

# ST MARY WITH ST LEONARD, BROOMFIELD ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

The Vestry Meeting (for the election of Wardens) and The Annual Parochial Church Meeting are scheduled to take place on Sunday 12 April 2026.  
It is planned that the meetings will take place following the 9.30am service.

## CONTENTS:

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council  
Financial Review  
Vicar's Report  
Church Fabric Report  
Safeguarding Report  
Electoral Roll Report  
Deanery Synod Report  
Worship & Ministry Reports  
Supporting Worship Reports  
The Wider Church Reports

Whereas every effort has been made to include all the activities in the life of St. Mary's Church within this Annual Review, there may be some omissions. We apologise for these and they are in no way deliberate. However, we hope that you will agree that this review gives a flavour of the many diverse groups that are active within the parish and events which are made open to all to promote our worship of God and to proclaim the Good News in the wider community.

*Virginia Buckley*  
(Hon Secretary to the PCC)

## Contents

	<b>Page Number</b>
1. PCC report	3
2. Financial report	9
3. Independent Examiner's report	16
4. Vicar's report	17
5. Churchwardens' Fabric report	17
6. Safeguarding	18
7. Electoral Roll	18
8. Deanery Synod	18
9. Ordinand's Report	20
10. Canon John Reflects	20
11. Servers	21
12. The Pastoral Care and Visiting Team	22
13. Rutherford Project Outreach	22
14. People and Stone Talks	23
15. School Liaison	23
16. Eco Church	24
17. Wednesday Bible Study Group (1)	24
18. Wednesday Bible Study Group (2) 'Baffled by the Bible'	25
19. Little Lambs	25
20. The Light Group	25
21. The Puppets	26
22. Church Music	27
23. St. Mary's Bell Ringers	27
24. Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF)	28
25. Tuesday Churchyard Working Party	29
26. Film Club	30
27. Beetle Drive	31
28. St. Mary's Ladies Group	31
29. The Children's Society	32
30. Christian Aid	32
31. Flower Arrangers	32
32. The Round Tower Magazine	33

Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council  
for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

---

## 1. Administrative Information

St. Mary with St. Leonard is a parish church within the Chelmsford Deanery, one of the twenty-three deaneries which make up the Diocese of Chelmsford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, 10 Butlers Close, Chelmsford, CM1 7BE. St. Mary with St. Leonard was for some years part of the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership (NCMMP).

As from 23 May 2017 St. Mary's PCC became a charity in its own right under the title "The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield" with the charity number of 1173143.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2025 are:

<i>Incumbent:</i>	Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott	(Retired May 2025)
<i>Ordinand:</i>	Andrew Mussell	
<i>Permission to Officiate:</i>	Canon John Brown	
<i>Wardens:</i>	Susan Garwood	(Re-elected April 2025)
	Margaret Powell	(Re-elected April 2025)

*Representatives on the Deanery Synod:*

Ros Mercer	
Christine Bailey	
Jill Readings	(Lay Co-Chair of Deanery Synod)

*Other PCC members:*

Virginia Buckley	(Hon Secretary 2025)
Rachel Butterworth	(Eco Church – re-elected April 2025)
Sarah Clark	(Press Officer – re-elected April 2025)
Lis Hardy	(Parish Safeguarding Officer and NCMMP Representative)
Stuart Parkin	(Co-opted July 2025)
Karen Paxton	(Electoral Roll Officer)
Alun Powell	(Hon Treasurer – re-elected April 2025)
Trudy Stevens	(Minutes Secretary)
Jim Tibbott	(re-elected April 2025, resigned July 2025)
Deborah Williams	

## 2. Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and may stand for election to the PCC. As St. Mary with St. Leonard's Church has Charity status, all PCC members become Trustees.

The PCC generally meets bi-monthly and members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The PCC has a Standing Committee to progress decisions agreed by the PCC.

The PCC met six times during the year including a short meeting following the APCM on 16 March to elect officers. The Standing Committee met on five occasions.

### **3. Aims and purposes**

St. Mary with St. Leonard's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St. Mary's Church; St. Leonard's Hall attached to the Church; and Broomfield Churchyard.

### **4. Objectives and activities**

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship and contributes to discussions on how our services, groups and activities can involve and meet the needs of the diverse groups of people that live within our parish. We are always looking for new opportunities to worship God and build fellowship in this Church.

In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- worship and prayer, learning about the gospel, developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus;
- provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish; and
- missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the church of St. Mary's and its associated buildings and land.

During the year we continued to seek ways to continue offering worship, prayer, pastoral support and to maintain our church fellowship. The following reports demonstrate what was achieved.

### **5. Achievements and performance**

#### ***Worship and prayer***

We offer a range of services, both on Sundays and during the week. A calendar of all services and other events is available in the Round Tower parish magazine, on St. Mary's website and advertised on our Facebook page. We also have a presence on Instagram.

Our regular Sunday worship consists of a 9.30am service in church, which is usually a Parish Eucharist. We continue to give thanks for Canon John Brown who has led these services and to Bishop Tony Robinson who joined us and took the service on 2 February. Bishop Tony then moved on to pastures new following his last service on 20 July and officiating at a funeral and burial on 28 July.

On the third Sunday of the month there is a Family Service at 9.30am. This service is less formal and more interactive than the Parish Eucharist with the aim of trying to attract families across the community to join our church. Our thanks go to the Family Service team of Jill Readings, Jill Parkin, Andy Mussell and Christine Bailey who have shared the lead for this service.

On the Family Service Sunday communion is offered through an 8am BCP Holy Communion service in church, with thanks to Canon John for enabling us to keep this Service going. A 5.30pm sung Evening Prayer Service is offered on the First Sunday of the month and our thanks to Trudy Stevens who has stepped in when Canon John was unavailable.

Our normal weekday pattern of worship includes a 9am Morning Prayer in church from Monday to Friday. Our thanks to Jill Readings, Lis Hardy, Chris Bailey, Virginia Buckley and Margaret Deacon who have agreed a rota to take the lead on this service. There is also a weekly 9.30am Thursday morning Thanksgiving Eucharist led by Canon John. Once a month, a 10.30am Wednesday mid-week Eucharist is offered in church.

The Church building is open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 10.30am until 12.30pm for people to sit and prayer or just enjoy the quiet space. It is also an opportunity to explore the Project

Rutherford exhibition area. Our thanks go to the rota of volunteers who take their time to offer this opportunity to others.

We usually have two bible classes weekly, both on Wednesdays. The Wednesday Morning Bible Study Group is held at Ros Mercer's house and in the afternoon 'Baffled by the Bible' is held at Chris Bailey's home. Our Friends with Faith group, a bible study group catering for parents and carers of children of all ages, has not been held in the last year due to the vacancy. Reports on these groups are included later in the Review.

St Mary's offers Festival and other special services at various times through the year including Holy Week, Easter, Harvest Festival, at Christmas and Christingle. We take opportunities to share worship with other organisations, including the local Primary School, and partner with the uniformed organisations on Remembrance Sunday.

### ***Ecumenical relationships***

St. Mary's has a Covenant with Broomfield Methodist Church. Canon John arranged for a small group to meet with a similar group from the Methodist Church in early November to revisit the principle of the covenant.

### ***Mission and evangelism***

Our aim as a Christian Church in this community is to make Christ's love known to everyone. We enable this through teaching, worship, bible study and discipleship groups; through baptisms; through services and groups for parents with babies and young children; and through groups which give opportunities for fellowship for young and older people alike.

St. Mary's Ladies Group, the Film Club, and the Beetle Drive group are all held once a month. Our Churchyard Working Party meets every Tuesday morning. All the meetings are listed in the Round Tower parish magazine and on the church website. You will find reports from all these groups within this review.

Other organisations which used St. Leonard's Hall in 2025 were: Friends of Broomfield Hospital; the Chelmsford & District club of Soroptimists International; the Essex Organist Association, and Brumfelda, the local history group. The Wives in Fellowship group also meets once a year for lunch and a meeting in the Hall.

With respect to St Mary's work with children, families and young people, we have the Little Lambs group for parents/grandparents/carers of pre-school aged children which meets weekly in term-time on Thursday mornings in St. Leonard's Hall from 10am until 12pm. The Light Group, a group for children of school years 6-9, is held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5.30pm in St. Leonard's Hall. You will find reports from both these groups later in this review. There is a Family Service on the third Sunday of the month to attract families to church and Lego Church, 'Building church brick by brick', is run by Heidi and Amber Mussell in the Hall during the first Sunday Service of the month, as a way of engaging children and their families. At each Family Service there is a Fairtrade stall.

