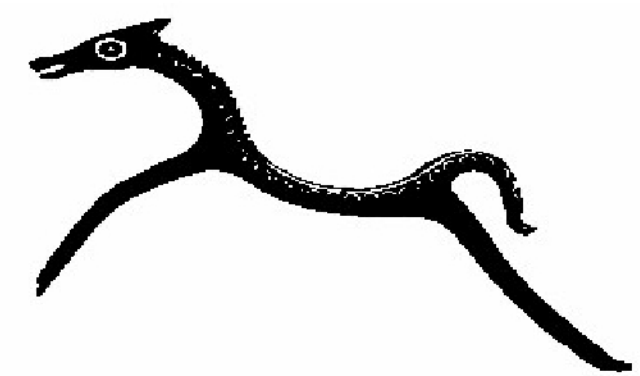


The Parish of St Mary the Virgin  
Silchester

(Part of the United Benefice of Tadley with Pamber Heath and  
Silchester, in the Diocese of Winchester)

ANNUAL REPORT for 2024



Develop in Faith  
Serve with Love

Presented at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

## **Objectives and activities**

Silchester PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector and Resident Priest in the promotion within the ecclesiastical parish of the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelical, social and ecumenical. The PCC also has maintenance responsibilities for St. Mary the Virgin Church and the Parish Rooms.

## **Contents of this Annual Report:**

### **Secretary's Report for 2024:**

Electoral Roll

Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

### **Vicar's Report**

### **Rector's Annual Report for 2024 for the Benefice**

### **Churchwarden's Report**

Fabric of the Parish Church

Parish Rooms

Churchyard

Burial spaces

Goods and Ornaments

Management

### **Safeguarding Report**

### **Basingstoke Deanery Synod Report**

### **Treasurer's Report and Financial Data**

### **Independent Examiner's Report**

### **Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

## Secretary's Report for 2024

**Electoral Roll:** The Roll for 2024 contained 90 names, 50 of these being for people residing within the Silchester Parish.

### **Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council:**

There were five full meetings of the PCC during 2024. There were also four meetings of the Standing Committee. The Finance and Stewardship Committee remained in abeyance, with matters of finance being dealt with by the Standing Committee.

The Missions & Charities Group was active: the Group met twice in the first half of the year, but health issues prevented further meetings.

In approximately chronological order, the main topics considered by the PCC were:

- 1. Safeguarding:** This was reported on as an agenda item during each meeting of the PCC and the Standing Committee, and a report for the Annual Parochial Council Meeting features as a stand-alone section later in this Annual Report. Happily, there were no issues of concern raised or reported during the year, although an ever-increasing effort had to be devoted to maintaining systems and training relating to safeguarding. DBS validity and safeguarding training status were monitored throughout the year, with PCC members and others being asked to renew checks and/or training as appropriate. Documents were introduced, reviewed, updated, approved, etc, as indicated by diocesan requirements. The overall status of the parish's safeguarding provisions was monitored with the assistance of the "Parish Safeguarding Dashboard", a tool recommended by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to enable themselves and the parish to monitor safeguarding status. A significant change during the year was to introduce a requirement for "safeguarding references" for every member of the PCC, and a good deal of thought was given to the nature of information that should be sought and the manner in which this information should be collected and managed.
- 2. The Worship Group:** This Group consists of clergy, lay ministers and the Churchwarden. It reports back to the PCC. It meets periodically to plan services for the coming quarter. In the latter part of 2024 the Group began to plan a questionnaire to be used to seek facts and views on service styles and attendance from everyone resident in Silchester and/or connected with St Mary the Virgin church. Copies of the questionnaire will be made available early in 2025. (See also "Patterns of Worship" following later in this section.) PCC members were pleased to note that service attendances had recovered to pre-Covid levels.
- 3. Prioritising Ministry with Young People:** Recognising that this initiative is essential for the future of our church, the PCC took it upon itself to address the question: "What does it offer for young people?" for every planned activity.
- 4. Finance:** This subject is covered in detail later in this report. However, interim reports from the Treasurer to the PCC kept members informed of highlights as the year progressed. Key points included:
  - The annual Fête, although impacted substantially by the weather, nevertheless achieved a profit.
  - The parish was able to pay in full its share of the Common Mission Fund.

5. **Fabric (including Parish Rooms):** At the end of 2023 both the Church and the Parish Rooms required improvements to their electrical systems. The PCC approved the necessary expenditure, and both systems are now fully certificated.
6. **Magazine:** Printing, collation and distribution were completed successfully every month, with just enough new recruits to the team being found when necessary.
7. **The Annual Parochial Council Meeting (APCM):** Members of the PCC spent time, as usual, on assembling the Annual Report for the previous year (2023), and completing other preparations in time for the APCM to take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April.

The APCM, as every year, saw the election and re-election of a churchwarden and PCC members. As alluded to in item 1 above, this year (for the first time) no candidate could be confirmed until receipt of two satisfactory safeguarding references. This requirement was also applied on this occasion to PCC members who were mid-term. It may be noted that in future references will be required for PCC members (or Deanery Synod Representatives) only on the occasion of their first-time election.

Mrs Hughes was re-elected as Churchwarden, but no candidate was proposed to fill the vacancy left by Mr Eldridge's decision to stand down. From April, therefore, the parish was served by only a single churchwarden.

At the PCC meeting following the APCM, members elected officers from amongst their number, including: Chairman; Vice-Chairman; Treasurer; Secretary; members of the Standing Committee; Parish Safeguarding Officer; Electoral Roll Officer; Data Protection Officer – all to serve until the following APCM.

8. **Creation Care:** Prompted and led by Revd West, the PCC gave its support to the "Greening Silchester" initiative, and then applied for and gained an A Rocha Eco-Church bronze award.
9. **The Village Fête:** The weather in the days leading up to the Fête were so wet that it became impossible to use the full extent of the playing field as usual. Instead, a Plan 'B' was developed at short notice that compacted almost all planned activities on to the land (and Hall carpark) immediately adjacent to the central road intersection. This worked surprisingly well, a great credit to those involved, and numbers attending the event held up well, although overall fundraising was reduced.  
The PCC had wondered, in advance, how to ensure safeguarding arrangements for the day would be adequate. In the end it proved not to be possible to provide 'umbrella' cover by seeking DBS clearance and suitable safeguarding training for the leader of the Fête Committee, so steps were taken to verify that the organisers of individual Fête activities did themselves have adequate arrangements.
10. **Foundation Governors for Silchester C of E Primary School:** As in most years, it was necessary for the PCC to identify and to offer candidates for the position of Foundation Governor for Silchester Primary School. Two vacancies occurred during the year, the first of which was filled successfully, but no candidate for the second position had been identified by the end of the year.
11. **CTAT Youth Pastor in Tadley (with Silchester):** The PCC was briefed on the work and ambitions of the Youth Pastor: the PCC expressed support for the work being done.
12. **Missions & Charities Group:** The future of this Group and its activities was affected by departure of a key member and by the absence through illness of others. Nevertheless

members of the Group successfully managed a number of events to raise money for the charities it proposed to the PCC for donations.

- 13. Magazine:** Mrs Speight gave regular reports regarding the team managing the production and distribution of the Parish Magazine. Monthly production is in the region of 500 copies, reaching most homes in Silchester.
- 14. Home Groups:** PCC members considered a proposal to form a Silchester-based Home Group resulting in Revd West inviting the leader of one of the existing Tadley-based Home Groups to come and speak in church about the role and activity of a Home Group.
- 15. Patterns of Worship:** Aware that patterns of worship are being looked at in each of the other parishes of the benefice, the PCC acknowledged that the Worship Group will be looking in detail at the existing pattern of worship in St Mary the Virgin, Silchester, and exploring the extent to which modifications may be needed or wanted. The Worship Group met several times before the end of 2024 to plan how best to elicit the information needed from church family members and others resident in Silchester.
- 16. Silchester Neighbourhood Plan:** On behalf of the PCC, and with help from Mr Eldridge, the Secretary submitted comments on the consultation copy of the Silchester Neighbourhood Plan. The principal comment was concerning the Parish Rooms which, apart from being misnamed, were also wrongly reported as having been proposed for demolition.
- 17. Using the “Common Cup” for Administration of Communion:** There was consideration of returning to the use of the “common cup” for communion services, as instructed by Winchester Diocese. In spite of the diocesan instruction, the PCC decided that, at least until the end of 2024, the parish should retain the use of intinction (i.e. dipping the wafers in the chalice at the point of administration). This position is likely to change early in 2025.

