ever, our financial challenges continue. We would dearly love more personnel to fulfil all the ministries we would like.
- As the dire situation in the Church of England continues, the PCC decided to continue to restrict our parish share payments, paying the diocese only our direct costs. It is a matter of conscience that we feel unable to support revisionist, 'progressive' ministry across the wider church and the diocese.
- Extensive work has continued in the church building. The old radiators have been removed and we have the permissions granted to remodel the old chancel area, and construct a more permanent dais.
- The Hanwood Park residential development in the parish continues to be a challenge. It continues to grow apace and there is an urgent need to plant a congregation there. We planted a 'flag in the ground' by holding a Christmas Carol Service at Hayfield Cross school, and we continue with regular, monthly, prayer meetings in the school building. There is now an urgent need for a minister to take this work forward presenting significant financial challenges.
- We continue, due to our orthodox, complementarian theology, to enjoy the episcopal ministry of The Rt Revd Rob Munro, Bishop of Ebbsfleet whilst maintaining a good relationship with our diocesan Bishop.
- It with deep sadness that we said goodbye to a number of faithful servants during the year. Jane Wade and Beryl Reed were both longstanding members of the congregation with considerable ministries. They will be missed beyond measure by Derek and Neville and by us all. But our grief is not without hope. We will meet again.
- The church computer system suffered an attack during the year, locking us out. No sensitive data were compromised, just the ability to get on with our work of ministry. I am very grateful for those in the congregation who freely shared their professional skill to get things sorted and secure again.
- I continue to serve on the General Synod which is both spiritually and emotionally very challenging. The sense of responsibility on General Synod weighs heavily and the disappointment of losing ground, even by wafer thin majorities, is crushing. My term finishes next summer, and I am unlikely to stand again.
- The situation in the Church of England continues to deteriorate as moves continue to be made towards authorising the blessing of sin. Many, maybe most, of the bishops have abandoned their belief in Scripture as God's Word. There are currently a number of senior sees vacant, we pray they may be filled with bishops of good conscience and doctrine.

Of course, ministry at St Botolph's is shared by many people. I am hugely grateful to each of our ministry team. It is a real privilege to work with Andy and Helen in this regard. Andy, as associate minister, assists in many ways above and beyond his responsibilities with the youth. Helen is simply a whirlwind of ideas, enthusiasm and

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wisdom, constantly impacting on ministry among children and families. We have also benefited from the ministry of Julie Lucas, our BCUK intern. Julie has been, among other things, working hard to develop our pastoral care and visiting teams, she also runs the 'Real Change' course which has been extremely well received. Every year I mention the team, but my repetition is not to be understood as in any way vain. It really does continue to be an enormous privilege for me to work throughout the year with our outstanding team of preachers: Andy Clark, Robert Bashford, Martin Adamson, and others. We are truly blessed that God has given us such a gifted and able team, ready and willing to serve, committed to the Scriptures and using their God-given gifts, bringing God's word with engaging seriousness and humility.

Kate Curnock, licensed pastoral assistant, decided to stand down towards the end of the year. Kate had been in her role for thirty years and her ministry of pastoral support has been very significant. She leaves her role as a licensed minister but continues as a member of the pastoral care team. I am very grateful for Kate's supportive, voluntary ministry.

It is also a real joy to have a team of service leaders who bring us into God's presence with sensitivity and joy. A great strength of the Church of England is our liturgy, much of it crafted over centuries, and even millennia. It is biblically based and, used creatively, draws us into God's presence, assures us of His undeserved grace and mercy, reminds us of timeless truth, and prepares us for the ministry of God's word. It is the skill of the service leader that ties all these threads together. I would like also particularly to thank our musicians who play faithfully week by week. There is always a risk of leaving people out, but I do need to express my thanks to all the musicians who play on Thursdays and Sunday evenings. However, I am particularly grateful to Graham Tilney who is extremely gifted in selecting, planning and playing and leading the band mainly on Sunday mornings. The quality of our worship is enhanced by their gifts.

I want to record a special note of thanks to the Wardens Paul Gosling and Carl Willis. They are patient and provide wise counsel through the issues we face. The wisdom and continued labour of former wardens is also hugely valuable. Special thanks here to Peter Jackson and Adrian Keach.

A big thank you must also go to those who have served on the Deanery Synod, the PCC and its sub-groups, you are a great group of people without whom we could not operate effectively. Your commitment, wisdom and desire to see St Botolph's thrive is much appreciated. In addition to the wardens, I am especially thankful to, David (Treasurer), Kate (Pastoral Assistant) and Martin (PCC Secretary) for your tireless service. Martin Adamson also serves as Parish Safeguarding Officer, a very important and significant role in these difficult days. It is a real blessing to have a PSO who really is on top of requirements and is able to lead this area of ministry. I am also hugely grateful to Tim Ackland who is a very gifted handyman, there seems to be little in terms of maintenance he doesn't know something about! With other teams of willing servants, He does a first-rate job and saves us a lot of money into the bargain.

Something of an unseen ministry is the maintenance of the church website. It is kept updated by Graham Tilney who stands ready and willing to make updates, even at very short notice. Without his time and effort we would have no online presence which is of vital importance in our digital age. I must also thank Rosie Dooley who manages so much of our social media.

There is a huge number of people who serve God by serving the fellowship in all kinds of ways: Sidesmen, Cleaners, Gardeners, Homegroup leaders, Prayer leaders, Pastoral Team, Church Tech operators, youth and children's group leaders, coffee making, sacristan etc. etc. God has provided His church with gifts in all areas to allow the smooth running of ministry for His Glory.

Finally, I could not write a report without recording my thanks to Heather. She is an angel whose skill and patience seemingly know no bounds!

May God continue to bless us as we look forward to another year serving Him. May His name be glorified in all we do and are.

Mark Lucas - Rector

## 2. Kettering Deanery Synod Report 2025

### Joint Kettering and Higham Deanery Synod – report to 2026 Annual Parochial Church Meetings

Higham Deanery Synod met three times in 2025: once on its own and twice with Kettering Deanery Synod, working together on an informal basis, largely to ease the workload, with Nicki Hobbs being Rural Dean in both deaneries.

#### i) Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March at St Peter's Church, Rushden

**Victoria Kellett, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer** spoke about her work, including her intent to bridge the gap between parishes and the diocesan team. She spoke about her background within probation and public protection, and her experiences setting up a probation service and then working in social care on St Helena, where her faith grew and developed. Reflecting on her current role over the previous eleven months, she observed that – although it had been a challenging period within the church nationally – progress had been made in recent years and was continuing.

Within the Diocese, capacity had been an issue and Victoria thanked people for showing patience while response times had been slow. She reported that the team is in a phase of expansion and development, progressing from one person to five. This will enable them to offer more support, such as parish safeguarding officers, network days and training opportunities. Victoria highlighted that a safeguarding audit was ongoing until July, focusing on the Diocese rather than individual teams. It has since been published at <https://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/aboutus/news/safeguarding-audit-2025-3303.php>. She asked for any safeguarding concerns to be sent to the general email address, rather than to individuals - [safeguarding@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@peterborough-diocese.org.uk).

#### ii) Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June, with Kettering Deanery at All Saints' Church, Kettering

The meeting had an **environmental** theme, with those present being given a tour of the church grounds and shown the large amount of work had been taking place to maximise the benefits to wildlife and the local community, leading to the church being the first in the Diocese to receive a gold eco-church award. One of the volunteers then spoke about the importance of getting everybody within the church involved and making environmental action whole ethos of the church. Examples of how the church had taken steps to reduce their impact on the environment included getting rid of all glitter and disposable cups, using as many water butts and storage containers as possible, switching to LED lighting and making small adjustments to the toilet system. The local Green Party had been very helpful in making recommendations, and that the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust (<https://www.nhct.org.uk/>) may be able to provide support. The church is also happy to be contacted for advice and queries, at [kettallsaintschurch@gmail.com](mailto:kettallsaintschurch@gmail.com). Those present then discussed in groups what their church is already doing, and what further steps they could take. They were encouraged to take these ideas back to their PCCs. The meeting was closed with the commissioning of Revd Neil Bullen as Assistant Rural Dean of Higham.