St. Mary's is involved with community group meetings organised by Donna Hance, the Events and Fundraising Manager at Broomfield Parish Council. This group consists of representatives from Ayletts Care Home, Madelayne Court Care Home, John Keene Memorial Homes, the Methodist Church, Broomfield Football Club, Broomfield Cricket Club, the British Legion, etc. The aim is to share dates of events and ideas and start to build relationships between the different groups so that they can work together as a community. Dates of events will be advertised in the Broomfield Times.

### ***Review of the year***

The PCC has had a busy year, keeping things going, both with worship and with social activities, in the absence of the Rev'd. Carolyn first

due to ill health and then her retirement at the end of April.

In 2025, there was one funeral, nine funeral and burials, two funeral and cremations, seventeen burials of ashes, two weddings, and eight baptisms.

### ***Worship:***

An army of volunteers gathered on Saturday 18 January to sort oranges and sweets for the Christingle Service held on Sunday 19 January. Collections from this service were donated to the Children's Society and subsequent collection from St Mary's Church Children's Society Box Holders totalled £545.01 with potentially another £81 in gift aid.

In March, 80 posies of flowers were organised by Margaret Pinkerton and her team of helpers, to hand out to all mothers during the Mothering Sunday Service on 30 March.

Monday Meditations in Lent were run in St Leonard's Hall at 11am for six weeks from 10 March to 14 April. The first session was led by Bishop Tony and the remaining by Canon John. Christian Aid lunches followed at 12pm with lovely home-made soups and cakes made by Lis, Ros and Trudy. The lunches were well attended and organised by Karen and Ros and served by Trudy. We were delighted to be able to send £500 to Christian Aid to support their Myanmar Earthquake appeal.

Easter Day 20 April was a Family Eucharist with the renewal of Baptismal Vows, and children making Easter Gardens followed by an Easter Egg Hunt in the churchyard.

May 18 saw the last service led by Reverend Carolyn Tibbott, following her retirement at the end of April. This service was extremely well attended and afterwards the congregation, including Jim, Carolyn's husband, who has always wholly supported her and has also worked hard for the Church, enjoyed a gathering in the Church Hall to wish her well and bid her farewell. Carolyn was thanked for her years of dedication.

A day of Prayer, organised by Trudy Stevens, was held on Wednesday 17 September from 9am until 9pm when the ancient service of Compline was sung. As the advert for a new vicar went out, a day was set aside to focus on our hopes and wishes regarding the future of St Mary's in prayer. Prayers were led in the church throughout the day, with an invitation for anyone to come and join in at any time. The hope was that prayers would be said not only in church but all over the village and wider. It was very moving to hear the tolling of a church bell, which heralded each hour and a different theme.

The Harvest Festival Service was held on Sunday 21 September, with members of the congregation invited to bring gifts of non-perishable items for distribution around the village or for the Foodbank. There were over eighty in the congregation including many families with young children. The service included many of the traditional harvest hymns and saw the much-awaited return of the Puppet Crew, whose performance was enjoyed by all, young and old. Also, each year, at Harvest Festival, the pupils of Broomfield Primary School collect Fair Trade tea and coffee to be donated equally between St Mary's Church and Farleigh Hospice. On 15 October, Miss Few, Deputy Headteacher, and two year six captains visited the church to drop off their donation.

A Service of Bereavement was held at 3pm on Sunday 2 November for all those who had been bereaved during the past year or in previous years. This was followed by light refreshments.

The Remembrance Sunday Service was held on 9 November with the British Legion to remember those who gave their lives for us in two world wars. This remembrance was acknowledged by a packed church, as both young and elderly paid tribute in silence, prayer and hymn. As always, this was an extremely poignant and moving service and thanks are given to Roger and Sue Cole for the magnificent manner in which the church was decorated, both internally and externally.

The Shoebox Family Service took place on Sunday 16 November. There was a marvellous response to Operation Christmas Child this year where 33 boxes were offered while many members of the congregation chose to donate online. Grateful thanks to Mrs Eileen Chapman for her fabulous contribution to the total.

Mondays in Advent, delving into the Revelation of St John took place in December, led by Canon John which was followed at 12pm with a Christian Aid soup and roll lunch.

Christmas Services commenced on Sunday 21 December with the Village Carol Service in Church at 6pm attended by 160 people and followed by refreshments in the hall. The Crib Service on Christmas Eve at 4pm was well attended by 226 people, young and old, who were treated to the nativity story and a performance by the puppets. Sixty-one people attended Midnight Holy Mass. Christmas Day with Holy Communion took place at 10.30am.

### ***Social and Community Events:***

People and Stone Talks throughout the year:

8 February	Broomfield Artists Thomas Huxley Jones and Gwynneth Holt by Jonathan Evens, Area Dean of Basildon
12 April	The Churchyard's Hidden Gems by Ros Mercer and Karen Paxton
17 May	Broomfield at War by Neil Wiffin and Cathy Pearson
19 July	Churchyard Stories by Karen Paxton and Malcolm Taylor
27 September	Our Church Bells by David Marcus and the Bell Ringers
8 November	The Pity of War, Broomfield's Great War Roll of Honour by Alun Powell

On 28 March, a quiz night was held in St Leonard's Hall run by David and Jill Parker of Fairtrade. The night was well supported with six teams of eight and our thanks go to Kathy Rouse and Michelle for organising the night. A total of £400 was raised through ticket sales, raffle and the heads and tails game. There were also Fairtrade goodies available to purchase.

The May Fayre was held on Saturday 10 May, which saw the church grounds beautifully decorated with lots of colourful bunting. A challenge had been put out to create enough bunting to go around St Mary's Church 8 times in recognition of VE day 80<sup>th</sup> celebrations. The May Fayre team of Rachel Butterworth, Sarah Clark and Anna Duke had made a great and very successful effort in getting the community involved and the advertising on social media proved excellent. The involvement of The King's Arms pub proved extremely positive and the table and chairs they provided were a welcome addition. A total of £2,234 was raised.

In September, grateful thanks were extended to all who participated in the MacMillan coffee morning which took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> at Trudy's house. They were blessed with dry weather which encouraged a sizeable number of people to attend and enjoy their coffee and cake. £698 was raised on the day.

The weekend of 13/14 September proved to be a busy time, with the Church Plant Sale, Ride and Stride, Parish Gift Day, Harvest Lunch and Heritage Open days. On Saturday morning the church courtyard was crowded with a wide variety of plants and produce for sale, raising an amazing amount of £555. Grateful thanks were extended to Carol Knott and her team, the bell ringers and others, for supplying and running the stalls. The Ride and Stride Event welcomed four stalwart participants which was three up on last year! They took the opportunity of looking around the church too. Saturday was also designated as our annual Gift Day in which all who value this ancient building are encouraged to show financial support for the ministry. A total of £3,144 was raised. On Sunday, a bring and share lunch at 12pm was enjoyed by many. Canon John kindly donated the main course of quality ham, cocktail sausages and cheese, together with apple pies for dessert, with members of the congregation providing the accompanying salads. The Heritage days attracted forty visitors on the Saturday and twenty-nine on the Sunday, with families from as far as Wickford, Grays and North Essex, as well as around Chelmsford. Thanks to Ros and Ian Mercer for their hard work in making this event so popular and successful.

The second quiz night of the year was held on Friday 3 October. This was an enjoyable evening with Gill presenting a wide variety of questions. The attendance of forty-one people on six tables was a mixture of people from the Church congregation and people from the local community. A generous £322 was raised for Church funds.

On Tuesday 14 October a group of twelve met in the Church Hall for a First Aid training course delivered by Graeme Brown of Edip Training Ltd. Six of the attendees were from the Churchyard Working Party and the remainder from other groups within our church. The group was shown the basics of life support, the recovery position, CPR, use of defibrillator, choking casualties, seizures, wounds and bleeds,

bandages and anaphylactic reactions. All participants received a certificate at the end of the day, which confirmed competence in Emergency First Aid at Work plus Anaphylaxis. Certificates are valid for three years.

On 24 October 2025, eighteen members of St, Mary's congregation, met at the Quaker Burial ground in Broomfield Road, Chelmsford. They were given a tour of the burial ground and insight into some of the Quaker traditions. Members were interested to find that some of the people buried there were relatives of people buried in St, Mary's burial ground. Thanks were given to the Mid Essex area treasurer for an interesting tour.