Colin Hunt  
(Honorary Secretary)

## **Report from the Resident Priest**

### **Worship and Prayer**

It continues to be a gift to our community that our church remains open for private prayer, in addition to the range of services offered that we hope, feed all those who attend. The PCC regularly monitors numbers and as a result of this, having noticed a variation between different weeks, commissioned the Worship Group to design and carry out a survey during February 2025 (see *'Final thoughts and Looking ahead'*, below).

Throughout 2024 the pattern of week-by-week services has remained the same, together with a programme of 'special' services for festivals such as Easter, Harvest, Christingle, and Christmas. The church family has not, alas, grown in number during this past year. Typically we are 28 -35 worshippers at a service, but in the week ending on Christmas Day we were pleased to welcome a total of 350 – the single largest service being the Crib Service on Christmas Eve with 140 squeezed into our pews!

The PCC and wider church family support Benefice services on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of a month. We hosted the Benefice on Palm Sunday and held for the first time in a long time a Maundy Thursday shared supper and service of Holy Communion – both of which we will host again in 2025.

We have continued to take worship into the village, something that our survey encourages us to do regularly. Alas, the Pet Service fell victim to dreadful weather, but the Songs of Praise service, held on the day following the Fête, and on Remembrance at the War Memorial were both really well supported. We are delighted to have been asked to respond positively to the request to plan another Songs of Praise in the village to mark VE Day at 80 and a short service on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

I am personally very grateful to members of the Worship Group and Benefice Ministry Team for their support to plan and lead our services and to all who support worship in other ways – bell-ringers, organists, vergers, readers, welcomers, intercessors and those who keep us well-fed and watered after services.

### **Life Events**

In 2024 our church continued to regularly host life events – baptisms, weddings and funerals. We welcome everyone, but it remains disappointing that following these we don't see much of family members after their services. Our Mission Statistics return for 2024 commented on the fact that we had held significantly more funerals than in 2023 and less weddings. In 2025 we said our farewells to some very significant members of our local community - Jack Shovel and Nancy Jones, to name but two – but to hold their funerals in our church has been very special indeed and have, we hope, offered significant witness of their faith and work to our wider village. The exciting news is that we have 6 weddings in the diary for 2025 and already a further 3 for 2026 and we are delighted that the two candidates for confirmation in March 2025 are both from our parish.

### **Pastoral Care**

I am appreciative of all that many in our church family do to support those who are ill, bereaved or in any other kind of need. It has been good this year to meet with two local Social Prescribers in an effort for us and them to be more 'joined-up' about who might lonely etc and for us to pass on information about what we offer that they could join in with.

A group from Churches Together Around Tadley (CTAT) will soon be completing training for Anna Chaplaincy. Anna Chaplaincy focuses on offering spiritual care to those in later life. In addition to myself, two other members of our church family are involved and so we look forward to discerning where God will have us use what we have learned. Our Commissioning Service is being held on June 8<sup>th</sup>, with licences and certificates being presented by Debbie Thrower, the founder of Anna Chaplaincy and former BBC 'Songs of Praise' presenter.

### **Eco Church**

Many, if not all, of us in our church family are conscious of the importance of responding to God's command to take care of His planet. It was therefore an easy decision for the PCC to work towards an A Rocha Eco Church award and we were delighted to achieve the Bronze level award without too much effort. I hope that we will make time to work for the Silver award in 2025-2026 with the help of Silchester School.

### **Support to Silchester School**

This year we said a sad farewell to Em Paddick-Wilsdon as she and Mark moved to pastures new. She made such a significant contribution to so many areas of our common life, but perhaps most especially in support and commitment to the village school. Given that we have no children/families in regular attendance at our weekly services, I feel it is critical that we are regularly seen in school and it was for this reason that I agreed to become a school governor and to attempt to take on Em's to lead Collective Worship on a weekly basis. This represents a significant 'chunk' of my hours each week and therefore it was important to obtain the PCC's agreement to me doing this – happily they agreed and it has become a very important and rewarding part of my ministry.

During 2024 classes from the school have made (often very muddy!) pilgrimages to church; helped to decorate our building for Harvest, and assisted with our Eco Church application through the building of a Bug Hotel and carrying out a nature count in the churchyard.

Further to regular 'nagging' from a now Year 6 pupil, in summer 2024 we organised the training of an Open the Book team. Thanks to regular and enthusiastic support from the Methodist Chapel, we have been able to increase the regularity of presentations of Bible stories from once to twice a month.

I am also very grateful for the support offered to my work in school from Sam Dunn, the CTAT Youth and Children's Pastor, as well as from Head of R.E, Mrs Sam Rolph and most especially to Head Teacher, Mrs Rachel Moir who is always welcoming to myself and to St Mary-the-Virgin Church. In February 2025 the school was inspected by OFSTED and we were thrilled to see the due reward for work of Rachel and her staff in their strong 'Good' rating across the board.

### **Community Life**

Our Worship Survey confirmed the importance of the place of St Mary-the-Virgin to the people of Silchester and to our wider communities. During 2024 it was good to be able to welcome individual and groups of pilgrims on Ride'n'Stride Saturday and Camino groups, as well as so many others who just 'call-in', often as they walk around the walls. In addition we have hosted visits from local packs/colonies of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. We were also pleased to welcome the Community Choir who chose us as the venue for their 2024 Summer Concert, to be repeated again in July 2025.

During 2024 the Chair of the Silchester Parish Council convened a Community Group, made up of representatives from local village organisations, including our church. We meet c. every 2 months and exchange information about who is planning what.

Our amazing village and church magazine continues to be an effective way to communicate to the wider community what we are doing and we remain hugely grateful to John and Claire Richardson, as well as to Sandra Speight and other helpers, for their hard work to produce and distribute this widely each month.

### **Ecumenism**

For me one of the many reasons I love this community and our Benefice so much is the opportunity to collaborate and witness to our faith through CTAT. In my opinion we made a good contribution to CTAT's work throughout 2024, attending meetings and sharing the leading, participating and hosting of events such as the Holiday Club and donating Christmas gifts from our Christingle service for the Salvation Army collection. A local off-shoot of CTAT, the Silchester Ecumenical Group, has continued to meet approximately every other month at St Mary's House.

In Advent we worked with the local URC to support the Let's Pray! Initiative and committed to pray for each street in the village and held weekly prayer walks covering just about all the parish during these four weeks.

### **Final thoughts and looking ahead**

It's been a busy year and 2025 has begun equally busily. I echo the late John Stott's ambition to "*be a church which is biblical.. a worshipping church.. a caring church.. a serving church... an expectant church*". I think we are well on the way to getting here, but there's still much I/we want to do. Most of all though we need to discern and listen carefully to God's plans for His church in this place and this community so we can join in with them. We have some clear steers from our recent Worship Survey and whilst these don't appear to be recommending massive changes to what and how we do what we do, I look forward to reporting on the results at next year's APCM.