#### iii) Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October, with Kettering Deanery at St Peter's Church, Irthlingborough

Tony and Helen Lynett each spoke about their respective work within prisons, noting that Prisons Week runs in mid-October and was in its 50<sup>th</sup> year. Tony spoke about his experience of being a Prison Chaplain, and the ways he has been able to engage with others who may not be familiar with the Christian faith. Helen spoke about being Diocesan President of Mothers Union, and the ways they help prisoners at significant times with prayer leaflets and handwritten cards. The talk finished with a Prisons Week prayer, followed by an opportunity for discussion in groups about the experiences members had had with prison services or chaplaincy. [www.prisonswEEK.org](http://www.prisonswEEK.org) has various resources, including daily prayers. There is a "Welcome Directory" of churches which are welcoming to ex-prisoners: members were encouraged to take this back to their parishes.

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Andrew Presland provided an update on the process of using donations no longer needed to pay for Lizzie, the former Deanery Mission Youth Enabler after she had moved to Hampshire, taking account of donors' wishes, with most money going to the parish to which the donor belonging, to be spent on youth work. *[Update: as at March 2026, of almost £19,000 unused donations given by just over 25 individuals, 4 PCCs and one Rotary Club, £17,800 had been paid to parishes, leaving just over £1,000 currently available for youth work at deanery-level. Thank you to Amanda Newman for all her work in looking after the finance over six years.]*

### Other news from 2025 and early 2026:

- Thank you to all parishes in the Deanery for their contributions to the **Diocesan parish share**, both in 2025 and continuing into 2026.
- Within Higham Deanery, **Revd Tim Smith** was instituted as Vicar of Whitefriars, Rushden on 19<sup>th</sup> January, followed by **Revd Yvonne Desroches** being licensed as Assistant Priest for Finedon on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. At the time of writing, St Peter's, Rushden remained vacant.
- Kettering Deanery- **Revd. Sarah Bennett** has been appointed as interim Priest in Charge for an initial period of 3 years at Christ the King. Ss Peter and Paul with St Michael's and All Saints are still in vacancy and the joint PCCs had a meeting with the Bishop on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> of March.
- Kettering Deanery has three vacancies for Diocesan Synod reps and as there are three nominations put forward these are accepted.
- The first joint deanery synod of 2026 met at St Andrew's Church, Broughton, on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, where Revd Jess Cotton spoke about on the **Diocesan Cursillo group**, followed by group discussions and feedback on existing opportunities there are in local parishes to develop discipleship and spirituality.
- **Nicki Hobbs** recently announced that she will be standing down as Rural Dean of Higham after two years, in addition to being Rural Dean of Kettering. We are grateful for all that she has done to lead and serve Higham Deanery, including supporting churches in vacancy.
- New deanery synods will come into operation early in the Summer, following **lay members being elected at this year's APCMs** – with Higham and Kettering Deanery Synods continuing to meet jointly, at least until the end of 2026.
- The **first meeting of the new deanery synod** will be Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30pm (St Peter, Raunds), then one on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, 7.30pm, in Kettering Deanery – venue tba.
- A joint **Deanery Evensong** will be taking place on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September at St Mary the Virgin, Finedon.
- **A vacancy for the Secretary of Higham Deanery Synod** still exists, together with space for a couple more members of the Standing Committee. Please contact Dudley Hughes (Higham Deanery Lay Chair) at [dudleychughes@gmail.com](mailto:dudleychughes@gmail.com) if interested.
- We continue to be on **Facebook** at 'Higham Deanery (Diocese of Peterborough)'. Please feel free to visit and share the page and to submit details of church events.

Andrew Presland (Higham Deanery Standing Committee), March 2026  
Hazel Goodman ( Kettering Deanery Standing Committee) March 2026

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## 3. St. Botolph's PCC Annual Report 2025

### 3.1 Aim and Purposes

St Botolph's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, Revd Mark Lucas, in promoting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, promoting the mission of the Church, as well as pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical matters in the Parish. The PCC also has the responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric and land of the Church, Church House, Rectory Cottage, and the land upon which stood the old Church Rooms. The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council (Powers) Measure 1956 as amended. The PCC is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission under number 1130426. The Church Representation Rules 2020 (Part 9 Rule M5(1)(b)) require “an annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the parish generally” to be received by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

### 3.2 Objectives, Aims and Achievements

Comments on the Church's objectives, aims and achievements for the year, and plans for the future are set out in the Report of the Churchwardens.

### 3.3 Membership

PCC Members are elected by the APCM for a period of three years. The size of the PCC is determined by the number of people on the electoral roll. St Botolph's therefore has 15 elected members although this can be altered by a resolution at the APCM. The PCC can then co-opt up to 3 further members.

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules.

During the year, the following served on the PCC:

Chair	Rev'd Mark Lucas
Ex-officio Members	
Church Wardens	Paul Gosling Carlton Willis
Deanery Synod Members (elected to 2026)	Kate Curnock Peter Jackson Adrian Keach Heather Knighton Julie Lucas Helen Tilney
Associate Minister	Rev'd Andy Clark
Elected Members	
Secretary	Martin Adamson (2027)
Treasurer	David Wright (2027)
	Tim Acland (2028) Pippa Coe (2026) Daniel Eade (2027) Robert Edwards (2028) Paul Gosling (2028) Jane Griffiths (2026) Nick Johnson (2026) Helen Laughton (2028) David Scullion (resigned) Carlton Willis (2026)
	<i>There were three unfilled vacancies.</i>
Co-opted Members	
	None

## 3.4 Church Attendance

Attendance at the regular weekly services has increased slightly during 2025. On average attendance at each service was:

- Sunday 8:30am – 11 adults
- Sunday 10:00am – 119 adults and 25 under 16
- Sunday 6:30pm – 40 adults and 4 under 16
- Thursday – 35 adults

The Sunday morning service continues to be live streamed on various platforms and although it is not possible to determine how many people are watching at anyone time, it has become a valued way of being part of the fellowship for those who cannot be there in person.

## 3.5 Organisation

The full PCC has met on five occasions since the last full PCC. Much of the work of the PCC is conducted by various task groups and committees, namely:

- Standing Committee
- Business and Finance Task Group
- Fabric Task Group
- Missions Task Group

## 3.6 Safeguarding and Risk Management

Health and Safety is the responsibility of the PCC as is Safeguarding. The PCC made the following appointments:

- The Parish Safeguarding Officer is Martin Adamson
- The Parish Safety Officer is Robert Edwards.

## 3.7 Main Objectives of the Year and Major Topics of Discussion

PCC meetings routinely include reports from the Task Groups as well as reports on the Deanery and Diocesan Synod meetings; staff reports are received from the Associate Minister, the Children & Families Worker and the Pastoral Care worker. Safeguarding and Health & Safety are also standing agenda items. In addition to this the PCC has:

- Continued to prayerfully consider the right way to respond to LLF.
- Considered the implications of the Standfast Trust and received a presentation on changes that have been made by the Trust.
- Expressed support for and received updates about the potential church plant on the Hanwood Park estate.
- Reflected on the appointment of the new Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Adoption of the Pastoral Care policy.
- Received updates on discussions held at General Synod.

## 3.8 Financial Report

The accounts for the year to 31st December 2025 are included in the papers assembled together for this Annual Report and reference should be made to the Treasurer's "Financial Review" for an appreciation of the Church's financial position.

## 3.9 The Future

The PCC is responsible for all parish finance, its management and control. Fresh ideas regarding the exercise of these duties are always welcome, and decisions are made after prayerful consideration. Anyone aged 16 or over and on the Electoral Roll is eligible to stand for nomination as a PCC member and is encouraged to do so.

There are eight places on the PCC to be filled at the APCM.