Saturday 29 November was the day for another successful Christmas Fayre, which was attended by many, some of whom were not recognised as usual attendees, despite the atrocious wet weather. A few new things including a choir of carol singers in the choir stalls, and the sale of hot chocolate and mulled wine, were appreciated. The round tower was once again transformed into Santa's Grotto and visited by many children. Grateful thanks are given again to Rachel Butterworth, Sarah Clark and Anna Duke for their hard work in organising this event, as well as the many other helpers, before and on the day. A total of £1,939 was raised.

A beautiful photograph of St Mary's Church at night formed the subject of our Church Christmas card this year, which all members of the congregation were encouraged to sign. Rather than distributing cards to everyone at church, a suitable message in the large card and a donation to toward the Gaza fund was recommended.

***Acknowledgements:***

The PCC would like to thank all its members and the wider church community for their support in the running of St Mary's following the retirement of Rev. Carolyn and the ensuing period of interregnum. We also give thanks to Canon John Brown for his continued support and ministry throughout the year and to Bishop Tony Robinson for his support during the first part of the 2025. We also give thanks to Rev. Julie Hardy and Rev. Simon Pearce for their support.

We thank our Churchwardens Susan Garwood and Margaret Powell for their hard work in keeping everything going in the absence of a vicar. We give particular thanks to Jill Readings for her leadership as Lay Chair for all PCC and standing committee meetings. We also thank the Family Service team for their support in organising the monthly family services, the Morning Prayer volunteers who have kept the weekday morning services running, and the Pastoral Support team who continue to provide comfort and support to those in need.

We are grateful to all of our wonderful volunteers who help to maintain our buildings and grounds, particularly the Churchyard Working Party who turn out every Tuesday and the Bell Ringers who ring for our Sunday services and other special events during the year.

There are many more people on rotas including sides people, bible readings, intercessions, refreshments who deserve our thanks as everyone helps to enable St Mary's to continue providing worship, fellowship and support to our community here in Broomfield. That's not forgetting all those who run various groups or activities, the reports of which can be found later in this report.

God bless you all.

***Virginia Buckley***  
***Hon Secretary to the PCC***

## Financial Report

### Summary

Overall, the church accounts were in deficit by £1,762.67 in 2025, a small surplus in the general (unrestricted) fund of £52.27 being more than offset by a deficit in restricted funds of £1,894.94. This was the first surplus in the general fund since 2020, following deficits of £19,078.94 in 2024, £7,491 in 2023, £5,081 in 2022 and £11,266 in 2021.

### Unrestricted funds

#### Income

Underlying general or unrestricted income rose to £110,303 compared with £89,804 in 2024, thanks to sharp increases in planned giving, fees and voluntary giving. **Planned giving** via the standing order and envelope schemes showed a strong improvement to £39,185, compared with £35,534 in 2024, although it still remains well below its peak of £43,975 in 2014. Loose collections declined slightly to £5,349 from £5,787 in 2024. **Voluntary giving** was boosted by a large donation at the beginning of the year which, with gift aid, amounted to £10,000 and a bequest of £9,083. **Fees for weddings, funerals etc** brought in £13,095 well ahead of the 2024 figure of £3,734. **Money raising events**, raised £6,196 on a par with the £6,115 in 2024.

#### Expenditure

The major expenditure was the **Parish Share** of £78,067 which I am happy to say we were able to pay in full.

**Church running expenses** totalled £32,128 in 2025 compared with £39,725 in 2024. Within this the provision of **music** accounted for £2,814 and **insurance** for £3,659. The **cost of utilities**, gas, electricity and water, rose slightly to £6,321 compared with £6,054 in 2024. Energy costs remain high and the church building and hall continue to be well used. I repeat my message of last year: *Nevertheless, with some thought I am sure we can reduce our bills. and I would ask all church and hall users to think about the use of energy in the church. Do I need to **fill** the kettle to make **one** cup of coffee? Do I need **all** the lights on when I'm only using **a part** of the building? Should I keep the doors **closed** when the heating is on? Please treat the church's energy bills as you would your own. As an Eco church these are questions we should be asking anyway but the high cost of our energy bills brings the problem closer to home.*

**General expenses** added up to £12,692 down from £15,885 in 2024. Spending on the **churchyard** amounted to £2,096 well down on the £10,319 spent in 2024 which included £7,800 spent on tree work. The cost of printing the Round Tower was £1,181 which was more than covered by sales and advertising fees totalling £1,394.

In total, expenditure out of the general fund amounted to £110,251, leaving a surplus of £52. This was a very pleasing result, but it must be remembered that income last year was boosted by a very large donation, a bequest and higher than usual fee income. These are sources of funds over which we have little or no control and if any or all of them had been absent last year we would we once again have posted a large deficit. The only sure way that we can avoid this is to increase our giving. To maintain our church costs over £2,000 a week. Regular giving provides less than a half of that! We are, of course, grateful to all our regular givers, donors and supporters of church events, but I would ask each and every member of our congregation to assess his/her financial support. If you are not already committed to the planned giving scheme, please do consider this as a means of ensuring our financial viability. We need more members of the congregation to commit to joining the planned giving scheme and it is also important that current members look at their giving on a regular basis and, if able to do so, increase their contribution.

## ***Restricted funds***

### **Spire Fund**

At the beginning of 2025, the spire fund held £20,278.89. Income to the fund during the year totalled £6,472.04: the final Heritage payment was £2,536.66, the talks in the People and Stones series totalled £2,086.12 and sales of the People and Stones booklets amounted to £1,849.26. There were payments to A E Simmonds Ltd, for the printing of further booklets, totalling £1,355 and a final payment to our architects of £1,293.48. That would have left nearly £25,000 in the Fund which would have been excessive. It was, therefore, split into two funds:

- (1) The Rutherford Fund will be used to cover future printing costs of booklets and any associated costs for the display area. At the end of 2025 there was £10,000 in this fund. Revenue from the People and Stones talks and from sales of booklets will provide future income.
- (2) The Fabric Fund will be used to finance building repairs and maintenance. Spending in 2025 on such repairs totalled £4,638.50 and the Fabric Fund was used to meet those costs taking some pressure off the General Fund. At end 2025 there was £9,463.95 in this fund.

### **Lychgate Fund**

At the beginning of 2025 the lychgate fund stood at £1,000. A donation of £191.55 was received. Final payments were made during the year to Bakers of Danbury (£570.07) and our architects, Roger Balmer (£621.48) a total of £1,191.55. The Lychgate Fund has now been closed.

### **Organ Fund**

There was a further small donation to the organ fund of £8.40. With the work on the organ now complete, the fund was closed and the surplus transferred to the general fund.

### **Other Funds**

There was no movement in the stained-glass window fund; the cremated remains area fund; and the sound system fund.

### ***Reserves Policy***

At the PCC meeting on 10 May 2021 the PCC agreed to the following Reserves Policy.

It is PCC policy to try to maintain unrestricted funds at a level sufficient to cover one year's unrestricted (general fund) expenditure. This should not only be sufficient to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow but also allow the Parish to meet emergencies, to offset any shocks to the parish's income such as the Covid pandemic and to maintain our Parish Share commitments.

It is customary for parishes to have a much lower target than this with the aim of, say, having sufficient reserves to cover just three months of general expenditure. There are several reasons, however, to have a much more conservative approach including:

- (1) the fact that St. Mary's general income over the last few years has relied heavily on bequests and one-off large donations. By their very nature, we cannot assume that these will be repeated every year and we therefore need to hold sufficient funds for those years when such generosity is not apparent.
- (2) The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that one off shocks to income can be extremely damaging. In 2020 general income (excluding bequests) amounted to £64,000 compared with nearly £90,000 in 2019, a drop of £26,000 equivalent to around three months expenditure.

At end 2025 unrestricted assets stood at £83,954, compared with an average level of expenditure over the past three years of over £100,000, meaning that our reserves policy was not met last year.

### ***Expenditure Approvals Policy***

The expenditure approvals policy (agreed at the PCC meeting on 10 May 2021) remains in place. Expenditure of up to £100 can be approved by the Vicar; expenditure of between £100 and £500 can be approved by the Vicar acting in conjunction with the two church wardens and/or the Treasurer; with expenditure above £500 needing to be approved by the PCC.

### ***Outlook***

It was good to report a surplus in the general fund for 2025 even if it was very small. I am aware, however, that this was in no small part due to income streams which are largely outside our control. In an ideal world treasurers like income streams which are stable and forecastable. Fees, donations and bequests are anything but. Our planned giving saw some improvement in 2025 but really needs to be higher. It is crucial that each and every one of us looks at our level of giving on an annual basis so that we do not slip back into deficit in 2026.