It's hard to believe that it will soon be two years since my licensing, but I thank God daily for leading me to Silchester. The many and varied demands on the life and ministry of a parish priest, especially one who is only contracted to work the equivalent of three days including Sundays, means that inevitably there are often difficult choices to be made each week about where to focus my energies. It is a genuine privilege to serve and live here, but I couldn't do what I do without the support of so many people. I've named a few people earlier in this report and it's always dangerous to do so for fear of missing out someone important. Hopefully though you know who you are, but as a church family we are blessed with a committed PCC, a really hard-working churchwarden in Jan Hughes, so ably assisted by Sandra Speight and Veronica Picton and treasurer, Richard Eldridge. Thank you as well to Revd Rob Young, Rev Cathy Pynn, Colin Hunt and Eve Baker who regularly lead worship in our beautiful church and, as noted above, to all who play any part in enabling and supporting our worship, who look after our building and churchyard so, so much more. I/we really can't succeed without you.

The Revd Karen West  
Resident/Associate Priest



## Rector's Benefice report to the APCM

This report covers the period from January 2024 to December 2024.



I would like to formally record my thanks to our wonderful Church Wardens (Jean Kyle, Jan Hughes, Peter Wood, and Chris Gillings) who along with PCC members have ensured everything continues to run smoothly in our parishes, especially given some of the challenges with our buildings over the last year or two.

I am also grateful to my clergy, BCM, BPP, and LLM colleagues who all ensure all our services happen. Thanks especially to Charles Lewis, Sally Sinclair, Sally Wood, Myles Ridley, Colin Hunt, Em Paddick-Wilsdon (who moved away last year) Simon Day, Eve Baker,

Chris Burge, and Elizabeth Seymour, all of whom appear very regularly on our rotas leading services and serving our communities.

Thanks also to our clergy Karen West, Chris Knight, Cathy Pynn, Linda Williams and Rob Young. Without these people, much of what we did in 2024 would not have been possible. It has been a joy to be fully staffed across the benefice with a team who can work so closely together. It is wonderful to see our parishes continue to grow and flourish.

Here are some of the amazing things our parishes have been involved in during 2024.

### January

**RISE** continued from January at St. Mary's alongside Messy Church at St. Paul's throughout 2024. Reverend Chris Knight took over the planning and leading of this, along with the first Sunday services at St. Mary's. There are a number of families who regularly attend both Messy Church and RISE. We now need to consider how to further disciple and welcome these families by developing services and pathways for them to be fully integrated into church life.

**Messy Church** has continued at St. Paul's on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and regularly attracts well over 100 people each month. I am grateful to our large group of RISE and Messy Church volunteers who lead these fresh expressions. Services like this are vital to the mission of the church. If we are to grow (and indeed survive) we have to be fully intergenerational in our worship. Last month we had 146 people, half of which were young people.

**Midweek services** – We continue to have two of the largest midweek services in the diocese. Considering the services are both Holy Communion and both at the same time, between them they attract up to 60 people. Many are not our usual Sunday congregation members. I am grateful in particular to Cathy, Linda, Charles, Chris, Paddy and many others who put so much of themselves into these services.



**Stillness on Sundays** remains a popular feature at St. Mary the Virgin every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday throughout the year. I am grateful to Eve Baker for leading this.

These services are supplemented with a fabulous café at St. Mary's each Wednesday, Coffee Morning at St. Luke's each Thursday and a Get Together at St. Paul's once a month on a Monday – all of these are growing.



Also in January, we held our annual **CTAT Unity Service** at St Mary the Virgin. This was very well attended with people from across Tadley, Pamber Heath and Silchester. The CTAT AGM was also held at the end of January. I am grateful to the CTAT representatives from our churches who ensure that we work well alongside our brothers and sisters in other church denominations.

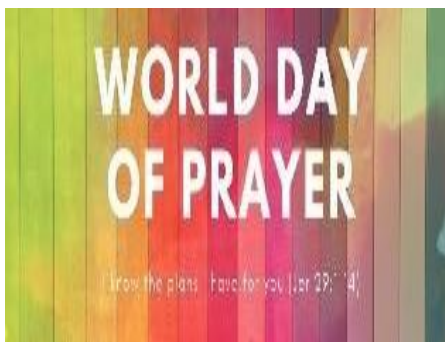
The **Silchester Ecumenical group** also continued to meet to plan worship and events throughout the year.

## February

In February St. Mary's held a **Valentine's party** with local band Carbon Copy. The gig afforded a great missional opportunity as many ages were represented that we tend to see less in church. Many have returned to St. Mary's since and feel a sense of belonging.



## March



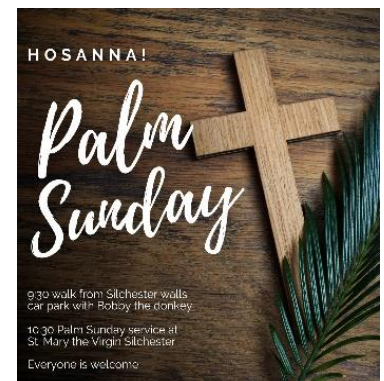
As we entered March, Lent was punctuated by the annual **World Day of Prayer** and our churches were invited to take part in a CTAT service at St. Paul's led by Eve Baker. I am grateful to Eve for the way she has brought together a team to lead this service. Attendance at this event has grown each year. It is another example of how well we work together ecumenically in Tadley, Pamber Heath and Silchester.

Throughout **Lent** as well as our popular home groups and social groups several benefice Lent events were held.

## April

In April the annual **Palm Sunday walk** departed from the Silchester Walls Car Park, due to flooding on the normal route. It was fantastic to take part in this as a benefice. A Church service was held at with coffee and hot cross buns served before the service. Both the walk and service were well attended. We look forward to this in 2025 hopefully with animals!

**The Maundy Thursday meal** in Silchester Village Hall was a success – I understand this was something of a landmark as the hall constitution previously prevented its use for religious services. We were able to eat and pray together and share in a simple service of communion. I am so grateful to the Silchester team who hosted this for the benefice.



On **Good Friday** St. Mary's hosted the annual **CTAT Good Friday service** outside the church with music by Tadley Concert Brass. This is always well attended and over 180 people joined in. Three hours around the cross was also held at both Tadley and in Silchester.

**Holy Saturday** at St. Mary's in the afternoon we hosted a **RISE Easter egg hunt** for families and around 80 people attended. This is another event that is growing year on year.

We also hosted a **benefice Easter Vigil** at St. Paul's. This is the first time



we have held this type of service in a while. It gave us chance to pause and reflect as a church family on Jesus' sacrifice. The evening started with a fire in the church garden, we then brought the light of Christ into the church as we held vigil.



Our Easter Day services were all well-attended. At St. Paul's we decided to run the Messy Church which would have normally been that Sunday. We wanted to show families that this was an important day and that they are important to us. This proved to be a good decision as a fantastic number of people attended Messy Church that morning, hearing the good news of Jesus Christ and consuming a lot of chocolate eggs!

Our traditional parish Easter Day communion services at St. Mary's, Tadley and St. Mary the Virgin, Silchester were well attended and both churches were full of light and flowers.



## May



At **St. Mary's, Tadley** the annual plant sale was held outside the church raising a huge amount in two hours!

This is now an annual event and looked forward to by the community. I am grateful to Keith Gillings and the team at St. Mary's who help to run this. It is also pleasing to see that throughout the year (in all weathers) the **Wednesday Weeders** have continued meeting at St. Mary's to tend the grounds and for coffee and chats

In May Silchester hosted a day with 25 international post graduate students from Reading University. Thank you to Mike Cole, Rev Karen and the Silchester team who were able to host them and help them with research. Throughout the year St. Mary the Virgin has hosted visits from the cubs, beavers, university and Silchester School to name just a few.



## June

Our churches were represented at the **Tadley Treacle Fair**. Our stand is now one of the biggest at the Treacle Fair with 6 pitches along with The Men's Shed and Green Heath Tadley. We were able to use this event not only to advertise our services, but also the Fête on The Green which took place the following week. It also offered a time to chat and pray with the local community.



