

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

(For all those on the Church Electoral Roll of the Parish)

The following reports are issued in preparation for the APCM of St Paul's Church in Tongham, which will be held at 11.30am on Sunday 11th May 2025.

1. Churchwardens Report
2. PCC Report
3. Twinning Report
4. Treasurer's Report (Statement of Accounts published separately)
5. Safeguarding Report
6. Children & Families Reports
7. Electoral Roll Report

1. Churchwarden's Report 2025

Churchwardens: Mrs Karen Lambert
Mr Kay Tauschwitz

Claire, Kay and I continue to meet monthly to monitor all that is going on within the church, including building and maintenance, personnel and pastoral issues and to attempt to keep an eye on Claire, to make sure she is not overworking! As always, some matters have been completed and others are ongoing.

The work to repair the clunch on the walls of the church was completed during the spring / summer. The architect who came in February to undertake our quinquennial inspection commented on how well it had been done. In fact, although we haven't yet received the report, he was complimentary about how much work from the last report we had completed as well as how far we have come on our journey get St Paul's church to Net Zero.

Our steps towards Net Zero and our efforts to look after the church and churchyard in more environmentally friendly ways have gone well this year. The odds and ends of temporary carpeting that we used last year to draught-proof the church worked so well that this year we installed some proper carpet – thanks to Kay for his hard work in laying it all. We have made good use of blankets this winter and continue to investigate pew heaters. We are planning to borrow a monitor from St Peter's to discover any warm spots within church where we can concentrate our efforts to warm the place and encourage you all to sit in these warm areas!

The Community Garden continues to be a wonderful community asset – we grew an assortment of fruit and vegetables in the summer and people were able to come along and help themselves to strawberries, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, beans and potatoes. Over the autumn we have been preparing a new play area, ready for new equipment that we have bought with grant money. In this and so many of our projects, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mike who works tirelessly for us. Thank you, Mike!

Another project that Mike has worked hard on, has been the heaters here in Old School – powered by our own solar panels, they are our way of securing heating for Old School without using gas any more. They

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warm the room quickly and efficiently and we are very grateful for Mike's in-depth knowledge, his enthusiasm and his expertise.

We have become a Fairtrade Place of Worship! We use Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar in the kitchen as well as in the cakes that we bake; we have also searched for cleaning products that use Fairtrade or eco ingredients, which helps to show our commitment to taking the best care we can of God's world. We will be celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight in the autumn and looking for new ways to raise everyone's awareness of the issues around fairness and justice in global trade.

The Twinning of our church with St Peter's in Ash has been a dominant thread of this year. We have continued to build relationships with the PCC, wardens and congregation of St Peter's; both our Eco team and the PCC have held joint meetings with their opposite numbers at St Peter's, which have led to the beginnings of a joint Church Development Plan for next year. As wardens, we are very conscious of the huge workload that Twinning puts on Claire and we are determined to support her in any way we can

Karen Lambert

Church Warden

2. PCC Report 2025

Administrative information:

St Paul's Church is located in Poyle Road, Tongham, GU10 1DS and is within the Aldershot Deanery of the Guildford Diocese. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a 'charity exempt from registration' with the Charity Commission.

PCC members in office at the time of writing are:

Vicar: Revd. Claire Holt

Wardens: Mrs Karen Lambert (since 2022) Mr Kay Tauschwitz (since 2022)

Deanery Synod: Mrs Nicki Bunce (elected until 2026) + Mrs Margaret Murray (elected until 2026)

Elected members:

- (until 2027) Mrs Claire Boud, Mrs Sally Banks, Mrs Madeline Manfield
- (until 2026) Mr John Clifton, Mrs Charlotte Palmer-Ladd, Mrs Sue Treherne (Treasurer)
- (until 2025) Miss Hayley Bunce, Mrs Julie Gadsby, Mrs Marta Smith

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of Elected Members conforms to the requirements of The Church Representation Rules (2011 revision) whereby all Church attendees must register on the Electoral Roll for 6 months minimum and may then seek election to the PCC. Usually, members are elected for three years (and may serve for six years before resting for a minimum of a year) ideally with three members being elected each year as three retire (but they remain eligible for re-election if they have not completed six consecutive years on the Council). Reaching the end of their term this year and now standing down is Mrs Julie Gadsby. Miss Hayley Bunce and Mrs Marta Smith are standing for re-election. We are very grateful to them all. Our PCC is a good, productive and open meeting where all contributions and comments are welcome and is always carried out with respect and humour.