***Alun Powell***

***Honorary Treasurer***

# Parochial Church Council of St. Mary with St. Leonard, Broomfield

## Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 December 2025

**Table 1: Receipts and Payments Account**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
<b>Voluntary receipts</b>					
Planned giving		39,185.20		39,185.20	35,534.00
Collections at services		5,349.56		5,349.56	5,786.63
All other voluntary giving	4a	26,348.00	2,728.21	29,076.21	61,935.22
Gift Aid recovered		14,257.30		14,257.30	12,410.30
<b>Activities for generating funds</b>	4b	6,196.40	3,935.38	10,131.78	9,588.04
<b>Investment income</b>	4c	2,312.35		2,312.35	2,567.51
<b>Church activities</b>	4d	16,654.04		16,654.04	3,946.51
<b>Charitable income</b>			2,220.00	2,220.00	1,385.50
<b>Total receipts</b>		89,804.30	43,349.41	133,153.71	228,266.10
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
<b>Church activities</b>					
Diocesan parish contribution		78,067.44		78,067.44	68,120.87
Clergy and staffing costs					904.38
Church running expenses	4e	32,127.58	8,478.53	40,606.11	76,731.12
Charitable giving	4f		2,220.00	2,220.00	1,385.50
<b>Costs of generating funds</b>		55.56		55.56	133.22
<b>Total payments</b>		110,250.58	10,698.53	120,949.11	147,275.09
<b>Excess of receipts over payments</b>		52.27	-1,814.94	-1,762.67	-14,121.38
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January</b>		83,902.17	33,974.90	117,877.07	131,998.45
<b>Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December</b>		83,954.44	32,159.96	116,114.40	117,877.07

**Table 2: Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total 2024</b>	<b>Total 2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash funds</b>				
Bank current account	59,189.86		59,189.86	63,089.21
CCLA deposits	19,927.00	32,159.96	52,086.96	49,831.79
Other cash and deposits	4,837.58		4,837.58	4,956.07
	<b>83,954.44</b>	<b>32,159.96</b>	<b>116,114.40</b>	<b>117,877.07</b>
<b>Investment assets</b>				
Tithe Chancel Fund		11,055.79	11,055.79	11,196.58
J Gyne Foundation		1,975.65	1,975.65	2,057.92
		<b>13,031.44</b>	<b>13,031.44</b>	<b>13,254.50</b>
<b>Total monetary assets</b>	<b>83,954.44</b>	<b>45,191.40</b>	<b>129,145.84</b>	<b>131,131.57</b>

Notes:

- (1) The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the receipts and payments basis.
- (2) The income from the J Gyne Foundation is for ordinary church purposes. Income from the Tithe Chancel Fund is undistributed and is added to the capital sum.
- (3) The movements in restricted funds during the year were:

**Table 3: Restricted Funds**

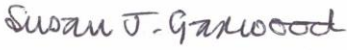
	Balance b/fwd	Receipts	Transfer	Payments	Balance c/fwd
Rutherford Fund	20,278.89	6,472.04	-14,102.45	2,648.48	10,000.00
Fabric Fund			14,102.45	4,638.50	9,463.95
Lychgate Fund	1,000.00	191.55		1,191.55	0.00
Stained Glass Window Fund	12,500.00				12,500.00
Cremated Remains Area Fund	24.74				24.74
Sound System Fund	58.37				58.37
Charity Fund	50.98	2,220.00		2,220.00	50.98
North Chelmsford MMP	61.92				61.92
	<b>33,974.90</b>	<b>8,883.59</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>10,698.53</b>	<b>32,159.96</b>

**Table 4: Further Analysis of Receipt and Payments Accounts**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>				
<b>a) All other voluntary giving</b>				
Donations general	17,265.02		17,265.02	17,219.69
Donations organ fund				8.40
Donations Project Rutherford				449.00
Donations Lychgate fund		191.55	191.55	
Grants (Project Rutherford)		2,536.66	2,536.66	37,258.13
Grants (Lychgate)				7,000.00
Legacies	9,082.98		9,082.98	
	<u>26,348.00</u>	<u>2,728.21</u>	<u>29,076.21</u>	<u>61,935.22</u>
<b>b) Activities for generating funds</b>				
Parish Magazine - advertising	180.00		180.00	825.00
May Fair	2,234.71		2,234.71	1,892.35
Christmas	1,939.56		1,939.56	1,596.12
Other	1,842.13	3,935.38	5,777.51	5,274.57
	<u>6,196.40</u>	<u>3,935.38</u>	<u>10,131.78</u>	<u>9,588.04</u>
<b>c) Investment income</b>				
Interest	2,312.35		2,312.35	2,567.31
	<u>2,312.35</u>		<u>2,312.35</u>	<u>2,567.31</u>
<b>d) Church activities</b>				
Fees for weddings, funerals etc	13,095.18		13,095.18	3,734.28
Parish Magazine - sales	1,213.86		1,213.86	886.53
Other	2,345.00		2,345.00	-674.30
	<u>16,654.04</u>		<u>16,654.04</u>	<u>3,946.51</u>
<b>Payments</b>				
<b>e) Church running expenses</b>				
Music	2,813.95		2,813.95	1,925.00
Cost of services (utilities)	6,321.40		6,321.40	6,053.59
Cost of services (insurance)	3,658.98		3,658.98	3,595.66
General expenses	10,177.19		10,177.19	9,232.33
Church building running expenses	2,515.11		2,515.11	6,652.97
Parish Magazine - printing costs	1,181.11		1,181.11	1,409.76
Church repairs & maintenance		4,638.50	4,638.50	
Spire		2,648.48	2,648.48	14,890.42
Lychgate		1,191.55	1,191.55	22,115.93
Churchyard	2,905.84		2,905.84	10,319.46
Other	2,554.00		2,554.00	535.99
	<u>32,127.58</u>	<u>8,478.53</u>	<u>40,606.11</u>	<u>76,731.11</u>
<b>f) Charitable giving</b>				
Children's Society		130.00	130.00	114.50
Christian Aid		790.00	790.00	940.00
Gaza		1,000.00	1,000.00	
RBL Poppy Appeal		300.00	300.00	331.00
		<u>2,220.00</u>	<u>2,220.00</u>	<u>1,385.50</u>

Approved by the PCC on 10 March 2026.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan J. Garwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Susan Garwood  
Churchwarden

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Margaret Powell  
Churchwarden

*Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of the Parochial Church Council of St. Mary  
with St. Leonard, Broomfield*

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 12 to 14.

**Respective Responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner**

The Church's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The church's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement.**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**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 s.130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts, which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act 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.

(Signed)



Roger Hardy

10 March 2026

# VICAR'S REPORT

Following the retirement of Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott in May 2025, the church has been in a period of interregnum.

## THE CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC REPORT

### ***Buildings:***

#### *Internal:*

A new altar frontal for the Lady Chapel was dedicated by Canon John Brown during the Ladies Group Lenten meeting. Many thanks to the Ladies Group for providing the funds for this project and to Ros Mercer and Sheila Hasler for turning the original idea into a lovely addition to our church.

Routine safety and maintenance checks have taken place through the year:

- the main boiler was serviced and repaired in May at a cost of £1,156.94.
- the fire extinguishers were serviced on 1 May at a cost of £175.68.
- the lightning conductor was serviced in May.
- portable appliance testing was carried out on 11 June at a cost of £130.
- the porch door lock needed attention by a locksmith. The top hinge is wearing and so the door is hanging at an angle putting pressure on the locking mechanism.
- there were problems with the door into the link corridor which needed to be rebuilt and re-hung.

#### *External:*

In January a pest control company was asked to remove a rat which had made his home under the Hall. This was done successfully and the access area has been blocked with wire mesh. The work to the lychgate was signed off by the architect in February. An unstable monument at the south-east corner of the church has been made safe by Bradford Memorials at a cost of £270. Nick Drake repaired guttering on the church and hall and has painted the windows and doors externally including the vestry door and windows. David Marcus is looking into the damaged tiles on the church roof and a drainage problem near the vestry door which may be causing the erosion of the base of the buttress on the north-east corner of the church.

### ***Grounds:***

The churchyard work party continues to do wonderful work in keeping the area under control. A huge thank you to them and their willingness to take on any challenge. We are deeply indebted to David Marcus for his leadership and his enthusiasm in this area and his contribution to the maintenance of the church building. The churchyard extension is maintained by outside contractors.

David Marcus met with the DAC Tree Officer on 4 June to view and assess the tree situation in the churchyard. A survey was carried out on the seven limes adjacent to the car park as recommended. The survey was done on 18 November when verbal advice was given to relieve loading on some of the branches and to remove dead wood. There appears to have been no significant change since the previous survey three years ago. We are still awaiting a written report, however, in spite of several talks with the company.