Signed on behalf of the PCC by Revd. Mark Lucas

**4. St. Botolph's Accounts 2025**

*Registered Charity Number 1130426*

**St Botolph's Church**

**Barton Seagrave**

**Financial Statements**

**Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

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## Financial Review Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

*The attached Accounts give information required of the Parochial Church Council by law as good stewards of monies received and paid.*

The Financial statements are set out in pages F4-F8 of this report.

We have had a challenging year in many ways, as we started the year with a budgeted shortfall of £113,236, which was to be funded from contributions from unrestricted and restricted funds and the general fund was set a net nil balance.

The actual outturn for 2025 showed a deficit of £18,433, broken down by a deficit on restricted funds of £4,126 and a small surplus on unrestricted funds of £337. There was a deficit on the general fund of £14,644 which it is proposed to be funded by transfers from the staffing and youth funds as has been done in previous years.

Funding for the Family Support Worker continues and is through one off income and regular donations. In year income amounted to £37,200 and expenditure on salaries and expenses of £32,844. The balance on the FSW fund at the end of 2025 was £36,807.

The general fund was budgeted at a deficit of £33,067 for 2025 but saw a number of variances during the year. Planned giving was almost £12k below expectations, but offset by grant received from the Standfast Trust. Expenditure saw increases in heating costs and maintenance of £5.7k and general expense costs of £4.5k. This was offset by a reduction in the Parish Share as a result of the reduction in planned giving. Overall the general fund was in deficit by £14,644 and will be funded by a transfer from the staffing fund and a contribution from the youth fund.

Whilst we are showing a deficit for 2025 of £18,433 this was against a forecast deficit for 2025 of £113,326. This was an in-year variance of £94,803 and was due to extra income of £23.9k which included a one-off grant from Standfast of £18.5k and a reduction in planned expenditure of £70.9k. The reduction in planned expenditure was due to the profiled spend of some major Church repair works which was £54.2k below budgeted, additional costs for heating and maintenance costs and a reduction in the Parish Share contribution.. The deferral of planned repair and maintenance costs into next financial year and will be funded from various restricted and unrestricted funds. There was however an increase in general expenditure which will have to be carefully monitored in the coming year.

In previous years the staffing youth funds have been used to contribute towards the cost of the Associate Minister that had been paid through the Parish Share.

The designated and unrestricted funds outturn was a deficit of £3,788 and we also saw a deficit on the general fund of £14,644. This was a better result than expected and in general, this was mainly due to planned building works not taking place in year, one off grants being received and a reduced Parish Share contribution..

Overall, for 2025 the level of unrestricted and general funds stands at £164,898 down from £178,351 and the restricted funds stand at £126,642 down from £130,155 in 2024.

In reviewing the accounts, other points come to note:

- Planned giving decreased to £112,072 (2024 £142,050) an reduction on last year's actuals of £29,978, FSW planned giving was £17,355 this was down on last year and saw a reduction in one off donations.
- The income from Weddings and Funerals and lettings saw a slight reduction on last year at £10.7k.
- General expenses were higher this year up £3.2k on 2024 but this was due to higher expenditure on funds other than the general fund. We also saw the implementation of debit cards for the church staff.

## St Botolph's Church

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- Major repairs and maintenance to the Church and Church properties in 2025 was £23,816 (2024 £25,100). There are some repairs that remain outstanding and will be re programmed into 2026. Spend on general maintenance was £5,239, slightly up on 2024 (£3,710).
- Giving to Missions from the general and unrestricted funds including the share plan was £25,940.

At the end of 2025:

- General Fund before transfers stands at a deficit of £14,644 for 2025 and the
- The Youth and Staffing Fund is now showing a balance of £39,294. (2024: £25,338)

The year ahead will bring with it continuing financial challenges, the actual general fund deficit in 2025, will need to be funded from a transfer from the youth and staffing fund. In 2025 we must not continue to rely on the General fund being bailed out, therefore it is vital that the budget for 2026 is set as a balanced budget against the general fund and costs allocated to the correct fund. We will have to continue to apply tighter financial management in the hope that we will be able to bring the Church general fund finances into balance for 2026 and relying less on transferring funds to correct any deficit at the year end. This will require strong financial stewardship, but at the same time ensuring that resources gifted are used in a way that will bring glory to God.

It is a constant challenge to be wise stewards of the resources we have and to be bold in the cause of the Gospel. Through the continued development of new homes in our Parish we have opportunities as never before to reach out to our surrounding community.

We pray that God will provide the resources, human and financial in the years ahead.

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.”  
Deuteronomy 16:17

May we bring Glory to God in all we do, day by day, week by week.

*David Wright (Treasurer)*

*March 2026*

# St Botolph's Church

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## Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees (PCC) of St. Botolph's Church, Barton Seagrave

This report on the Financial Statements of St Botolph's Church for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 1 to 7, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and section 43 of the Charities Act 1993.

### Respective responsibilities of the PCC and the examiner

As the members of the PCC, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements. You consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and section 43 (2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

### Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43 (7)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition, issued by the Finance Division of the Archbishop's council. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act: and

- to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations

have not been met: or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Caroline Berry  
Rothwell  
Northants



Date:

17/3/2026

# St Botolph's Church

## Statement of Financial Affairs (Income)

**Year Ended 31st December 2025**

	Actuals	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2025	Provisional Budget for 2026		
	2024				Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
<b>Incoming Resources</b>							
<b>Receipts from donors</b>							
Planned Giving (Bankers Orders)	142,005	21,345	87,759	109,104	17,600	92,400	110,000
Planned Giving (FWO)	749	0	604	604	0	1,000	1,000
Other Planned Giving (Tax Efficient)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planned Giving (Non Gift-Aid)	3,904	0	2,365	2,365	100	3,400	3,500
Collections at Services	4,752	0	3,093	3,093	0	6,000	6,000
Non-Recurring/ Non Gift-Aided Income	1,010	80	130	210	100	500	600
Non-Recurring/ Gift Aided	3,075	0	0	0	300	200	500
Gift Day	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tax recoverable on Gift Aid	38,239	4,143	24,095	28,238	4,175	25,825	30,000
	<b>193,734</b>	25,568	118,045	143,613	<b>22,275</b>	<b>129,325</b>	<b>151,600</b>
<b>Other voluntary receipts</b>							
Legacies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warkton Contribution	0	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Donations and Appeals	3,210	20	1,240	1,260	0	31,406	31,406
Income - Rectory Walk	6,502	0	3,974	3,974	0	3,500	3,500
	<b>9,712</b>	20	5,214	5,234	<b>0</b>	<b>35,906</b>	<b>35,906</b>
<b>Activities in furtherance of the councils objects</b>							
Fees for weddings & funerals	7,751	200	6,462	6,662	0	7,000	7,000
Coffee Monies	520	0	369	369	0	290	290
Bookstall sales	62	0	120	120	0	100	100
Ch hall lettings PCC objects	4,253	0	4,042	4,042	0	4,000	4,000
	<b>12,586</b>	200	10,993	11,193	<b>0</b>	<b>11,390</b>	<b>11,390</b>
<b>Income from investments</b>							
Bank & building soc interest	13,717	0	8,865	8,865	0	6,000	6,000
Rent Church House Flats	10,431	0	10,491	10,491	0	11,340	11,340
Rectory Cottage	14,400	14,400	0	14,400	15,120	0	15,120
	<b>38,548</b>	14,400	19,356	33,756	<b>15,120</b>	<b>17,340</b>	<b>32,460</b>
<b>Other receipts</b>							
Other Funds Generated	8,310	2,388	32,815	35,203	0	15,000	15,000
Parish Weekend	0	0	0	0	0	750	750
Holiday Club - income	25	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Support Worker	4,341	8,430	0	8,430	0	0	0
Events and Activities Income	260	0	845	845	0	3,000	3,000
Misc Income	8,296	7,435	12,694	20,129	3,500	15,300	18,800
	<b>21,232</b>	18,252	46,354	64,606	<b>3,500</b>	<b>34,050</b>	<b>37,550</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>275,812</b>	58,440	199,963	258,403	<b>40,895</b>	<b>228,011</b>	<b>268,906</b>