**Fête on The Green** returned to Tadley the week after the Treacle Fair. This year it was run very much as a community event which local businesses and stallholders sharing The Green with our church stalls. Music was provided by our church band and local band Carbon Copy. We were able to stage a fantastic Community event that attracted well over 1000 people.

In early June Silchester 'Went Wild' with a special family friendly outdoor service focussing on the wildness of nature and God's creation. We headed off from the church across the road to the fields opposite to pray for a good harvest and for all those who produce our food. We were blessed with beautiful weather as we processed and sang; learning about what is grown locally and the challenges of climate change in the Spring of 2024. I am so grateful for all the work done by Rev Karen and the team on



the churchyard and in the journey to becoming an Eco Church. All 3 of our parishes now hold these awards.



The following Thursday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, we welcomed to the churchyard 33 Year 5 pupils from Silchester School who enjoyed an afternoon of activities as part of their well-being week on what nature does for us and what in return we can do for nature.

For **Father's Day, St. Mary's held an outdoor BBQ** as part of RISE. Thanks to the fine weather, we were able to chat and enjoy a social time together with our families.



At the end of June Chris Knight was **ordained as a priest** at Winchester Cathedral. We celebrated with a special benefice service celebrating both Chris' ordination to the priesthood and St. Peter and St. Paul's Day. It was wonderful that so many guests could join us for that service, including several visiting clergy. We were able to have our annual photograph outside St. Mary's

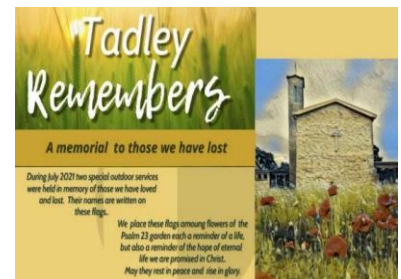
That evening we celebrated **St. Peter's Day** as I led a special service in St. Peter's Church as we thought about who St. Peter was and his legacy to the church. It was great to be able to use St. Peter's again as we had not been in the building for a long time. It clearly means so much to the local community. Later in the month we also held a special day, where many from the Tadley community came and helped us garden and clean the church. We plan to open the church up further for services and open weekends in 2025.



## July

In July, the CTAT ministers led '**Tadley Remembers**' - a memorial service where we remembered those we had lost. I invited families from all three of our parishes for whom we had conducted funerals. This event allowed us to reconnect with families more deeply, and the events seemed to be valued by all who attended. The weather looked a bit dodgy on the day so we all crammed into St. Peter's (including Tadley Concert Brass, but if anything, this made the service even more intimate.

**Tadley Men's Shed** was also on-site at St. Mary's, Tadley. We are so pleased they are now officially sited at St. Mary's. This has increased



the buzz of mission around the church and helped in the aim to become a parish where things happen 7 days a week.

A Pet Service was held on the Village Green in Silchester. The weather was awful, but 20 brave souls and their pets came to the service where Revered Karen spoke on how pets don't see our imperfections. I am so grateful to the Silchester team for the way they engage the community in worship. As we look forward to 2025, it will be interesting to see the results of the worship survey in Silchester.



## August

It was a pleasure to marry so many couples in our churches throughout the summer, particularly at St. Mary the Virgin, Silchester which remains a popular choice for couples both locally and from further afield. We look forward to the weddings which will take place summer 2025 (and the weddings already booked for 2026!)

Also, in August **afternoon teas** were held at St. Mary the Virgin every Saturday and Sunday in August at the **Silchester Church - St Mary the Virgin**. This was a great way to engage those passing.



## September

September began with the annual **Silchester Fête and Dog Show**. Although, thanks to a deluge of rain it looked like the event would be called off, the fête committee came to rescue with 'Plan B' and the event (although different to previous years) was a complete success! Thank you to all who helped, supported and attended the Silchester Fête and Dog Show and Silchester Village Market. It's great to get so many people (and their dogs) together to show what Silchester, the surrounding area, and the church has to offer.

September also saw our annual **Battle of Britain Memorial** service led by Charles Lewis, which was attended by the Air Training Corps and several local and national dignitaries. I am so grateful to Charles for his organisation and passion for this service.

## October

**Harvest** was celebrated in our churches with lots of donations to the local Food Bank and some of the wonderful decorations gifted to us to decorate the churches. Silchester celebrated in 2024 by achieving a bronze Eco Church award.

We also celebrated St. Luke's Day in October with a special open weekend! St. Luke's was opened on Saturday and was inundated with visitors. You may be aware that the last quinquennial inspection of St. Luke's identified some serious work needed doing to maintain the integrity of the roof. This led to a missional group of folk meeting regularly led by Cathy Pynn. The Open Day

*St Luke's, Church Road: Pamber Heath's church*

**Open Day**  
**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 10am to 4pm.**  
*Come & have a look around your village church.*  
 Free entry. Heritage displays. Refreshments served.

**Celebrate St Luke's Day Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 10.15am special church service.**  
*Everyone is welcome.*

St Luke's is working toward celebrating your village church's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2030-including fund raising a new roof. Contact Rev'd Cathy Pynn if you want to help in any way. enquiries@stpaulstadley.org.uk

was part of raising both awareness and funds for this project. It was well attended and donations were fantastic. I am so grateful the St. Luke's mission team for organising this, to Louise for her fantastic displays and to Carol Stevens from TADS who showed us Pamber Heath of old. The next day we held our parish service in St. Luke's Church.

We finished October with an alternative to 'trick or treating' at Halloween. While a 'Light Party' was held by CTAT at Tadley Common Methodist Church, St. Mary's, Tadley set up gazebos on the front lawn aiming to bring hope and light to the community. Over 100 hot chocolates were given out that evening. Thank you 'Team St. Mary's!'



## November

At the end start of November, our **benefice All-Soul's service** was well attended. Nearly all families for whom we have taken a recent funeral attended having received personal invites. We have received some wonderful feedback about how touched the families were to be included and how the event has helped the grieving process. Across the year, funerals seem to come in fits and starts and no longer seem to regularly spaced out as in the past. It is thought (across the Deanery) that the rise in low cost non attended direct cremations has had an impact on this occasional office.

**Memorial Service**  
 4pm Sun Nov 3rd  
 St. Mary's Church, Tadley

A CHANCE TO PAUSE TO REMEMBER THOSE WE HAVE LOST BY NAME

f FOLLOW US: @ ST.MARYS.TADLEY

November also focused very much on **remembrance** and as well as St. Mary's Remembrance service, Charles Lewis and Rev Chris Knight led the act of remembrance at the Baughurst War Memorial which attracted over 400 people.

An Act of Remembrance also took place at Silchester War Memorial led by Rev Karen and at St. Luke's Pamber Heath led by Rev Cathy.

There were also record numbers at the Tadley Remembrance Day Service.



This year has seen a marked increase in numbers for public events and perhaps a turning point since pandemic. You will read later that numbers were also very high this year at our Christmas events.

In November Silchester parish held 'an in loving memory' service. Similar to our All-Soul's service, it gave many the opportunity to remember loved ones in an atmosphere of quiet contemplation. I know it benefited many in the village and surrounding areas.



**IN LOVING MEMORY SERVICE**

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER**

**NOVEMBER 10TH 2024 @ 3PM**

A SHORT SERVICE OF PEACEFUL REFLECTION AND MUSIC

A CHANCE TO BE STILL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A TIME TO REMEMBER OUR LOVED ONES WHO ARE NO LONGER PHYSICALLY WITH US HERE ON EARTH BUT ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS.

A CHANCE TO LIGHT A CANDLE AND HAVE YOUR LOVED ONE'S NAME READ OUT IN MEMORY OF THEIR LIFE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT EVE BAKER - eve\_baker2003@yahoo.co.uk



We had a busy weekend at the end of November. Our churches were represented with a stall at the Ambrose Allan Centre for the **Tadley Christmas tree lights switch on.**

Our stall remained very popular and we were able to successfully publicise our Christmas events. A record number of Christmas leaflets were given out

this year. Over 400 in total - Double that of last year.