We had an added attraction to our wildlife in the churchyard during the year. A wasp nest appeared on the beautiful giant redwood tree. It was a very active colony which need cordoning off. We think a

badger might have solved our problem by completely removing the nest and it must have had a very good meal out of it.

Our Parochial Inspection was carried out by our Area Dean, Rev'd. Simon Pearce on 23 June.

*Margaret Powell & Susan Garwood*

## SAFEGUARDING

At St Mary's we are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults facing risks of any kind of abuse, pastorally caring for them, as well as others involved in or affected by the potential abuse.

The PCC has due regards for the guidance issued by the House of Bishops including both Policy and Practice Guidance provided by the National Safeguarding Team for the Church of England.

Details of who to contact are displayed in the church, the hall, the church website and in the Round Tower magazine.

Our aim at St Mary's is that the ministry team and the PCC:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Safely recruit volunteers and ensure they have the knowledge and confidence to recognise and respond appropriately to abuse or any concerns.
- Safeguarding is considered at every PCC meeting, and our Safeguarding Policy and Statement reviewed and adopted every year prior to the APCM.
- Role descriptions specify the Safeguarding requirements for each role.

Thank you to all our volunteers who spent time doing the various online safeguarding training courses, so that they can help keep people safe. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

*Lisbeth Hardy*  
*(Parish Safeguarding Officer)*

## ELECTORAL ROLL

Last year our numbers reached 110 by the time of our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2025. Our current Electoral Roll is 106, a loss of one due to moving away from Broomfield, and three sadly due to death. Despite being in an interregnum, we are still seeing new people coming to our services and we hopefully will see them settling with us and adding to our numbers.

*Karen Paxton*

## DEANERY SYNOD

Rev'd. Canon Tim Ball retired as Area Dean in January 2025, and Rev'd. Simon Pearce was appointed as the new Area Dean after a consultation with clergy and the Lay Chair. Simon has brought renewed vigour to the role and, as well as meeting regularly with chapter, the Lay Chair and Assistant Area Deans, he has instituted regular meetings for lay officers of the deanery, such as church wardens and lay ministers and preachers.

Rev'd. Sally Croft was appointed to join Rev'd. Tony Cant as Assistant Area Dean, replacing our own Rev'd. Carolyn Tibbott who had stepped down from this role.

Synod met in February, June, October and December, with an average of 42 attendees from all 31 parishes, and we aim to hold synod in as many churches of the deanery as we can.

Over the course of the year we have had presentations from Canon Michaela Southworth, CEO of the Chelmsford Diocese to discuss the finances of the diocese and how this fits with Parish Share; Bishop Guli, in response to a request from Synod members to explain the situation with regard to 'Communion by Extension', given the large number of clergy vacancies in the deanery; Canon Ivor Moody who spoke about mental health and wellbeing and Rev'd. Sharon Quilter, Racial Justice Officer, who helped us to explore questions of identity and otherness.

Deanery Synod Reps for 2025 were:

Jill Readings, the Lay Chair of the Synod

Ros Mercer

Chris Bailey

*Jill Readings*

# WORSHIP & MINISTRY

## ORDINAND'S REPORT

Many changes have occurred since the last report I wrote, and I find myself writing this one having concluded my time with you at St.Mary's. The year has been one that has seen many changes, both personally and as a whole; with Carolyn's retirement it became imperative that a permanent supervisor for my final year was confirmed. While Bishop Tony agreed to assume this role when he was with us, it was not a permanent solution. It is at this point that I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Canon John for his constant and reassuring presence. He has been one of many people that have shaped my ministry.

It was decided that Rev'd. Sally Croft would assume the role of my permanent supervisor and that I would attend Springfield in order that I could withdraw from active duty to complete the final year of study. It was shortly after confirmed that my curacy would also be served in the parish of Springfield. When I think back to my initial introduction to Broomfield in ministry, things have changed a great deal, changes which I have had to embrace with certainty and faith.

I am immensely proud of the opportunity that God has given me to grow and develop my ministry with you, it is important that you know how formational that time has been. I have been so honoured to share in some immensely exciting worship in the family service team along with times of deep sadness and prayerful contemplation. I was appointed as chaplain of the Royal British Legion by Bishop Tony until an incumbent begins at Broomfield and, of course, I will continue this role. The involvement of the community in our services has been very special and humbling to witness.

Study wise, I complete my final year in June when I will be licensed at the cathedral, I will then be ordained on the 13 September. As this date approaches, I would love to see some of you there. The near future is both exiting and daunting at the same time, but it is one that I greet with God's grace. As always, I am available to anyone who would like prayer or support in any way. Please just let me know. I will finish, as I did last year, with a verse that Carolyn gave to me as I began the process of discernment to ministry "Brother, Sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you, and pray that I might have the grace to let you be my servant too". Thank you all, I will keep you in my prayers.

Yours in Christ

*Andy Mussell*

## CANON JOHN REFLECTS

I retired what I now conclude was the first-time round from being Priest in Charge of, Margaretting, Fryerning, and Mountnessing at the end of October 1999 on account of what I was informed was a serious heart condition. A year or so later I obtained Permission to Officiate (PTO) since medication and regular hospital checks indicated that I was fit enough to take up spasmodic occasions of ministering in parishes in interregna or when incumbents needed holidays. This went on for many years particularly in the Bradwell Episcopal Area. But it got to the point in the Covid Pandemic when my PTO permission ran out, and somewhat reluctantly I didn't bother to renew it. I felt I was too old to continue! But then at the end of the Pandemic appeals came asking if I would assist in desperate situations. By this time the requirements of DBS checks and attendance at safeguarding training sessions were mandatory. I really couldn't face all this, but the appeals kept coming, so I gave in very reluctantly accepting the need to fulfil all righteousness!

Then Jean and I moved from Galleywood to Broomfield. The then Archdeacon of Chelmsford suggested I become an Honorary Assistant Priest at St Mary with St Leonard's, Broomfield, with the proviso that I still appreciate that if requests came in for me to offer ministry in other parishes I should feel free to accept, so I did, but I was to regard Broomfield as a base. Then was it as many as 18 months nearly 2 years ago, with Broomfield now curate-less and the vicar very sick, appeals from elsewhere had to be refused. I found myself resuming a large part of being a priest in charge again! Little had I or, I assume, the congregation expected such a requirement. With hindsight I am only grateful I had had 55 or so years of experience of ministry in many varied parochial, cathedral, and chaplaincy posts, to prepare me for what possibly to expect!

I have found sharing in ministry at Broomfield a very enriching experience for which I am exceedingly grateful to so many of you. I pray and trust that I have been able to sow seeds, nurture, and on occasions harvest, your growth in discipleship. As I had shared with some of you my plan had always been to leave you at the end of February, by which time I and I know many of you had hoped a new vicar would have been in post. Such was not to be, but I wished to honour my commitment to study, writing, and publishing, so with the agreement of the Bishop of Bradwell I shall resign from Broomfield on 1 March. Jean and I will continue living in Broomfield, but I shall not enter through the doors of the church. My prayers for you however will not cease as you prepare for a new chapter in the company of a new incumbent.

I pray God will richly bless and inspire you all in the days, months, years, which God grant will lie ahead of all of us.

*Canon John Brown*

## SERVERS

This year has been challenging at times and great thanks are extended to members of the team who have stepped-up to ensure all Eucharistic services have been covered.

We have been able to assist two more people to learn the role of the server, which has been so helpful. There are now seven people on the team. During this interregnum it has been a pleasure to serve Canon John Brown and also to welcome other clergy who have attended the church to conduct services.

Two servers attended an Essex Chapter of Servers service and meeting at Great Burstead Church in October. Belonging to the Chapter allows us to network and keep in touch with other servers across the Diocese.

Following the sad passing of Margaret Clarke in January 2026, we would like to acknowledge with sincere gratitude Margaret's loyal and devoted service over many years.

Some members of the team have now been licenced by the Bishop to take Holy Communion to people who are housebound and unable to attend church. If anyone feels that they would like to join the serving team, please do contact the Church Wardens and you would be very welcome.

*Chris Bailey, Sue Browning, Margaret Ginn, Lis Hardy, Kathy Rouse, Trudy Stevens, and Karen Travis.*

## THE PASTORAL CARE AND VISITING TEAM

The Pastoral team meet regularly to help identify those church members who are unable to join us in church physically, offering them visits. Canon John when requested has been sharing Holy Communion in their homes. A member of the team has also been accompanying Canon John when he visits residents at Ayletts Residential home and Broomfield Village with Holy Communion. Members of the Pastoral team have been trained by Canon John and been authorised, so in future they will be able to carry out this role. We are very grateful to Canon John for the support he has given us.