# St Botolph's Church

## Statement of Financial Affairs (Expenditure)      Year Ended 31st December 2025

	Actuals	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2025	Provisional Budget for 2026		
	2024				Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Fund raisers - expenses	0	-	-	0	-	-	-
<b>Missions</b>	<b>23,049</b>	3,005	22,935	25,940	<b>2,676</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>23,676</b>
<b>Activities relating to the work of the Church</b>							
Honoraria and Bursary	925	-	800	800	-	1,000	1,000
<b>Staff Expenses</b>	<b>6,021</b>	-	<b>6,523</b>	6,523	-	<b>8,900</b>	8,900
<b>Youth and Children's work</b>	<b>30,487</b>	<b>32,765</b>	<b>2,793</b>	35,558	<b>37,500</b>	<b>8,100</b>	45,600
<b>Outreach Expenses</b>	<b>788</b>	-	<b>2,909</b>	2,909	-	<b>2,500</b>	2,500
Womens Evangelism	0	-	838	838	-	-	-
Upkeep of services	50	-	1,364	1,364	-	500	500
Audio, Powerpoint & Music	2,002	-	1,287	1,287	-	3,200	3,200
<b>Church House Running Costs</b>	<b>14,388</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>24,979</b>	25,339	-	<b>28,200</b>	28,200
Fees for Weddings & Funerals	3,907	160	808	968	-	4,000	4,000
Bookstall purchases	243	119	321	440	-	150	150
Parish weekend expenditure	0	-	-	0	-	500	500
	<b>58,812</b>	33,404	42,622	76,026	<b>37,500</b>	<b>57,050</b>	<b>94,550</b>
<b>Church management and administration</b>							
<b>Office Salaries</b>	<b>17,628</b>	-	<b>18,783</b>	18,783	-	<b>21,000</b>	21,000
<b>Church Running Costs</b>	<b>14,637</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>17,500</b>	20,200	-	<b>8,100</b>	8,100
<b>Office and Admin Costs</b>	<b>13,424</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>17,347</b>	17,688	-	<b>18,120</b>	18,120
Council Tax Flat 1	0	-	-	0	-	1	1
<b>Property Repairs</b>	<b>24,008</b>	<b>23,116</b>	<b>700</b>	23,816	<b>23,600</b>	<b>25,500</b>	<b>49,100</b>
	<b>69,697</b>	26,158	54,330	80,488	<b>23,600</b>	<b>72,721</b>	<b>96,321</b>
Parish share	137,836	-	94,382	94,382	-	100,000	100,000
Total Payments	<b>289,394</b>	62,567	214,269	276,836	<b>63,776</b>	<b>250,771</b>	<b>314,547</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	<b>-289,394</b>	<b>-4,126</b>	<b>-14,306</b>	<b>-18,433</b>	<b>22,881</b>	<b>22,760</b>	<b>45,641</b>
Total Funds Brought Forward	<b>323,555</b>	130,769	179,205	309,973	<b>126,642</b>	<b>164,898</b>	<b>291,541</b>
Total Funds Carried Forward	<b>£ 34,162</b>	£ 126,642	£ 164,898	£ 291,541	<b>£ 103,761</b>	£ 142,138	£ 245,900

# St Botolph's Church

## Funds Movement Summary

**Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

		Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
<b><u>Restricted Funds</u></b>					
Apprentice	Apprentice Fund	4,000	0	0	4,000
Pensions	Pension Fund	-132	0	0	-132
Bell	Bells and Belfry Fund	2	428	160	270
Choir fees	Choir Fees Fund	110	0	0	110
St Bots Tots	St Bots Tots Fund	3,076	1,519	342	4,253
Organ	Organ Fund	126	0	0	126
Family Support Worker	FSW Fund	32,491	37,200	32,884	36,807
Childrens Resources	Childrens Fund	5,000	0	0	5,000
Property Chapel	Chapel Fund	8,595	0	8,596	-2
Potters	Potters Place Fund	785	0	0	785
Share	Shareplan Fund	3,525	2,676	3,005	3,196
CSS	Sound System	-1,636	0	0	-1,636
Rectory	Rectory Cottage Fund	18,513	0	0	18,513
Propres	Property (restricted) fund	41,913	9,418	17,580	33,751
Staff	Staffing Fund	14,400	7,200	0	21,600
Welfare	Fellowship Fund	0	0	0	0
		130,769	58,440	62,567	126,642
<b><u>Designated and Unrestricted Funds</u></b>					
General	General fund	-42,167	187,104	201,748	-56,811
Soup and Sandwich Lunch	Pilgrims Fund	1,903	0	404	1,499
Prophold	Property Holding Fund	73,134	0	0	73,134
East Legacy	Property Holding Fund	30,545	0	0	30,545
Heating	Heating Fund	61,714	0	10,018	51,696
Womens Ministry	Womens Ministry Fund	688	2,064	1,885	867
Coffeeshop	Coffee Shop Fund	621	92	214	499
RectWDes	Rectory Walk Designated Fund	29,922	3,947	0	33,869
Sarajevo	Sarajevo Fund	1,059	0	0	1,059
Wolf	Michael Wolf Legacy Fund	10,845	0	0	10,845
Youth	Youth and Children's Projects	10,939	6,756	0	17,694
		179,205	199,963	214,269	164,898
<b>Total Funds</b>		309,973	258,403	276,836	291,541

# St Botolph's Church

## Balance Sheet

**Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

	<b>Year 31/12/2025</b>	<b>Year 31/12/2024</b>
<b><u>Fixed assets</u></b>		
Church House / Rectory Cottage	135,000	135,000
Buildings depreciation	- 65,460	- 62,760
Fixtures and Fittings	50,088	50,088
Fixtures and Fittings Depreciation	- 30,053	- 20,036
Equipment	2,010	2,010
Equipment Depreciation	- 2,010	- 1,340
	<b>£ 89,575</b>	<b>£ 102,962</b>
<b><u>Current assets</u></b>		
Bank Current Acc.	91,469	206,541
Bank Deposit Acc.	109,829	91,059
Bank CAF Cash Acc.	16,887	6,451
Internal Orgs Bank Acc.	1,966	2,310
Central Board of Finance	100,000	100,000
Cash in hand	-	0
Accounts Receivable	2,492	1,911
	<b>£ 322,642</b>	<b>£ 408,272</b>
<b><u>Liabilities</u></b>		
Agency Collections	16,990	18,390
Accounts Payable	103,686	182,871
	<b>£ 120,676</b>	<b>£ 201,261</b>
<b><u>Net Assets</u></b>	<b>£ 291,541</b>	<b>£ 309,973</b>
<b><u>Held in Funds as Follows:</u></b>		
<b><u>Restricted Funds</u></b>		
Apprentice Fund	4,000	4,000
Pension Fund	- 132	- 132
Bells and Belfry Fund	270	2
Choir Fees Fund	110	110
St Bots Tots	4,253	3,076
FSW Fund	126	32,491
Childrens Fund	36,807	5,000
Chapel Fund	5,000	8,595
Organ Fund	- 2	126
Potters Place Fund	785	785
Shareplan Fund	3,196	3,525
Sound System	- 1,636	- 1,636
Property (restricted) fund	18,513	49,113
Rectory Cottage Fund	33,751	11,313
Staffing Fund	21,600	14,400
Fellowship Fund	-	-
	<b>£ 126,642</b>	<b>£ 130,769</b>
<b><u>Designated and Unrestricted Funds</u></b>		
General fund	-56,811	-42,167
Soup and Sandwich Lunch	1,499	1,903
Property Holding Fund	73,134	73,134
East Legacy	30,545	30,545
Heating Fund	51,696	61,714
Womens Ministry Fund	867	688
Coffee Shop Fund	499	621
Rectory Walk Designated Fund	33,869	29,922
Sarajevo Fund	1,059	1,059
Michael Wolf Legacy Fund	10,845	10,845
Youth and Children's Projects	17,694	10,939
	<b>£ 164,898</b>	<b>£ 179,205</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£ 291,541</b>	<b>£ 309,973</b>

*Approved by the Parochial Church Council and signed on it's behalf by Revd. Mark Lucas (PCC Chairman)*

## Notes to the Financial Statements Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

### 1. Accounting Policies

- a) The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention, using the accruals basis.
- b) Unrestricted Funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restriction regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes of the PCC.
- c) Restricted Funds represent funds of the PCC which can only be used for specific purposes.
- d) Income Tax recoverable under Gift Aid is not recognised until received.
- e) The Freehold Property in use by the Church is based on a historical valuation less depreciation.