The next day a Christmas Fayre and Craft Market was held in the church and hall at St. Paul's. While the church focused on food and refreshments, we were able to invite 25 local traders to set up shop. It was also wonderful to see organisations such as The Men's Shed and CTAT represented with stalls. There was a wonderful Christmas atmosphere. Many of the stall holders have already asked about Fête on the Green in the summer of 2025.

I am grateful for Jean Kyle and Deanne Wagstaff's help and leadership of this event.





## December and Christmas!



Messy Church at St. Paul's kicked off our Christmas Events with over 100 people coming along, dressing up as characters from the nativity and joining in the Christmas story. One mum said Messy Church at St. Paul's was the best chaos she has ever been part of and her kids look forward to coming every month!

The following week was a special Christmas RISE at St. Mary's. I am pleased to see that families return; we have gained new families and many families attend both RISE and Messy Church. I am grateful to Chris Knight who took over the coordination and organisation of RISE as well as developing a first Sunday worship team. Both Messy Church and RISE build on our work to become intergenerational churches.



I am particularly pleased by how we engaged our schools over Christmas. Tadley School chose to hold three Christmas services in St. Paul's and it is wonderful to see the link between St. Mary the Virgin and Silchester School continue to flourish. I am grateful to Rev Karen who serves on the governing body.

**Carol Services** took place in all three parishes, at St. Mary's, was well-received and as usual St. Mary's Tadley, took the first Sunday had very good numbers for this service. Silchester and Tadley followed the next week. Tadley took the decision to hold their carol service in the old Tadley church of St. Peter. This was a magical environment and a special service. What we weren't prepared for was over 120 people turning up. We managed to cram 108 people into the church, but then it was full! We will need to give consideration in 2025 whether we move back to St. Paul's or hold two carol services at St. Peter's. Clearly St. Peter's Church means so much to so many in and around Tadley. Thank you to all the readers and everyone who makes the churches look so amazing for these events.



**The CTAT Event – ‘Follow the Star’** which was held on **Wed 19<sup>th</sup> December (mainly hosted by St. Mary’s)** The animals were a big draw and the sharing of the story around the churches meant every church got to be part of the event. This was still one of our best-attended CTAT events, however it was clear holding the event before the Christmas Holidays had an impact on numbers which were about two thirds that of last year.

Many children stopped to see the animals on the way back from school and did not come back later for the event. Overall we still had approaching 200 people who were all moved safely from church to church. I am grateful to Peter Wood and Keith Gillings for managing the road crossing, all the stewards and The Salvation Army band who travelled with us as we ‘Followed the Star.’

**Our Benefice Crib Services** on Christmas Eve proved popular. We held 4 services that day and all relied on the teams in each church. It is a testament to the strength of the team that we could hold 4 services on this day. As usual the Tadley tradition of packing out St. Paul’s meant there was standing room only as around 350 people celebrated Christmas together!



**Midnight Communion** was held at 11:30pm on Christmas Eve at St. Paul’s, St. Mary’s, Tadley, St. Luke’s and St. Mary the Virgin, Silchester - these again were well attended. Numbers were up on last year. It was also a joy to see a couple of families for whom I had conducted funerals attending this service.

**The Christmas Day services** took place in each parish with family Communion at St. Mary’s, Tadley, St. Paul’s and St.

Mary the Virgin which meant everyone who wanted could receive a Christmas Day communion whether they were night owls or not! It was great that several visiting family and friends attended.

**Our Christmas Toy Appeal** provided gifts to 126 families in need. Thank you to everyone who donated. Meanwhile, members of the clergy delivered around 50 food hampers on behalf of the Food Bank to people in our benefice parishes.



## Reach

I am pleased to report that our Facebook pages continue to grow. St. Paul's exceed 1000 followers last year and continues to grow. St. Mary's are approaching 700 followers and I expect this to be exceeded during 2025. This is 10 times more than other local churches and hot on the heels of the number that follow the diocese page!

Our reach continued to be strong, over the Christmas period (around 25,000 people), more than the population of Tadley, Pamber Heath and Silchester put together!

## As we move forward in 2025 we have a lot to celebrate already!

- St. Paul's Get-Togethers continue and are growing each month.
- St. Luke's Coffee Mornings continue and attract a great number as do the monthly Pub Lunches at the Pelican.
- St. Mary's breakfasts are fantastic and have been raising over £500 some months for a different charity each month.
- Our home groups continue to provide support and discipleship across the benefice with the potential of a new group in Silchester.
- We look forward to welcoming Bishop Philip Mounstephen, our diocesan bishop when he leads our March Benefice service with confirmations.
- We have had a fantastic benefice service in Silchester in January and on Palm Sunday.
- Our benefice Youth Group continues each month.
- Our fresh expressions of Messy Church and RISE continue to thrive.
- Rev Steve has been selected by the Church of England to help develop a new Children's, Youth and Families course this year for all incumbents.
- We will be considering how we adapt and resource our services so they are fully intergenerational, so that young people are fed and not just taught.
- All three parishes have new 'first Sunday services' allowing us to stretch and grow us as disciples.
- We have several events already planned for the remainder of the year such as 'Fête on The Green' and VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations as well as the ever-popular Silchester Fête.
- We continue to develop our relationships with Men's Shed at St. Mary's.
- We are will be working with Tadley Under 5's Pre-School as part of their Forrest Schools Curriculum.

- We are being visited by the Bible Society in April who will be reporting on our progress with the outside space at St. Mary's. This will be reported on nationally.
- As I write we are looking forward to our Easter activities.
- As a benefice I look forward to us contributing to the Diocesan strategy bid 'Walking the Wessex Way' where we will be invited to bid for money for our benefice which could fund resources such as Youth and Families Worker.
- We will continue our focus to become welcoming, inclusive, generous and loving.

## A vision for 2025

Where should our focus be this year? I suggest it continues to be our **CULTURE, focusing on two main areas:**

### 1. How we welcome everyone:

We need to continue focus on three words – **Generosity, Hospitality, and Friendship**. Why? Well, because we haven't got it right yet, but we are getting there!

Research from successful churches shows that these three elements are the key ingredients for growth and discipleship. They reflect how Jesus lived. When we engage in radical generosity, authentic hospitality and grow friendships rather than just friendliness we create missional opportunities living the love of God in all we do.

Imagine for a moment your doorbell rings and stood the door is someone who you've never met who has never been to your house before. They have no idea why they have come to your house or what will happen once they are there, but feel compelled to visit.

You welcome them. You say "I know you have never been to my house and have no idea where my lounge is, but try and find it take a seat and sit quietly on your own. I'll be with you in 20 minutes once the other 30 people you don't know arrive."

Eventually you join them in the lounge saying "I know you have no idea what this meeting is all about, but just try and sit here for an hour and then you can have a coffee (if you can be brave enough to come get it yourself). Then as a special treat (we'll call it a word you don't understand like 'fellowship') you can talk to all these people you don't know.

You wouldn't do that in your house...at least any good host wouldn't, yet that is exactly what we do in our churches. That is not **Generosity, Hospitality, and Friendship**. If anything, that is neglect. Is it any wonder the church gets a bad name?

This year I want us to be radical with our welcome. It might mean on occasions letting someone else take over on the door so you can take that new person to a seat, chat to them and get to know them. It could be introducing them to others, so come coffee time it's not quite so weird. It may mean praying for them and visiting them later that week.

It may mean looking seriously at how we do church. You wouldn't let someone wait over an hour in your own house for a coffee why do we do that in church?

Those who have challenged me on this, will know how passionate I am about it. It's the one thing I will not budge on! It's what makes me see red when we neglect it!

**Generosity, Hospitality, and Friendship** is what Jesus lived. It is something we can all do easily, but it's also the first thing we let go when we let our preferred traditions take presence over following Jesus' instructions to love one another...and especially the stranger.