This year we have held for the first time Pastoral Afternoon Teas for those who are unable to get to services or live alone and these have been very well received. Please do let one of the team know if there is someone who you are aware of who would appreciate a visit.

We would like to acknowledge the unfailing service that Margaret Clarke gave to this team over many years and we will miss her devoted help greatly.

*Chris Bailey, Margaret Clarke, Kathy Rouse, Karen Paxton, Trudy Stevens, Karen Travis, Lis Hardy*

## RUTHERFORD PROJECT OUTREACH

Although the building works are now finished and Project Rutherford has officially ended, we continue to promote the life and works of Rosemary Rutherford with talks and tours. It is pleasing to note that the ripples are moving out to the wider community.

As part of the Chelmsford VE Day 80 event organised by Chelmsford for You on Monday 5 May, Ian and Ros Mercer, helped by Kathy Rouse on the day, created and manned a display about Rosemary Rutherford's War Art as part of the exhibition in the Shire Hall. Ros presented a talk on Rosemary Rutherford's War Art in the Cathedral later in the afternoon, which was well received and appreciated. The exhibition was also open on Thursday 8 May as part of the Civic Society's VE Day 80 event.

The Round Tower Society visited the church briefly as part of their tour of Essex churches on Saturday 7 June. On the same day, the Amateur Geological Society visited the church for the day to look at the monuments and the church walls, guided by Ian and Ros Mercer.

Cathy Pearson gave a talk on Rosemary Rutherford at Chelmsford Museum as part of the Essex Book Festival on 21 June. Our booklets were there for sale.

The Friends of Chelmsford Museum visited the church to see the exhibition, fresco and stained glass on Friday 4 July. They had tea, coffee and cake and made a generous donation to the church as well as purchasing some People & Stone booklets.

Ros Mercer presented a piece about Rosemary Rutherford on Community Radio on 25 August, arranged by Edith Millar of The Ideas Hub. The music chosen was Kate Bush: "This Woman's Work", which seemed appropriate.

The church was open for Heritage Open Day, and Friends of Essex Churches Ride & Stride event on 13/14 September. We had forty visitors on Saturday including folks who came to the Plant Sale and three as part of the Ride & Stride event. On Sunday we had twenty-nine visitors including several from across the county. Ian Mercer gave a Heritage Week talk 'History in Church Walls' at Patch on Monday 15 September. He used St Mary's as the main example and there were about twenty attendees.

Ros Mercer gave a talk about Rosemary Rutherford to Chignal WI on 6 November, together with a display of her artwork. Several booklets were sold and the fee was donated to the church.

Ros Mercer is compiling a book about Rosemary Rutherford's Stained Glass based on the catalogue by Anne Haward with additional sections on her life story and a case study of her window in St Faith's church, Gaywood, Kings Lynn, for which further research was done by their church historian. A publisher has been approached, and grant funding is being sought.

*Ros Mercer*

## PEOPLE & STONE TALKS

8 February: Broomfield Artists Huxley Jones & Gwynneth Holt by Jonathan Evens, Area Dean of Basildon. A booklet recording these two artists lives and works is in preparation by Kathy Rouse in the People & Stone booklet series.

12 April: Hidden Gems in the Churchyard by Ros Mercer and Karen Paxton. Ros presented an overview of the history of churchyards and Karen told the lives of a selection of those buried in our churchyard as part of her ongoing work in documenting the graves and researching the lives of those memorialised.

17 May: Broomfield at War by Cathy Pearson and Neil Wiffen. These two excellent speakers described the results of their extensive research into Broomfield during the Second World War. Their talk included family stories, giving a more personal insight and it was accompanied by a booklet in the People & Stone series.

19 July: Churchyard talk by Karen Paxton and Malcolm Taylor. Karen along with Lyndall Collins, recounted the lives of more of those buried in the churchyard and Malcolm Taylor presented the history of War Graves and chronicled those in our churchyard.

27 September: Our Church Bells by David Marcus and Bell Ringers. David presented a very comprehensive account of our church bells, their history and the history of church bell ringing. This was very ably illustrated by immaculately rendered ringing by our bellringers.

8 November: The Pity of War 2 by Alun Powell. Alun continued his poignant presentation on Broomfield's Great War Roll of Honour, contrasting men from different social classes.

Each of these talks were attended by forty or more people, raising both awareness of our church and Broomfield residents and funds for the church and ongoing outreach for Project Rutherford. We have a mailing list for future talks extending to people living far outside the parish.

*Ros Mercer*

## SCHOOL LIAISON

Liaison with local schools continued during 2025 with our Activities Team, which was formed during Project Rutherford to help to connect St Mary's Church with the wider community.

On Monday, June 16, we welcomed Broomfield Primary School year one pupils to St. Mary's Church to explore the Churchyard, looking at the different trees with the help of I-Spy Trees activity sheets. This was arranged to support a topic in the BPS curriculum for the summer term. This fun activity helped the pupils to learn more about trees and how to recognise them.

In the morning of the 15 October two year six pupils accompanied the Deputy Head to bring a generous donation of Fair-Trade tea and coffee. These were accepted by the team and Church Warden, Margaret Powell, and placed in front of the altar for congregations on the following Sunday to see.

On the last day of the Autumn term two Christmas services were held at St. Mary's Church for Years 3-4 and Years 5-6 of Broomfield Primary School. The children had prepared two separate programmes of singing, reading, prayers, solo and group instrumental performances. The theme chosen for 2025 was 'The World'. For the second service, approximately 100 parents of the year six children. For each service the team contributed the welcome, an interactive talk, and closing prayer. It was a joy to listen to and participate in.

In July, year seven pupils from Chelmer Valley High School visited St Mary's to see a place of Christian worship as part of their RE curriculum.

We look forward to continuing our contribution to the Community Outreach programme in 2026.

*Valerie Pattenden*

## ECO CHURCH

Eco Church is a project that has been set up by A Rocha UK a Christian Charity working for the protection and restoration of the natural world. The aim of this project is to equip Christians and churches in the UK to care for the Environment. At St Mary's this work has been ongoing since April 2021.

Eco Church focuses on five key areas: worship and teaching; management of church buildings; management of church land; community and global engagement; and lifestyle. We currently have the Bronze award status and have been working this year to gain our silver award which we hope we will achieve in 2026. Although we are currently Bronze status, overall, the individual breakdown of each category shows that we are already at Gold standard for worship and teaching; Silver standard for both the management of buildings and land; and bronze for both community and global engagement and lifestyle.

We have continued to work this year to promote better environmental action amongst our congregation. This is done through regular environmental worship and teachings; Eco Church sections of our church magazine and website; and incorporating our Eco Church values into other events that the church runs. We continue to be a Fairtrade Church with a Fairtrade stall at our services once a month and at our main fundraising events throughout the year. As part of our Eco church activity, we are also committed to praying regularly for a different environmental charity each month.

As we work towards our silver award, we are concentrating more on moving our environmental efforts beyond our congregation by also thinking about our wider community and global reach. These are areas which we are excited to develop more throughout 2026.

*Rachel Butterworth*

## WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our weekly Bible Study group has continued to meet at 2a Hearsall Avenue, although it is sad to say that our numbers have decreased recently, and each month we attend the Midweek Communion service. We have continued to study St John's Gospel, which we have found challenging at times – St John was challenging people in his own times too we suspect. We have also used books by Paula Gooder who recounts biblical events through the eyes of women – Women of Holy Week and Women of the Nativity. Her skilfully retold stories draw on her extensive knowledge of the Bible and provide a perspective to which we can easily relate. We commence our sessions with refreshments and prayers for those whose

suffering is known to us, not least our own members. We remember especially and pray for the soul of Margaret Clarke, a longstanding and steadfast member of our group.

*Ros Mercer*

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY GROUP (2) – 'BAFFLED BY THE BIBLE'

We continue to meet at my home, have a coffee and begin and end with prayer in which we pray for our Parish, our friends and those we know who are in need. We support each other to share and explore the gift of God's word to us in scripture and to consider its relevance in our daily lives.

We have used various bible study books to guide us but are comfortable as a group to express our own ideas and interpretations. This year we have explored scripture relating to, 'Journeying with Jesus', 'Gifts of The Holy Spirit', 'The Book of Micah'. As it was the 700th anniversary of 'The Nicene Creed' we followed a study guide highlighting that statement of faith. During Advent we followed a book by Paula Gooder 'Women of the Nativity'.

All are welcome to join us as we continue to explore together the richness of God's Word to us.