### 2. Fixed Assets comprise 2 Freehold properties:

- Church House
- Rectory Cottage.

The Book value of these properties does not reflect current market value.  
The Property Holding Fund finances both properties.

During the year assets were purchased and they are being depreciated using the Straight Line Basis, an asset is depreciated at a percentage of the original value. The asset will be depreciated by the same amount each year.

Buildings depreciated at 2% - £2,700 for 2025

Fixtures and Equipment depreciated at 20% - £10,018 for 2025

Equipment depreciated at 33% - £670 for 2025

### 3. Employees

- a) The average number of employees in the year was 3 (2024: 3)
- b) The total remuneration of employees amounted to **£53,474** (2024: £48,574).

### 4. Independent Examiner

The Independent Examiner, Mrs Caroline Berry received a fee of £100 for her services.

### 5. Parish Share

	2025	2024
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<b>Full amount paid:</b>	<b>£94,382</b>	£137,836
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Of the amount allocated for the Parish Share in 2025 £94,382 was allocated to the Ephesian Fund.

- ### 6. Honoraria:
- The Treasurer, Mr David Wright received **£500**. (2024 £500)  
The Musical Director, Mr Graham Tilney received **£300** (2024: £300)

## **5. Churchwardens' Report 2025**

It has been a privilege to serve as Churchwardens over the past year and to share in the responsibility of caring for both the people and the building of St Botolph's Church.

St Botolph's is a Grade I listed church building, recognised for its exceptional historic and architectural significance. This designation is both an honour and a weighty responsibility.

We are deeply grateful to those who give their time to cleaning, maintenance, churchyard care, and practical oversight. Much of this work happens quietly but is vital to the life of the parish.

### **Biblical Faithfulness in Teaching and Worship**

A defining strength of St Botolph's is its strong ethos of Biblical accuracy in teaching and worship. Our ministry is grounded firmly in Scripture, with preaching and teaching that seek to handle God's Word faithfully, clearly, and with integrity.

Under the leadership of our Rector, Mark, Bible-based teaching continues to shape our corporate worship and personal discipleship. Sermons are rooted in careful exposition of Scripture, encouraging both understanding and practical application. Our liturgy, prayers, and sacramental life likewise reflect a commitment to theological depth and doctrinal faithfulness within the tradition of the Church of England.

This shared commitment to biblical faithfulness provides clarity, unity, and confidence as we seek to live out our calling in today's world.

### **Youth Ministry**

Youth Ministry continues to be a real strength within the life of St Bots. Under Andy's faithful and energetic leadership, young people are encouraged to explore and grow in their faith within a safe, welcoming, and well-structured environment. His commitment, alongside a dedicated team of volunteers, has fostered strong relationships, thoughtful biblical teaching, and genuine discipleship. It is greatly encouraging to see young people actively engaging with Scripture, asking honest questions, and developing a confident and personal faith. This vibrant ministry is both a blessing in the present and a hopeful investment in the future of the church.

### **Very Strong Children and Families Ministry**

We are especially thankful for the very strong children and families ministry led by Helen. Through dedication, warmth, and thoughtful leadership, Helen has helped build a ministry that is both well-structured and spiritually grounded.

Children are not simply accommodated within church life but actively nurtured in faith. Families are warmly welcomed and supported, and there is a clear commitment to helping children grow in their understanding of Scripture in ways that are engaging and age-appropriate. This ministry is a vital investment in the future life of the church and is supported by a faithful team of volunteers whose service and care are deeply valued.

### **Music**

We are richly blessed by excellent musicians led by Graham, whose contribution to worship is both vibrant and spiritually enriching. Through their skill, dedication, and sensitivity, our music enhances congregational singing and deepens the atmosphere of praise and prayer.

Music at St Bots is not simply an accompaniment but an integral part of worship, helping us to express joy, lament, thanksgiving, and reverence. We are deeply grateful for the time, preparation, and commitment given by those who lead and support this vital ministry.

### **Church Administration**

Heather, our Church Administrator, is truly a vital cog in the life of St Bots. Her organisation, and calm oversight ensure that the many moving parts of church life function smoothly and effectively. From managing communications and coordinating bookings to supporting clergy, PCC, and ministry leaders, Heather's work—often behind the scenes—provides essential stability and continuity. Her professionalism, attention to detail, and servant-hearted approach make an invaluable contribution to the ministry and mission of the church.

# St Botolph's Church

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## **A Growing Congregation**

We give thanks that the congregation continues to grow. It is encouraging to see new individuals and families joining us and becoming part of church life. This growth reflects both God's grace, the strength of Biblical teaching and the warm welcome extended by members of the congregation. 10am Sunday services are almost always very well attended. You could say "bursting at the seams". There are generally over 100 adults and upwards of 30 children. Given St Bot's capacity (not including the Side Chapel) is a little over 200, we are blessed indeed. We are now actively seeking to establish a Church Plant on the Hanwood Park estate. Prayer meetings have been held at Hayfield Cross school to support the project. There is significant energy behind the plans.

## **Bell Ringing Team**

St Botolph's is blessed with a wonderful team of bell ringers who faithfully enhance our worship and mark important moments in the life of our church and community. Special thanks go to our Tower Captain, Caroline, whose dedication, leadership, and enthusiasm ensure the bells continue to ring out.

## **Easter and Christmas Services**

Easter and Christmas services are special times of the church year. At Easter there were a total of six special services, which included the Son Rise Holy Communion service early on Easter Sunday which is held outside on the green. In total there were 289 attendances over Easter.

Our services at Christmas are very popular. It is a great opportunity to spread the word of the Gospel. Stand out attendances were at Carols on the Green and the Christingle service. The total number of people attending worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was 417. (Some people will have been to more than one service).

## **Areas of Service**

We are deeply grateful to the many people who faithfully serve in practical ways across the life of St Bots. Particular thanks go to those who prepare and serve refreshments, creating opportunities for fellowship and welcome after services and at events. We also greatly appreciate the team who manage the visual technology (VT). In addition, sincere thanks are due to those who prepare for Holy Communion, ensuring that this central act of worship is conducted with care, reverence, and attention to detail. These acts of service, often carried out quietly and faithfully, contribute greatly to the life and worship of our church community.

We would also like to express our huge thanks and appreciation to Tim Acland for the expertise and practical skills he brings to the life of St Bots. His willingness to offer time, knowledge, and hands-on help with practical matters around the church building has been greatly valued. The care and attention he gives to maintenance and problem-solving play an important role in helping us look after this historic church well, and his contribution is deeply appreciated.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Cayti Bilski, who continues to serve faithfully as Sacrist at St Bots. This important ministry, often carried out quietly behind the scenes, plays a vital role in supporting the worship life of the church, and her continued dedication is greatly appreciated.

We are also very grateful to the team of gardeners who faithfully care for the grounds around Church and Church House. Through their time, effort, and attention to detail, the church paths, borders, and surrounding areas are kept vibrant and welcoming throughout the year.