## 2. Becoming fully intergenerational churches

Yes, it's a long word, but it simply means that we make sure our services feed everyone, the newcomer, the older person, the child, the parent who is only there for their child and of course the rest of us who have hung around church for ages!

The Church of England's focus for the next 5 years is to at least double the number of children and young people in our churches. Yet when you look at the way we do church (outside of Messy Church and RISE) very little time and money is spent on families and children's work. This has to change. I will use the acronym PRAY to explain how:

**P – Prioritise** – We must budget for this work first before anything else.

**R – Resource** – We have to be willing to resource it with time, people, and money.

**A – Adapt** – We have to change what we do in services and how we operate.

**Y – You** – Every member of our church family must be involved in this.

In 2025 I have been selected to represent the diocese pioneering a new training course for incumbents to try and achieve this. We are also developing new intergenerational services for use across the Church of England. You will notice that some experimentation will take place from mid-year onwards in our services, until we get this right.

The aim is not to neglect our older members or focus so much on children that the rest of us feel bereft, but to involve **everyone** in our services. We need a careful focus on discipleship to ensure each of us is on the path to growth.

So, how do we ensure that we grow in the likeness of Christ?

In Mark's gospel we hear <sup>14</sup>When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. <sup>15</sup>Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Mark 10:14-15)

To Jesus children are holy, to us they appear to be a nuisance better off in some little used corner of the church with anyone who is willing to look after them. We must not hinder children in church, they understand far more than we give them credit. Over the next year we must face several questions: Are children being fed as worshippers or merely taught? Are they being done to or are they fully participating in everything we are doing?

Furthermore, Jesus' words have serious implications for all of us. Read Mark 10 again - Jesus' theology of salvation is based on us receiving the Kingdom as a child.

“Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” It means we too have to think about how we are worshipping. If we are not willing to do church as the whole family of God, young, old, and everyone between, then Jesus says we are getting it very wrong.

I hope my words have challenged you or at least made you think. If they have stirred up feelings of guilt or anger, then good, that’s a better starting point than apathy.

This year let’s fully focus on welcome and inclusivity - It’s two small things to focus on but a pretty big vision to be getting on with.

Later this year there is the possibility that our benefice can contribute towards the diocesan strategy ‘Walking the Wessex Way’ in a big way. This may also mean funding could be applied for to develop our intergenerational work, maybe even enough to employ a Children and Families Minister. I want to see our churches and God’s people flourish.

Let’s have a vision so big that it’s only possible with God!

For now, I want to thank you for the opportunity you have afforded me to lead this benefice and I want to thank every one of you for the care and love you show each other and our churches. I feel proud of what we have achieved and excited by what God has in store for us this year.

***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” - Jeremiah 29:11***

With love in Christ

Reverend Steve McKay

Rector of the United Benefice of Tadley with Pamber Heath and Silchester.

## **Churchwarden's Report for 2024**

As Rev Steve McKay & Rev Karen West approach their second anniversaries in their current posts, we welcome the stability this gives us in Silchester. We also very much value the regular and varied services led by Rev Cathy Pynn, Eve Baker, Colin Hunt and Em Paddick Wilsdon. We were sorry to see Em & Mark leave in the autumn and wish them well in their new parish. Em will be sorely missed by both church and school.

During 2024 a successful and thought-provoking Lent group was held in the Methodist church, jointly organised by Silchester Methodists and St Mary the Virgin. Sadly, the Palm Sunday walk had to start from the Wall Lane car park due to the muddy/flooded state of the Drove but at least it was dry on the day. A new venture was the Maundy Thursday shared supper and communion service in the village hall. This was well attended and well received and will be repeated in 2025. The Fête in September was very nearly 'rained off' due to the flooded playing field but due to a lot of last minute reorganisation and an amazing amount of work by the committee it went ahead and was very well attended even though over a considerably smaller area. Again at least it was dry on the day. A Songs of Praise service with the Tadley Concert Brass was held in the marquee the day after the Fête. This too was very well attended and well received and will probably be repeated this year. Something which was definitely not 'dry on the day' was the Pet Service and this adversely affected the numbers attending. At least with fewer people we were able to sit away from the rainy side of the marquee.

Christmas services were generally well attended with about 140 at the Crib Service. Another new venture is that we have kept the Christmas tree to be turned into a Lenten tree in 2025.

During the year, a Worship Group was formed so that all those who lead worship in Silchester could meet and plan together. In order to assess how we could better serve both the church and village communities a survey was compiled and the results will be published, and acted upon, in 2025. We are conscious that much of the current village has not been built close to the church so may think of holding one or two more services nearer the centre of the population.

The church has very good links with Silchester Primary School with representatives on the governing body, an Open the Book group, and volunteers who go in regularly to hear children read. The children enjoy their pilgrimages to the church, particularly if the walk is wet or muddy!

We are pleased that our church is open every day and are very grateful to all those on the security rota who open and lock the church and to Geoff Willmott who keeps the churchyard so well maintained. Also, to those people on the cleaning and flower rotas who keep the church looking so welcoming. The 'big church clean-up' in early December was a great idea so many thanks if you helped with that. Also, thanks to the Christmas tree elves and others who decorated the church & porch for Christmas and Easter.

The fabric of the church remains in good order with most of the actions noted in the quinquennial review now complete. The principal outstanding item remaining is the refurbishment of the south vestry door. The major barrier to this being completed is the abject lack of interest in any local parties to take on the work. In addition to the regular work undertaken in the graveyard,

contractors were engaged in early 2024 to reduce the height of the boundary hedgerows, a task that will require upkeep later in 2025.

Thanks to our small but dedicated refreshment team who supply us with coffee and other goodies after services. It is good to be able to chat over coffee, particularly if there are new people in the congregation. Another small but dedicated team are those who produce and distribute the magazine without which the church and village would not function.

Bell ringers welcome us all to services on the second & fourth Sundays as well as ringing for special events. They have also entertained the Guides & Scouts and held a teaching session in August.

Thanks to all the readers, sidesmen and prayer leaders who help our services run smoothly. Also to Jean Filkin and the choir and Henry Peat and John Pynn our organists.

Sadly we had many more funerals than either weddings or baptisms in 2024 but all who died had lived long and productive lives worthy of celebration. There are already more weddings planned for 2025.

Finally I wish to thank all those people who have helped me so much this year.

Jan Hughes

Churchwarden



## Deanery Synod Report for 2025

There were two full meetings held in 2024.

The first was on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June at St Mary's, Eastrop, and was attended by Revd Karen West. The meeting focused in Mission and Ministry to Older People, with a presentation on the Anna Chaplaincy. This was followed by a number of breakout workshops on related subjects, with those attending the meeting choosing between:

- Anna Chaplaincy;
- Being Together: Combatting the Loneliness Epidemic;
- Holiday@Home;
- Hospice & End of Life Care (with Revd West as a contributor);
- Messy Vintage: Cultivating Creative Connections;
- Mission & Ministry in Care Homes; and
- Social Prescribing: Pioneering Community Partnerships

The second meeting was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October at St Mark's, Kempshott, attended by Mrs Speight and Mr Hunt. The theme of the meeting was "Towards a More Sustainable Church", with a plenary talk on "Creation Care". The key point was that Creation Care is an opportunity for discipleship and mission, so is an integral part of what we are already doing. Moreover, Creation Care is a way to find common ground with other community groups around us who are interested and passionate about this subject. People care about their local area. This issue is not going away with time, it's only going to get bigger / worse. What will the church have done in 10 years' time?

A further topic was the aim of achieving net zero carbon by 2030 and the Diocesan commitment to this aim. It is clear that some churches/parishes will be able to make significant changes aimed at supporting the achievement of this aim. However, in response to a question from the floor, it was also conceded that a church/parish such as Silchester has little scope for reduction of its environmental footprint.

Colin Hunt and Sandra Speight

Deanery Synod Representatives for St Mary the Virgin, Silchester.