*Christine Bailey*

## LITTLE LAMBS

For the last year, I have continued to lead this group with much valued help from Rosie and Karen. Rosie does a great job advertising our group on social media platforms, and Karen has kept the children and parents entertained with her musical interludes; a highlight being the children accompanying Karen on the piano with the hand bells and singing Jingle Bells! We have also been joined by Wendy who has been helping in the kitchen to provide hot drinks for the parents/carers and is proving to be a valuable member of the team. Both Wendy and Karen have been delighting parents, carers and children alike with their delicious home baking!

We started the year with our core group of regulars, with an average of 12 children and 10 adults per week for the first term. We pride ourselves on always being there, whatever the weather and however many attendees we have each week. This can vary from as low as 8 children to the record for the year being 22 children and 18 adults! We have a few groups of twins and two-child families, which does boost our numbers when they all attend at the same time!

For me personally, I have been thrilled to welcome my daughter Sophie, as a new mum to the group, and my gorgeous granddaughter Lilah. We all love seeing the babies and watching their development from lying, sitting, crawling, toddling and eventually coming to the hatch to ask of a biscuit. It is not long then before they move on to their next challenge of pre-school.

*Virginia Buckley*

## THE LIGHT GROUP

The light group has continued to thrive this year. Although we only have five members, all aged 14-16, they are enthusiastic attendees and are starting to find their feet with their own faith. They are also a great help at family services, and we are always happy to see them in church, however long it is since we last saw them – we know that life is busy!

The highlight of the year was our residential trip to Fellowship Afloat in Tollesbury where we joined with other youth from churches in the Chelmsford area for a weekend of sailing, activities, food and fellowship. Bishop Adam joined us for the evening on Saturday and talked about his own faith. We are looking forward to doing this again in June 2026 and in January 2026 will be going ten pin bowling with more young people from churches across the town.

Since September, we have been following a teen discipleship course to explore what it means to be a Christian in the world today.

Many thanks to Joan Vine and Steve Readings for their support at our meetings and to the mums who cook the pizza.

*Jill Readings*

## THE PUPPETS

Having been absent in church since 2022 the puppets returned for the Harvest Festival Service on 21 September. We returned with three new puppeteers. The group now consists of eight puppeteers ranging in ages from 14 to 87 years! Puppets aim to perform at three to four family services a year, including the Crib Service on Christmas Eve.

*Debbie Williams*

# SUPPORTING WORSHIP

## CHURCH MUSIC

2025 has again had its challenges for us all, and I am very grateful to our wonderful choir and to Jane for being a constant throughout this interregnum. We have tried very hard to keep services the same as they always have been.

However, we very much welcomed the opportunity to learn new canticles and psalms upon the introduction of Morning Worship. We feel that this has brought a refreshing change to our Sunday mornings, and I know that many of you, the congregation, enjoy this service.

Heartfelt thanks to you, for regularly taking the time to thank us for the music during the service. I mentioned in my report last year that the hymns and anthems we sing during communion are chosen because they link with the readings of the day or to the specific Sunday within the Christian year. Hence, the continuity throughout each service is maintained.

As I plan the hymns about two months in advance, I sometimes forget just how well-linked they are! Sometimes I do get it wrong though! On these occasions at a Friday choir practice, I realise that all hymns are a bit slow or not known to many so we quickly scabble around for alternatives between us.

The choir continues to meet every week and we have such lovely, fun rehearsals which contain lots of laughter. The Christmas Carol Service was a highlight again in December. We boosted our numbers with some of my son, Jonathan's teenage choir, and the Rutter anthem we had worked on sounded wonderful. Again, at this service, it was a joy to welcome readers from different organisations within Broomfield. The number of people attending was fantastic (over 170) and at the crib service we had 206 people. This promises well for our future and something that our new incumbent will be able to develop.

*Jill Parkin*

## ST. MARY'S BELL RINGERS

Another year has elapsed with the bells of St Mary's continuing to ring out. This past year has seen another two ringers commence learning with us bolstering our numbers. We currently have a new recruit learning to ring for their Duke of Edinburgh award as well.

Several of us attended an outing organised by the local ringing association ringing at different towers around Great Dunmow which was fun. We also had our own local outing to Rayne and Black Notley where one of our ringers is based. These activities allow us to experience ringing on bells which handle different to our own.

We also helped out with a talk given about bells and bell ringing, punctuating the talk with examples of ringing. This was very well received and gave folk an insight into our world. We also rang for the Day of Prayer, ringing the Treble bell on the hour every hour throughout the day.

Members of our local band also support other towers, ringing regularly at Boreham and Great Waltham. We are a community that supports each other and if you are interested in being a part of this and learning to ring, please contact Chris Marcus the Tower Captain for more information.

*Chris Marcus*

## BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP (BRF)

These booklets, which are published three times a year, are enjoyed by several of our churchgoers. They offer daily texts from the Bible followed by comment from several well-known professional Christian authors. The cost is around £18 for the years' subscription.

The most popular booklet is New Daylight, which also comes in a larger print form. Other publications are Guidelines, which gives a more in-depth Bible study, and Upper Room, which suggests a bible reading, followed by meditations which are written by readers themselves. Within the booklets are suggestions for other publications issued by BRF.

For further information there are past issues situated on the bier where you will also find information regarding the work of BRF. They can also be reached online at [brf.org.uk](http://brf.org.uk).

*Margaret Ginn*

# THE WIDER CHURCH

## TUESDAY CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We meet every Tuesday morning, usually from 9.00am to about 12.30-1pm. to look after the Churchyard and the car park. With a total area of around 4.5 acres there is much to do.

There are eighteen of us and our tasks include cutting the grass, trimming the hedges and shrubs, clearing leaves, tidying the graves and the cremated remains areas, attending to the flower beds, sweeping the paths around the Church and clearing the surface water channels and drains. We also carry out routine maintenance of the trees. Two new members, Joan Vine and Stuart Parkin, were welcomed to our team this year.

A risk analysis was undertaken during the year. There are many risks of injury in the Churchyard due to, for example, uneven ground and memorials and through the use of equipment and tools. These have been identified along with measures to mitigate the risks both to the Working Party and visitors to the Churchyard.

A First Aid training course was arranged and held on 14 October in St Leonard's Hall. Twelve people from various groups within the Church participated in the day long course, six of whom were from the Working Party. At any time, we should have at least one First Aider within the Churchyard during our Tuesday morning sessions.

The work on the graves includes weeding and tidying and, as necessary, levelling and filling where they have sunk. We also remove edging and chippings where possible and appropriate. These make it difficult to mow between the graves and risk damage to the mowers. The security of memorials is regularly checked and this year we have had to lay down a headstone that had become loose on its base and have employed masons to repair a large tomb memorial which was in danger of collapse. All of the work on the graves is sensitively carried out.

In December 2025 the Church car park hedge was cut by a contractor using a competition flail cutter to a level just above the post and rail fence. This looks very sparse after the cut but will regenerate and be at a more manageable height for future maintenance.

We maintain the hedge planted four years ago around the Churchyard extension meadow area. The hedge saplings have been mulched with collected leaves in the autumn and chippings from the felled trees and this has helped them to grow and flourish. Several saplings have been selected to grow into hedgerow trees whilst the remainder will be kept at an appropriate height. In spite of the very dry summers in their early days the majority of the hedge saplings appear to have survived and those that suffered have been replaced where possible.

The grass of the extension area on both sides of the path is managed by contractors and therefore is not within the Working Party's remit although we do cut alongside the hedge as mentioned above.

A survey of the limes along the car park boundary was carried out in November 2025 by a professional arboriculturist. This followed a similar survey in 2022 and the subsequent advice that we should have the trees resurveyed in three years to check that there had been no deterioration. Thankfully none was discovered although some minor works have been identified. Those works along with the removal of two diseased Atlas Cedar trees on the western boundary and pruning of the Magnolia by the Church porch remain to be carried out.

We continue to try and look after the Churchyard in a manner so that there is a balance between the need to make it attractive to local people and visitors whilst also encouraging wildflowers, insects, birds and bats by leaving areas of grass uncut and log piles. Areas of our Churchyard have been a refuge for plants and animals for generations. We have a badger, or perhaps badgers, which follows a regular trail through

the Churchyard, deer have been sighted and too many grey squirrels! Unwelcome visitors last year was a swarm of hornets that set up a nest in the bark of the Wellingtonia. It has left a large hole in the bark and we hope they will not return next year.