## **In Conclusion**

Above all, we give thanks to God for His continued faithfulness to St Botolph's. For the growth of the congregation, the commitment of so many who serve, the ministry among children, youth, and families, and the faithful proclamation of His Word, we recognise God's gracious provision and guidance throughout the year.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...* *1 Peter 1:3*

Church Wardens Carl Willis & Paul Gosling

# St Botolph's Church

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## 6. Fabric Report 2025

Another year passes and I hope all who read this report will agree that, as far as the church building is concerned, the Fabric Task Group has continued to improve our worshipping environment. Following the installation of a servery area and toilet a couple of years ago, together with an all electric heating system, we are pleased that we have now made the Side Chapel into a much more welcoming environment. After levelling the floor in 2024 we have replastered the walls; installed the glass screen and doors; laid a new carpet; installed the handrails, and added two monitors for relaying services. When not in use these can be hidden behind curtains lovingly produced by Liz Caplis who is also responsible for making the beautiful banners that are hung on the church walls. To complete the work we need to install hand rails; a glass “window” in the squint; and to alter the cabling to the monitors – work which should be completed quite soon.

Also, having received the necessary approvals from the DAC, we have been able to progress some of the church re-ordering. To date we have installed a larger monitor on the cill of the South window on the West wall which, with the other monitors around the church should enable everyone to see what is being projected. When we are certain this is satisfactory, we intend to remove the two small monitors on the central column and tidy up the cabling to make the area look less cluttered. We will also remove the monitor on the south wall in the chancel. We have also removed all the old steel radiators and all that remains is to fill in the holes left following removal of the support bracket mounts. The removal work was undertaken, incredibly in under four hours one Saturday morning by 9 of our male worshippers following a verbal appeal for help at a 10am Sunday service. The next phase of reordering will include the removal of the credence table and levelling of the east end of the chancel to enable a further 25 chairs to be sited there; and then to build a replacement dais, slightly larger than the existing one. Also the removal of the redundant church boiler.

When the reordering is complete we will need to completely redecorate the church walls which is probably the major item included in the 2026 budget. This work will include redecorating the outer wall of the toilet which has been flaking since first installed!

Much of the “management” of the practical aspects of the Group’s work is undertaken by Tim Acland who not only deals with items that are included in our budget, but also in dealing with the countless day to day issues that arise unexpectedly, largely due to the age of the buildings we have the responsibility to maintain – the church, Church House and Rectory Cottage. As a fellowship we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Tim for all that he does, and for his considerable practical skill and knowledge. Many thanks - Tim.

Tim has spent much time on the church roof which seems to be in constant need of repair – not least in keeping the building watertight!! The central gutter is lead lined and subject to frequent splits, to the extent that within a relatively short time we will need to replace it. Our architect is aware of the problem and will be needed to agree a solution that will satisfy the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) as a faculty to undertake the work will be required.

We have recently installed a new church roof alarm system which should only activate when there is human intrusion – the previous one was frequently set off by pigeons which was particularly annoying when Peter Jackson or Tim got called out at 3.00am in the morning to investigate!

Maintaining Church House is a challenge, and there is much work that could be done to make it a more inviting place. With this in mind we have commissioned a Space Planning exercise with an architect skilled in such matters who will look into our room usage to see if the present arrangements could be improved – e.g. could we provide a single unisex toilet upstairs rather than have separate male and female toilets?

There is much day to day maintenance which goes on quietly in the background and which most worshippers are unaware of – but would be if the issues weren’t dealt with as expeditiously as they are.

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I have just re-read the report I produced for last year's APCM, and anyone reading it 12 months on must wonder why the Fabric Task Group doesn't do more! I say this because a certain amount of what was said last year continues to be "on-going". E.g. "the replacement of the lighting units and shutters in the Fellowship Room; provision of a location in the kitchen garden for the wheelie bins which should be positioned no nearer than three metres away from the building" - and "lack of sufficiently hot water in the servery". All of these matters, and many others, get considered at our monthly meetings and will be completed in due course, so please be patient! It all boils down to prioritisation and fire fighting (i.e. when the unexpected has to be dealt with as a matter of urgency).

Many of our ideas to improve the church environment require approval by the DAC and they become increasingly difficult to convince that our suggestions should be accepted. Most of the work in persuading the DAC is undertaken by Peter and we should all be most grateful that he has had the time and patience to satisfy a committee who appear to believe that a listed church building should be considered a museum rather than a place for vibrant church worship. To be fair we haven't had as many problems with the DAC this year as in the past few, but we do have to have water tight proposals when approaching them seeking permission to make an alteration or addition.

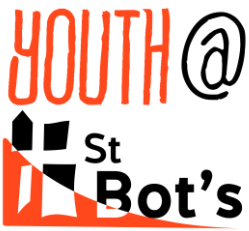
Our Task Group is only five strong with none of us in the flush of youth, so, in order to keep costs down, as far as possible we try to undertake non skilled work using members of our fellowship able to give their time. We now believe that the best way to get a response when some work is needed to be done is to verbally ask for help in our services, more particularly at the 10.00am service. So when the next plea is made, please seriously consider if you could offer to help.

The time is coming when many of the rooms in Church House will need a lick of paint. So if any readers feel adept with a paintbrush please be ready to volunteer when the plea goes out!

As I said last year, what we ask is that all who use, particularly Church House, should remember that it is an old building that needs a lot of TLC. So please, always treat it with respect!!

Adrian Keach – Secretary, Fabric Task Group

## 7. Children's & Youth Ministry 2025



**St Bots Youth ministry aims to be Good News for Young people in Barton Seagrave & beyond**

*He [Jesus] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

*[The New International Version](#). (Col 1:28–29).*

### **In Partnership with Parents & Carers - We want...**

- to help young people:
  - come to know and love Jesus as Saviour & Lord
  - grow to maturity in their faith
  - become active, serving members of the church
- to equip young people to:
  - be lifelong followers of Jesus
  - effectively share their faith with their friends and family
  - live 'in the world 'but not be 'of the world'
- in all these things to work in partnership with parents and carers
- the youth ministry groups to be the highlight of the young people's week



(School years 7-9)

The name *eighty* comes from Mark 1:15, the first words Jesus speaks in Mark's Gospel, calling us to repentance—literally *doing a 180*. *Eighty* is a lovely group of young people who meet on Sunday mornings during the 10am service and on Thursday evenings.



(School years 10-13)

Link meets each Wednesday evening during term time. There is a great mix of young people from different schools, churches and backgrounds who enjoy meeting together each week.

We want our young people to have a great time and look forward to coming along to *Eighty* & *LINK*. We want them to see how relevant the Bible is to today's culture and to come to know Jesus personally as we explore it together. We want them to grow deep roots in Christ.

Over this last year at *LINK* & *Eighty* we have seen the adventures of the early church in the book of Acts and considered the '*Mission Impossible*' they faced. We explored '*Loyalty Under Pressure*' through Daniel and the 10 Commandments – asking how we can live for Jesus in a world which wants us to deny him. We also looked at '*Doing Life with Jesus*' discovering what living for Jesus looks like in daily life.

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## **1eighty on Sundays**

We have continued, once or twice, to keep 1eighty in for the whole service. We want to help and equip them to engage with and participate in regular services. We know how important this is: being involved in the wider church and being regular on Sundays helps young people to keep going in their faith into adulthood. The whole church family has a part to play in this.

1eighty on Sundays follows the same teaching series as the main 10am sermon. We hope this helps families talk about what they've been learning together and supports 1eighty in engaging more with regular services.

## **Equipped**

*Equipped* runs after the evening service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month in Rectory Cottage. This is open to 1eighty and LINK members. Its purpose is to encourage discipleship and help the young people be equipped to live for Jesus.

## **Highlights from the Last Year**

Some of the greatest highlights over this last year have been:

- growth in the number of young people coming to Sunday services
- young people encouraging each other to read their Bibles
- some young people independently reading their Bibles and praying together
- real growth in spiritual maturity among some, and a genuine desire to work out what living for Jesus looks like
- seeing **8 young people confirmed**
- growing boldness—some being willing to talk about their faith with unbelieving friends and family

We have a wonderful, dedicated team of leaders who do a fantastic job of faithfully serving our young people. Youth ministry is the responsibility of the whole church, whether directly involved or not. Research shows young people need **seven significant Christian relationships** to come to faith and to build a resilient, lasting faith. This means it's not just up to parents or the youth team—the whole Christian community has a part to play. We are all called to be interested in, love, and care for our young people.