## **Safeguarding Report**

No report of concern about safeguarding was raised during 2024.

Miss Hannah Evans filled the position of Parish Safeguarding Officer. Mr Colin Hunt continued to act as DBS and Safeguarding Administrator.

Despite the (very welcome) lack of concerns, there was nevertheless considerable administrative activity during the year. DBS clearances and safeguarding training were kept under review and renewed or initiated when necessary. Policies and procedures were reviewed, with additions where indicated.

For the first time, in September, the principal Sunday service was planned with a safeguarding theme. This was combined with a baptism, the overall service being judged a success.

A significant activity following the Annual Parochial Council Meeting in April was seek two safeguarding references for all members of the PCC and certain others who are expected to undergo DBS checks. The format of the request made to referees had been developed with input from the PCC, carefully limiting the questions included within the request to those for which the answer has some relevance to suitability with regard to safeguarding. In future, requests for references will be made only for people who are newly elected or appointed.

Winchester Diocese supports the use of a “parish safeguarding dashboard” through its website, and this prompts particular safeguarding-related actions which are then recorded. The tool acts as both a guide and an audit tool, so that both the parish and diocesan staff are appraised of the status of parish’s safeguarding arrangements. An Action Plan is generated, copied to, and then approved by the PCC, which sets out those actions needed to achieve full compliance with all requirements.

Safeguarding as a topic appears on the agenda for all PCC and Standing Committee meetings. In addition, specific reports are made periodically to the PCC.

Colin Hunt and Hannah Evans

## **Treasurer's Report for the Year ending December 2024**

Being a treasurer of St Mary the Virgin is mostly a straightforward job, but only because by the work undertaken behind the scenes by Sheila and Richard Fletcher. Their tireless administration of the Gift Aid claims and the stewardship of the Parish Giving Scheme and for the diligent recording of cash receipts helps us to maintain accurate records of the PCC's income and expenditure results which also aids forward planning.

The accounts for 2024 again show a healthy position where the church is not reliant on fundraising activities to cover its obligations to the Winchester Diocese.

In terms of significant expenditure, 2024 again saw funds being invested in the church buildings with the majority of non-regular expenditure being spent on dealing with some overdue maintenance of the churchyard by external contractors. Although the controllable cost base remained under tight control, headwinds with higher utility costs and exceptionally poor weather immediately before the Fête meant the outturn of a small but manageable loss for the year. The United Benefice of Tadley, Pamber Heath and Silchester made the decision early in the year to recruit a Benefice Administrator. This role has proved invaluable in supporting the clergy and churchwardens with the benefits of reallocating administration tasks far outweighing the relatively modest cost.

As mentioned above, one of the most positive factors in the accounts is that the level of giving through collections and donations is at a level which covers Silchester's obligation to the Common Mission Fund (previously the Parish Share). This fund that Silchester is requested to cover of over £32,000 is not only to cover the cost of clergy but more importantly to ensure that the community is supported by the outreach of the church through initiatives that are vital for many parishioners. The Diocese published a 'Financial Briefing' towards the end of 2024 setting out the challenges that it faces with visiting worship numbers (UK wide) in decline. Silchester is pleased to be able to report that it is largely bucking that trend and was consequently able to make an additional CMF payment for 2024 in order to send a small but significant message to the Diocese that it was willing to 'support thy neighbour' in times of need –the Diocese of Winchester sent its heartfelt gratitude to all who support the church for this gesture.

One of the reasons for the consistent number of worshippers, visitors and supporters of the church is the boundless enthusiasm of Rev Karen West. Against a backdrop of churches countryside having to reduce the number of clergy and the sale of some clergy homes, it is a joy to see the relationship between village and church remaining strong with the relationship with Silchester's church-aided school being stronger than many can remember. In addition, it is a credit to all who have been involved in planning and leading services that the attendance at church and supporting events has been strong and the generosity of those attending has been a welcome underpinning of the relatively healthy state of the church accounts.

The PCC remains eternally grateful to those who have responded to events by maintaining or increasing their levels of regular giving and also to those who have chosen to join the Parish Giving Scheme\*.

Overall, Silchester PCC remains once again in a fortunate position. We have a regular service schedule led by clergy and lay worship leaders (most operating on a voluntary basis) and it has cash

reserves to support the church fabric and ministry and, more importantly, has a depth of resources to draw upon in our church family. 2025 will again continue to pose a challenge to all household incomes and the corresponding level of generosity through giving that they can afford. With the support of the church family and God's guidance, I am sure that the balance of 2025 will continue to reward the generosity (of wealth, community and spirit) shown by all who support and contribute so freely and readily.

Richard Eldridge

Treasurer

April 2025

- \* The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) can be subscribed to by calling 0333 002 1271 (membership number: 416004221) or visiting <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/silchester-reading/> All donations and associated Gift Aid claims accrue directly to the church.

## PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER

### Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b><u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u></b>						
Incoming resources from donors	37,035	-	37,035	37,626	-	37,626
Other voluntary incoming resources	22,288	-	22,288	21,225	-	21,225
Income from charitable and operating activities	10,011	-	10,011	7,540	-	7,540
Income from investments	307	-	307	196	-	196
Other ordinary incoming resources	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>69,640</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69,640</b>	<b>66,588</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>66,588</b>
<b><u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u></b>						
Missionary and charitable giving:	3,664	-	3,664	2,061	-	2,061
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church	60,063	-	60,063	50,023	6,600	56,623
Church Management and administration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Raising and Publicity	10,191	-	10,191	7,415	1,000	8,415
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b>73,918</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>73,918</b>	<b>59,499</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>67,099</b>
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES	(4,277)	0	(4,277)	7,088	(7,600)	(512)
<b>Gross Transfers</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>(7,600)</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	<b>(4,277)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(4,277)</b>	<b>(512)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(512)</b>
BALANCES BROUGHT FORWARD AT 1 JANUARY	24,823	42,908	67,731	25,335	42,908	68,243
<b>BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 DECEMBER</b>	<b>20,546</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>63,454</b>	<b>24,823</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>67,731</b>
	(0)	(0)	(0)	0	(0)	(0)

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER**

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	2024			2023		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>						
Tangible fixed assets			-			-
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>						
Debtors	2,050		2,050			-
Stocks	-		-	-		-
Cash at Bank and in Hand	20,546	42,908	63,454	24,823	42,908	67,731
<b>LIABILITIES</b>						
Amounts falling within one year		0	0		0	0
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	22,596	42,908	65,504	24,823	42,908	67,731
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>22,596</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>65,504</b>	<b>24,823</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>67,731</b>
<b>Representing:-</b>						
<b>FUNDS</b>						
Unrestricted	22,596	-	22,596	24,823	-	24,823
Designated & Restricted	-	42,908	42,908	-	42,908	42,908
	<b>22,596</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>65,504</b>	<b>24,823</b>	<b>42,908</b>	<b>67,731</b>
	0	-	0	0	-	0
Approved by the Parochial Church Council on:						
	Rev S McKay (PCC Chairman)					
	R Eldridge (Treasurer)					
The notes on pages 3 to 5 form part of these accounts.						