The PCC have given us authority to ensure that the Churchyard is maintained in accordance with the rules and we remove items from graves that are deemed in contravention of those rules. This includes grave surrounds, plastic and artificial flowers, photographs, cards, balloons, wind-chimes, soft toys, ornaments, candles and personal belongings or memorabilia etc. We also remove any dead flowers and shrubs together with empty vases, particularly glass, which may break if blown over.

Expenses are kept to a minimum as much as possible and apart from the trees our major expense is usually petrol for the mowers and strimmers, together with parts for these. It is estimated that around 1500 man-hours of work go into the maintenance of the Churchyard and car park every year. This is a significant voluntary commitment by the members of the Working Party for the benefit of our Church.

Our very welcome practice of a refreshment break during the morning with sausage rolls has continued. There is a rota and each member has the important responsibility to buy the sausage rolls and milk when it is their turn. We are very grateful to Diane and Valerie who warm the sausage rolls and make the drinks every Tuesday. Also, we enjoy group lunches from time to time at a local hostelry.

An important part of our role is a presence in the Churchyard on Tuesday mornings when we are available to talk to visitors. We have many regulars with whom we enjoy a chat.

We are a very sociable group and anybody who enjoys a chat would be very welcome to call in and see us on a Tuesday morning anytime between 9.00 and 12.30. If you time your visit to coincide with our break between 10.30 and 11.00 you would even be offered a sausage roll, coffee or tea. Maybe you will enjoy our company so much you might want to join us!

I close by giving my grateful thanks to all our volunteers who turn out, sometimes in inclement weather, to keep our Churchyard looking splendid. Many of our visitors comment on its state and this is a testament to the hard work of our volunteers, most of whom are from the wider local community.

*David Marcus*

## FILM AND LUNCH CLUB

Year 2025 was very well attended. We enjoyed a great variety of films throughout the year, and I want to thank our regulars for their continued support, their monthly attendance, and their commitment to the group.

We watched some cracking films, including *Waking Ned* and *Groundhog Day* (which we watched in preparation for Lent - very fitting!). At Easter we enjoyed *Peter Rabbit*, which had everyone laughing, along with plenty of chocolate treats. Moving into summer, we watched *What We Did on Our Holiday*, a cheerful, 'happy-go-lucky' film full of summer vibes. Later in the year, we watched *Out of Africa* in honour of the late Robert Redford. Many other films were enjoyed throughout the year, accompanied by seasonal treats and plenty of chatter. We finished the year at Christmas with the classic *It's a Wonderful Life*, enjoyed with mince pies and Christmas cake as we reflected on the year gone by.

Over the year, we donated a **Film Club Hamper** for both the Church May Fayre in the spring and the Church Christmas Fayre in November. These hampers were made up of generous donations from our regulars. We plan to continue this every year, as the hampers are very popular on the raffle table. Each church group donates a hamper, creating amazing prizes and helping raise funds for the church.

The Film Club meets on the second Monday of each month at 12.30pm, apart from school holidays. Members bring their own lunch, and we provide tea or coffee, along with a few treats that I like to throw in for good measure! We also have seasonal treats for Easter, summer, and Christmas.

Some of the films lined up for 2026 include *Fisherman's Friends 2*, following on from the first film which was brilliant, and everyone loved it! We will also be watching another Robert Redford film, along with many comedies, as these always go down a treat. We do love a laugh so watch this space!

We welcomed a couple of new members last year who seem to enjoy the club and have settled in very well. We are one big family at Film Club, and we always miss those who can't attend due to illness or other reasons. Sadly, we lost David, one of our long-standing regulars who attended with his wife Sandra. They have both been a big part of our church community for many years. David will be greatly missed. Sandra will be in safe hands with us when she feels ready to return.

New members are always welcome, and we encourage ideas for films and themes from everyone in the group, it's very much a team effort. Details of the planned films can be found in the monthly parish magazine, *The Round Tower*.

To summarise 2025, I can proudly say it has been a pleasure hosting the Film Club for the third-year running. It is wonderful to see everyone come along to enjoy, laugh, cry, and immerse themselves in the films. It's a lovely, relaxed environment, and everyone feels at ease because of how friendly we all are. We really are a lovely bunch. Here's to the Film and Lunch Club thriving for many years to come!

*Sarah Clark Film Club Host*

## BEETLE DRIVE

We are still here thanks to a very loyal and small band of supporters. Our attendance number ranges from 12 down to 7 with any number in between. There are ten Beetle Drives through the year with August and December excluded. We still meet at 2 pm in St Leonard's Hall on the third Thursday in the month. We play Beetle with prizes for the highest and lowest scores and end with refreshments and a chat. All very pleasant and enjoyable. We will be delighted to welcome new players. Please think of giving it a go.

*Margaret Powell*

## ST. MARY'S LADIES GROUP

The Ladies Group has had another very successful year with a current membership of 31 ladies.

The topics in our monthly meetings have been wide ranging with speakers from local, national, and international charities. In addition, other afternoons have been member-led and have included social events such as a Beetle Drive, a Harvest Lunch, a Quiz and our usual Christmas Celebration.

We have donated £490 this year to our chosen charities which include:

- The Friends of Broomfield Hospital
- Namuncha Peace School in Kenya
- Guide Dogs
- The Ideas Hub, Chelmsford
- St Mary's Church

The long-awaited Lady Chapel Altar front funded by Ladies Group was installed and blessed by Canon John. Our thanks go to Ros Mercer and Sheila Hasler for this stunningly beautiful addition to our Church.

There was an amazing response by members to our Christmas Appeal which provided 2779 individual first aid and toiletry items for Ukrainian families via the Hope and Aid Direct charity.

Our meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month in St. Leonards Hall at 2pm. They are also advertised in the Round Tower and on the church website. Any ladies who would like to join us will receive a very warm welcome.

*Sue Cole*

## THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

16 members of St Mary's congregation have a Children's Society box where they are able to make financial contributions to the Charity throughout the year. The boxes were brought to church to be blessed at St Mary's annual Christingle Service. A total of £476 was raised by our box holders with potentially another £70 in Gift Aid. The collection at the Christingle Service also raises funds for the Society.

The Children's Society believes that every child deserves a good childhood, to grow up safe, happy and hopeful. But over the last decade children's wellbeing has been suffering, and the challenges of recent years have made life more difficult than ever before for young people and their families.

I would like to thank all those who continue to support the Children's Society. The kindness and compassion shown by box holders makes it possible for young people and their families to access help as soon as they are struggling. The charity protects young people from abuse, exploitation and harm, and gives them the resources they need to thrive and enjoy the healthy and happy childhood they deserve.

*Sue Cole*

## CHRISTIAN AID

Our support for this important Christian charity continues to be our main overseas focus. The soup lunches which followed our Lent course led by Canon John proved very successful, and we were delighted to have been able to send £500 to Christian Aid to support their Myanmar Earthquake appeal. Thank you to all who participated and contributed.

Following the Christian Aid Week donations, we were able to send in £177.70.

**Christian Aid Week in 2026 will be 10 to 16 May 2026** focusing on community-led projects across the world. Do visit their website to learn more about their initiatives. In promoting self-sufficiency rather than dependency, this is a worthwhile charity that deserves our backing, both financially and in our prayers. Thank you for your continuing support.

*Trudy Stevens*

## FLOWER ARRANGERS

2025 has been a relatively quiet year for us. 80 posies were made for distribution on Mothering Sunday. The team of ten decorated the church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Arrangements were done for two weddings. Sue and Roger Cole did a magnificent display for Remembrance in November. Weekly sanctuary flowers were in place except during Lent and Advent, when an Advent ring of foliage was provided. My ongoing thanks to the willing team for their lovely displays and support.

*Margaret Pinkerton*

# THE ROUND TOWER MAGAZINE

The strength of our Round Tower continues to be the number of people from our congregation who regularly write for it. There is always something interesting, entertaining and informative in it and that is entirely due to our contributors. I try to keep it balanced with religious items, historical items, jokes, puzzles and general information about what is happening in our lovely church. And it remains a useful way of getting information out to the wider community.

Many thanks to everybody who contributes by writing articles, to our editorial panel and to our dedicated band of distributors who deliver between 140 and 150 copies per month. Single copies are also available at the back of the church. Last year we put up our price to 60p per issue, £7 for a year's subscription which I believe is still excellent value for a 44-page magazine. The magazine just about pays for itself partly thanks to our advertisement section. A number of advertisers, however, have recently dropped out and we could do with a few replacements! If you are a local business looking for custom in the Broomfield area, please get in touch. Our fee is just £39 a year for a quarter page, £60 for a half page and £120 for a full page. You will not need to generate much extra business to cover the outlay.

*Alun Powell*