Please pray for our young people and give thanks for them and for the leaders who serve so faithfully and sacrificially each week at both LINK and 1eighty.

## **Schools**

Opportunities for gospel work in schools are important to take where they are available.

Andy has continued to support Bishop Stopford School this year through assemblies and school communions. It has been a real privilege to support the school—meeting with senior staff, supporting the amazing work of Victoria Hutchinson (School Chaplain) in a small way, being involved in strategy, the recent SIAMS inspection, and serving on the steering committee for the Growing Faith Learning Hub project.

It is enormously encouraging to see the student-led Christian Union continue to grow, along with groups for sixth formers and lower school. There are up to **50 young people attending some weeks**—quite extraordinary!

Please give thanks to God and pray for this ministry and all opportunities we have in schools. It really is amazing and unusual to have such opportunities. Please also pray for new opportunities to open in other secondary schools.

Andy Clark

## **8. Families and Children's Worker Report 2025**

I began the report for 2025's APCM by quoting Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 2:8-9; the reassurance contained in those verses has proven to be no less relevant over the last year:

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*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.' Ephesians 2:8-9*

I thank God for his protection and provision for all the children we have had contact with this year and for his enabling and sustaining of myself and all the volunteers, without whom it would be impossible to reach so many children with the Gospel of Jesus. My heartfelt thanks go to each and every one.

As always, I do not take my role for granted and recognize it is only by the prayerful generosity of the St Botolph's and St Edmund's church family that I can do what I do. There have been many highlights during 2025; here are some:

- Summer Holiday Club looking at the lessons from Jonah. It was such a joy! About 50 children attended the club each day along with around 30 volunteers! Please pray for the 2026 Holiday Club – 'Secret Agents' which will take place from 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> August.
- The number of children in Sunday groups remains around 25 each week with several more in our creche. Please pray that these children will grow in their head and heart knowledge of Jesus. Please pray also that their leaders and helpers remain enthused and blessed in their service.
- St Bot's Tots – our baby and toddler group remains as popular as ever and is fully booked each week. Please pray that more families will come to church as a result of coming to St Bot's Tots. We have seen a few families regularly join our services this year.
- It has been a privilege to give Bibles to families who don't have one at home. We recognize that the primary influence in children's lives remains their parents/caregivers and we want to encourage parents and children to learn together at home to love and serve God for themselves.
- Assemblies and school visits – I regularly attend four primary schools to lead Collective Worship. It's really good to go back to schools where pupils recognize me and seem happy to see me!
- Visits to St Botolph's church by school groups and childminders continued during 2025 especially at Christmas and Easter.
- Baptisms – there were a couple of infant baptisms in 2025 and it is a privilege to get to know and share the Gospel with the families of the children being baptized.
- Who Let The Dads Out? – one Saturday morning a month for dads and male carers and their children. This has been a great time as we get to know some of the regular dads more. Most of those who attend are non-church families. Regularly about 10 children.
- Refresh – our weekly Bible study/prayer time for young women and their pre-school children. Again, we must say a huge 'thank you' to the creche ladies (Cynthia, Jane and Lindsay) and to the other leaders of the group (Rachel, Rosie and Angela).
- The Christingle service at Warkton was a wonderful time and was well attended. It was followed by refreshments and the lighting of the Christmas Tree at the village hall.
- I attended the annual Growing Young Disciples Conference in January. I have also attended other training events both in person and via zoom including a virtual book club. I'm pleased to say that some members of the volunteer team were also able to attend training events which has been very helpful.
- TBC (Thursday Bible Club) started at the beginning of May for children in school years 3-6. This has been going really well and numbers of children attending have increased; we regularly see around 15 children or so each week. We have been looking at some fundamental questions about the Christian faith and the children have been asking amazing (and difficult) questions! Please pray that these children will make a personal commitment to Jesus – if they haven't done so already!

Nurturing the children and families in our fellowship is not something that is the sole responsibility of those who formally teach on Sundays or during the week. Building God's kingdom is the responsibility of each one of his people. As the Psalmist wrote:

*We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done... so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Psalm 78:4&6*

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Please do speak to me about any aspect of the Children's and Families ministry. I greatly value your prayers, support and fellowship and look forward to what God will do in the coming year.

Helen Tilney Families and Children's Worker

## 9. Safeguarding Report 2025

Safeguarding in the Church of England has been an issue of national focus over the last twelve months for all the wrong reasons. It would not be appropriate to comment on any of that in this report other than to stress the need for us to learn whatever lessons we can and to recognise the importance of continued diligence in all aspects of what we do at St Botolph's. In recent weeks, the PCC has embarked on a review of our safeguarding routines and the impact of this should become clearer over the next few months.

Everyone at St Bots needs to be part of building a strong safeguarding culture, and you can do this by:

- Being vigilant – it can be very difficult to imagine anyone in our church doing the kind of things that we have read about but we have to take an approach that says 'it could happen here' however unpalatable that is.
- Reporting any concerns to either The Benefice Safeguarding Officer (Martin Adamson 07843122477), The Rector or the Diocese Safeguarding Team ([How Do I disclose a Safeguarding concern? - Diocese of Peterborough](#)).
- Ensure your DBS is kept up-to-date – anyone working with children, part of the Pastoral Team or on the PCC, needs a new DBS every three years. Please don't wait for a reminder from me!
- Ensure that your training is also up-to-date. Anyone who needs a DBS check should also re-do their training every three years. For most people that will mean the Foundation Level module and the Domestic Abuse course both of which can be accessed by logging on to the Church of England training portal and creating an account there. [Home | Safeguarding: Training Portal](#). Anyone on the sidespersons team but not otherwise involved with children or vulnerable adults needs to complete the Basic level module which again needs to be refreshed every three years.

Please continue to pray for the safety of our children, young people and vulnerable adults. Please also pray for those local services, beyond the church, who are trying to support children and young people who are at risk – many agencies continue to be overwhelmed by the number of referrals they are receiving.

Please also pray for victims of abuse that they may know God's healing and comfort in their lives. If you or someone you know have been a victim of abuse and feel unable to talk to anyone in the church team or at the diocese, the following page has contacts of other agencies and organisations that may be able to help.

[Finding Support and Useful Contacts - Diocese of Peterborough](#)

Martin Adamson – Benefice Safeguarding Officer

## 10. BCUK Intern and Pastoral Care Report 2025

I began as an BCUK Intern in September 2024 and the scheme is for 2 years. "The Intern Scheme is for individuals who have completed the BCUK Certificate Course, and who want to keep on growing. The scheme provides monthly training meetings, peer groups and one-to-one mentoring. The church provides a Local Leader to provide regular support and guidance. I am grateful to Kate Curnock for acting as my Local Leader. Interns are equipped to run courses or seminars, develop pastoral care structures, engage in interpersonal ministry and develop their own skills and experience in pastoral ministry, all in collaboration with their church leadership, with long-term ministry in mind ". (Follow <https://bcuk.org/about/what-is-biblical-counselling/> to find out more about biblical counselling).

### Real Change

Three Real Change courses have taken place during the year. 42 people have now participated in one of these courses. The course encourages us to look at our hearts and with God's help change from the inside out. It is

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real change because our heart and motivations will change, not simply behavioural change. It has been so encouraging to hear many testimonies of change from those who have attended. The biblical model of change used in the course also equips us to help one another in our daily struggles as we engage in conversation with and prayer for one another.

## **Seminar**

In January I organised a seminar on Understanding Anxiety, inviting Dr Steve Midgley to speak. The seminar was attended by almost 100 people. Many were thankful that, as a church, we were willing to acknowledge and talk about these kinds of struggles. I was grateful to the Pastoral Care Team members and Real Change participants who gave practical and prayer support to this event.