<b>PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER</b>						
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>						
<b>For the year ended 31 December 2024</b>						
<b>1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES</b>						
In so far as it is appropriate for the needs of the PCC, these accounts have been prepared on the accruals accounting basis, using the regulations set out in Chapter 8 of the "Guidance on Accounts, reports and scrutiny", including the Church Accounting Regulations 1997 and the Church Accounting (Amendment) Regulations 2001 prescribed by the Business Committee of the General Synod. Since the gross income in 2024 falls below £500,000 these financial statements do not require the scrutiny of a Registered Auditor and are therefore subject to review by the Independent Examiner.						
<b>2 INCOMING RESOURCES</b>						
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
			<b>2024</b>			<b>2023</b>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>2(a) Incoming resources from donors</b>						
Planned Giving:						
- Gift Aided donations	27,871		<b>27,871</b>	26,209		<b>26,209</b>
- Tax Recoverable	6,440		<b>6,440</b>	9,047		<b>9,047</b>
- Other ordinary incoming resources	863		<b>863</b>	906		<b>906</b>
Collections at all services			-			-
Sundry donations	1,861		<b>1,861</b>	1,464		<b>1,464</b>
	<b>37,035</b>		<b>37,035</b>	<b>37,626</b>		<b>37,626</b>
<b>2(b) Other voluntary incoming resources</b>						
Grants			-	500		<b>500</b>
Donations, Appeals etc.	2,300		<b>2,300</b>	2,605		<b>2,605</b>
Fetes and other fund-raising events (inc B Ball)	19,988		<b>19,988</b>	18,120		<b>18,120</b>
Legacies			-			-
	<b>22,288</b>		<b>22,288</b>	<b>21,225</b>		<b>21,225</b>
<b>2(c) Incoming from charitable and operating activities</b>						
Magazine Advertisements	4,501		<b>4,501</b>	3,973		<b>3,973</b>
Magazine subscriptions	2,344		<b>2,344</b>	2,351		<b>2,351</b>
Printing			-			-
Sale of publications			-			-
Fees (net)	3,166		<b>3,166</b>	1,216		<b>1,216</b>
	<b>10,011</b>		<b>10,011</b>	<b>7,540</b>		<b>7,540</b>
<b>2(d) Income from investments</b>						
Bank Cash Management Interest	307		<b>307</b>	196		<b>196</b>
	<b>307</b>		<b>307</b>	<b>196</b>		<b>196</b>
<b>2(e) Other ordinary incoming resources</b>						
Petty Cash			-			-
Church fees			-			-
Asset surplus			-			-
	<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>69,640</b>		<b>69,640</b>	<b>66,588</b>		<b>66,588</b>

<b>PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER</b>							
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>							
<b>For the year ended 31 December 2024</b>							
<b>3</b>	<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023
		£	£	£	£	£	£
3(a)	<b>Grants</b>						
3(a)	<b>Missionary and charitable giving</b>						
	<b>Church Overseas:</b>						
	External Charities	3,664		3,664	2,061		2,061
		<u>3,664</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,664</u>	<u>2,061</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,061</u>
3(b)	<b>Activities directly relating to the work of the church</b>						
	Ministry: Parish Share	34,052		34,052	34,052		34,052
	Expenses of office	3,385		3,385	580		580
	Upkeep of Services	495		495	402		402
	Sub & Membership	249		249	177		177
	General Expenses			-			-
	Heat, Light & Water	4,239		4,239	2,432		2,432
	Insurance	2,889		2,889	2,762		2,762
	WDBF -Diocesan Fees (Weddings & funerals)			-			-
	Depreciation			-			-
	Wedding/Funeral Fees Paid	243		243			-
	Ref Books & Literature			-	1,280		1,280
	Church Maintenance	2,329		2,329	2,072	2,400	4,472
	Expenditure on Magazine	2,352		2,352	2,616		2,616
	Upkeep of Churchyard	6,500		6,500	3,650		3,650
	Mission Church Running Costs	500		500		4,200	4,200
	Organists' Honorarium & other music costs	144		144			-
	Organ/Piano Tuning/Repairs			-			-
	Staff costs	2,686		2,686			-
	Flower Expenses			-			-
		<u>60,063</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,063</u>	<u>50,023</u>	<u>6,600</u>	<u>56,623</u>
3(c)	<b>Church Management and administration</b>						
	Post, Telephone & Stationery, Miscellaneous		-	-		-	-
				-			-
3(d)	<b>Fund Raising and Publicity</b>						
	Cost of fetes, fundraising etc	10,191		10,191	7,415	1,000	8,415
	<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<u>73,918</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>73,918</u>	<u>59,499</u>	<u>7,600</u>	<u>67,099</u>



<b>PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER</b>						
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>						
<b>For the year ended 31 December 2024</b>						
<b>STAFF COSTS</b>						
The PCC does not have any salaried employees. Volunteers undertake the cleaning and security of the church.						
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>						
Neither the Parish Church nor the Mission Church, both buildings being licensed for public worship, are required to be valued for purposes of these accounts. Both are fully insured for re-instatement costs in the event of fire or other major disaster, but not against terrorist attack.						
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
			2024			2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Cost</b>						
Opening Balance	4,284	-	4,284	4,284	-	4,284
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing Balance	4,284	-	4,284	4,284	-	4,284
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>						
Opening Balance	4,284	-	4,284	4,284	-	4,284
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing Balance	4,284	-	4,284	4,284	-	4,284
Closing Net Book Value	- 0	-	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
Opening Net Book Value	- 0	-	- 0	- 0	-	- 0
<b>CASH AT BANK</b>						
The PCC holds no stocks or shares.						
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
<b>ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS</b>			2024			2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cash at Bank and in Hand	20,546	42,908	63,454	24,823	42,908	67,731
Debtors	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stock	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current Liabilities	(6,000)	0	(6,000)	(4,500)	0	(4,500)
	14,546	42,908	57,454	20,323	42,908	63,231

8 DEBTORS AND PREPAYMENTS	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
			2024			2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Gift Aid Tax Recoverable	2,050	-	2,050	500	-	500
Stocks	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Debtors	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<u>2,050</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,050</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>500</u>
9 LIABILITIES	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Designated and Restricted Funds	Total Funds
			2023			2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>						
Accruals	(6,000)	0	(6,000)	(4,500)	0	(4,500)
Other creditors	-	-	0	-	-	0
	<u>(6,000)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(6,000)</u>	<u>(4,500)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(4,500)</u>
10 FUND DETAILS						
The designated and restricted funds comprise:						
Fabric fund		25,277			26,000	
Mission church fund		5,000			5,000	
Churchyard fund		4,149			4,149	
Goddard memorial fund		4,259			4,259	
Ministry Team fund		1,750			1,750	
Music Fund		1,500			1,500	
Missions and charities fund		250			250	
Bell Fund		723				
General fund (unrestricted)	22,596			24,823		

**Parochial Church Council of St Mary the Virgin, Silchester**  
**Independent Examiner's Report**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 1 to 5.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The charity is preparing accrued accounts and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

**It is my responsibility to:**

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission 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 report**

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**

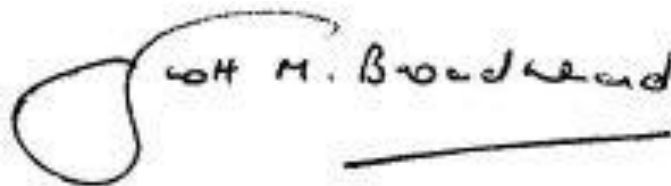
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott M. Broadhead". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Scott Broadhead (FCCA)  
Maids Moreton  
Buckingham  
31 March 2024

THE PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, SILCHESTER

**ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING &**

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

AGENDA FOR THE MEETINGS TO BE HELD ON

SUNDAY April 27<sup>th</sup> April 2025

**ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING**

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024
4. Election of Churchwardens for 2025/2026

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

1. Welcome – The Rector
2. Presentation of the Church Electoral Roll
3. Approval of minutes from last APCM of 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024
4. Presentation of Annual Report containing:
  - Secretary's Report of proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish generally
  - Rector's and Resident Vicar's Reports
  - Churchwardens' Report (including Fabric, Goods and Ornaments)
  - Deanery Synod Report
  - Report on Safeguarding
  - Treasurer's Report and presentation of 2024 accounts
  - Independent Examiner's Report on the accounts
5. Election of Officers
  - (Deanery Synod Representatives- 2 Representatives still within their terms of office)
  - Members of the PCC for 2023/2024 (4 to be elected, each for a 3 year term)
  - Sidesmen and Sideswomen for 2025/2026
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Closing Prayers