## **Pastoral Care Team**

Most pastoral care will be done through Home Groups and other small groups, but there will be times when someone needs more specific help and support for a specific period. In this situation, a member of the Pastoral Care Team may become involved. I have continued to act as Pastoral Care Team coordinator. We meet approximately termly for mutual support and prayer, consideration of pastoral needs that have arisen and teaching /training. During the year we have said goodbye to Barbara Bashford as she has moved away, we will miss her pastoral wisdom. After more than 30 years as a Lay Pastoral Minister, Kate Curnock decided not to renew her license in October 2025 but remains a member of the Pastoral Care Team. Other team members are Philip Burch, Graham Farrier and Claire Johnson. The Pastoral Care Team have continued to offer **Prayer Ministry** after the 10am service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday each month.

## **Team**

The visiting team mainly make regular visits to those who can no longer get to church for reasons of illness or infirmity, whether this is temporary or long-term. The team began visiting in October 2025. We meet each month to pray for those visited and plan future visits. There is also a teaching /training element to these meetings. We always share encouragements from the visits and it is wonderful that the visitors are as blessed by the visits as are the visited.

## **One-to-one conversations**

It is a privilege to meet with people to chat through a particular area of struggle. This might be a one-off conversation or over a number of sessions. I am available for one-to-one pastoral conversations and I can be contacted at [julie@stbots.church](mailto:julie@stbots.church)

Julie Lucas

## **11. Mission Task Group Report 2025**

The Mission Task Group exists to promote Mission activities in the church and to allocate giving to supported mission agencies. New members welcome.

Currently we support Pedro Santos through CMJ. And Through TEN, in Sarajevo we support Dragan Nedic the pastor of the **Kosevsko brdo** church and Slavko Hadzic, an evangelist. Several members visited Dragan and Sandra in October and this has given us a greater insight into life there. Slavko will visit the church in March 2026 and meet many of us.

Dangia Desta is a pastor at Bible college in Ethiopia and is sponsored through Crosslinks.

We also contribute to the work of the Christian institute and Rock UK and to a range of other ministries here and overseas including our local foodbank.

David and Angela McClatchey left for Japan with OM in March 2026.

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Beyond the mission group, many church members support other Mission agencies or sponsor children through Compassion UK. It is a privilege to be part of a church family who invest in the work of the Gospel in so many ways in the UK and around the world.

We are keen to build links with and pray for our partners regularly and keep the church informed about their work. Newsletters are available on the Mission Board

## **12. Women's Ministry Annual Report 2025**

The Women's Ministry Team plan to have at least four events annually to reach, teach and encourage women. Over the last year about 45 women attended the Summer Pudding Evening with Pippa Sands speaking. Over 60 attended a breakfast where Debbie Palmer shared her story of faith.

Around 100 came to the annual Advent craft evangelistic event. Joy Breckwoltd spoke about Jesus the light of the world and Lou Adamson demonstrated a Christmas craft for everyone to join in making. We are very grateful for all the men who give us practical support to set up this event in the church building. Most recently we have organised a morning with coffee and croissants entitled 'Help Me Pray'.

We are greatly encouraged by the numbers attending and the fact that many women bring friends who are not yet believers. Natter Nights continued on the third Tuesday of the month but numbers attending have dwindled and they were paused from November 2025.

We especially wish to thank Lindsay Benn and Rachel Samways who have chaired the women's ministry team since it's inception in 2016. After 10 years, they have both felt that the time is right to step down. We are so grateful for their faithful, spiritual leadership over so many years. We have also said thank you and goodbye to Angela McClatchey.

The WMT would value your prayers as we ask the Lord to direct us in the way forward for this work. We pray that the work of the WMT will enable women to grow in loving Jesus and in confidence in sharing the gospel with others.

Women's Ministry Team: Rosie, Lou, Helen, Kate, Claire, Julie

## **13. Men@St Bots Report 2025**

The Men's Ministry continues to go from strength to strength. The original vision to communicate the Gospel of Jesus, encourage a brotherhood culture, and develop friendships among the men continues to be met. The team has expanded and now Shane is involved with our forward planning, his youth and insight is so valuable. We are always on the look-out for new ideas.

Tea, coffee, are on tap during each evening, and various "ice-breaker" activities are available for those who wish to participate or just spectate. Always central to each gathering is a talk or personal testimony about Jesus.

The importance to keep the Jesus at the forefront of our meetings is paramount in our planning. During the past term we have had a film night (The Case For Christ), Melvyn giving his testimony combined with roasting chorizo, a quiz night, Graham explained the gift of music and how it impacts our emotions and aids our worship; to hear 30 men singing "How Great Thou Art" was something else!

As the group continues to grow, please pray for the Men@St Bots

## **14. Bellringers Report 2025**

We have continued to ring on Sundays before the 10am service and the 6.30pm service most of the time. We have also practiced on Mondays between 7.30 and 9.00 pm to improve our striking and also the range of methods we can ring. At the moment we are working on Stedman Doubles, Oxford Treble Bob Minor and Plain Bob Triples.

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Derek Sibson who was tower captain for many years died on 22 March and his thanksgiving service was held at St Botolph's on 22 April and attended by nearly 200 family and friends. The bells were rung before the service by the family, the local band and invited representatives from Derek's ringing over the years. After the service there was open ringing for any ringers who wished to ring.

On 7 April the local band rang an eighth peal in memory of Derek as follows: 640 Plain Bob Doubles: David W Scullion 1, Anne P Cook 2, Caroline M Mitchell (conductor) 3, Nick Watts 4, E Jane Sibson 5, Aubrey M Hutton 6. First eighth peal and longest length rung 1 and 6.

The following month we rang for the 80<sup>th</sup> celebrations of Victory in Europe Day. This was advertised in advance and we did have some members of the congregation come to listen to us. We rang Call Changes and the following ringers took part: Kate Curnock, Geoff Curnock, Karen L Sharman, Claire A Harris, Caroline M Mitchell (conductor), John G Mitchell and Bartholomew K M Gardner.

At the end of January this year we were sorry to lose David Scullion as he has moved with his family to Coventry. We will also miss Noah who often accompanied his father and enjoyed holding a small rope we have fixed to the wall during the ringing. On the last Sunday we arranged for Noah to chime the treble bell (standing on three boxes and with help) which made his day. We are hoping that David will continue his ringing career in Coventry and that Noah will have the opportunity to learn properly once he is tall and strong enough. This is usually around the age of 11 years.

Caroline Mitchell

## 15. Flower Group Report 2025

The Flower Group hopes everyone enjoys the flowers the team faithfully put into church throughout the year.

We would like to let you know about a motion that was passed at the last General Synod to encourage a more sustainable approach to church flowers.

- a) embrace the principles of the Sustainable Church Flowers movement which encourages the promoting the use of local, seasonal and fully biodegradable/compostable flowers and foliage.
- b) encourage cathedrals, churches and churchyards – wherever possible – to source flowers and foliage locally and seasonally for use in worship and church life.
- c) call on cathedrals, churches and churchyards to eliminate the use of floral foam (oasis) and all similar non-biodegradable and non-reusable products and techniques, while rediscovering traditional and environmentally friendly methods of presentation and display.

As a group, we have moved away from using oasis as far as possible and have reverted to the traditional chicken wire and alternative flower supports, and simple vase arrangements. Compostable equivalents of oasis are very expensive.

As regards to locally and seasonally sourced flowers, these are only available from daffodils and tulips etc in Spring through to chrysanthemums etc in the Autumn; these do come at a higher cost compared to supermarkets. The General Synod motion has neglected the issue of the income of some of flower growers in poorer countries that flower sales may be their primary source of income, so it would be prudent to check country of origin if possible. Additionally, a request to the church family, if anyone would like to offer some of their garden flowers throughout the year this would be greatly appreciated.

Together we can increase our care for the world that we have been blessed and which we are custodians.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you, to all the ladies ( and gentleman) who regularly decorate the church with floral arrangements for our enjoyment .

Chris Roughton, Flower Group