Objectives and activities

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with Vicar: Revd. Claire Holt, in promoting within the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church (pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical). The PCC also has freehold ownership and maintenance responsibilities for The Old School (beside the Church in Poyle Road) which serves as the Church Hall.

Church attendance

There are now **85** names on the Church Electoral Roll. Average weekly attendance at the main Sunday service over the whole of 2024 is **45**. We have continued to have people attend on Zoom and YouTube as well as in person.

Review of the year

PCC:

Our PCC meetings are a mix of practical discussions and ongoing consideration of our Church Development Plan. We focus on one area each meeting and have also increasingly been considering the Twinning process too.

Growing in welcome:

We started to link teams across the 2 churches. In particular, the Eco team has met a couple of times to share experience, look at our Eco church status and start to plan for net zero

There have been a growing number of events where both churches have attended including services (10am on 3rd Sunday and Café church, Evensong and Taize), prayer events, social events including Fellowship Lunch. This has enabled members of both congregations to get to know each other and build on friendships.

The steering group started to look at the new CDP for the coming year and initiated a skills audit which has been carried out in both churches. The PCCs also had a joint meeting, where we looked at what is important to us to help form our values and also continued to form the new CDP

Growing in discipleship:

We have continued with book recommendations and also ran the Bible Course. These have been advertised across both churches.

We have encouraged people to experience encountering God in diverse styles of worship, with Taize service being a particularly valued time to reflect in a new way.

We have offered first communion across both churches and 6 boys were prepared to have their first communion, 3 from each church. These received for the first time in February. A joint confirmation course was also offered.

We have continued to offer a variety of ways in Advent and Lent to prepare for Christmas and Easter across both churches.

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Growing in community:

We have worked on communication at St Paul's and have a clearer planning process for events, which is beginning to bed in. There is further work that needs to be done with regard to planning across both churches and also communicating with the wider community.

We have started an Instagram account – it is early days, but we hope to develop this further in 2025.

Eco teams have had joint meetings. We have also done some better advertising of the recycling we do and are hopeful that we will see the impact of that in March for our next event.

Financially, we have received a couple of legacies and donations this year which, together with our budgeted maintenance fund and some grants, have enabled us to repair the clunch work highlighted in our 2020 Quinquennial, add some solar panels and batteries to The Old School and replace a large window in The Old School, which had a rotten frame. (please see finance report and wardens report)

The maintenance team have been fantastic! We have got so many jobs done and they have saved us much money with the time and skills donated! (Please see wardens report)

We have supported financially Phyllis Tuckwell, Step by Step, Leprosy Mission and The Source and supported our local community through our food shed, which has given out more parcels than ever before. The games afternoon for cancer research was a great success and we will be looking to repeat in some way. We were able to provide a hamper of games to The Royal Marsden. We are planning on adding support to Compassion's water aid project this year.

The Food Shed continues to be a valued resource in our community and there is now a team who help check the contents and sort parcels, making it much easier. Thank you to Marta Smith and Charlotte Palmer-Ladd, Jo, David and others! And Charlotte is helping with checking resources and ensuring we have cleaning products, tea and coffee etc please let her know if you notice something is running low. We continue to try to ensure these are eco friendly as far as possible and are delighted to have got our Fairtrade church status. All our coffee and tea is fairtrade, we aim to use fairtrade sugar and as many other products as possible. Our taste test voted Waitrose Fair Trade chocolate our favourite!

A huge thank you to all on the PCC – we have good meetings, available on zoom as well as in person, and benefit from the contributions of all who are there. A particular thank you to the wardens for all their additional work and support for Claire.

Parish Life:

Our Children's Team has been fantastic! We are hugely grateful to the team and especially to Pam for all she has done, she has now stepped down from leading (though remaining on the team). Flames and Ignite are now meeting together, which has worked well. (please see later report)

The Hub meets on Sunday evenings for older teens, led by Dave Welch, with his great team too. Much pizza eating, conversations and chat takes place!

And Café Church has continued once a month at 4pm providing an opportunity for a different style of worship, more discussion, and some visiting speakers – including Gabby North from the Leprosy Mission. We have continued to explore the best way to hold services on the 3rd Sunday and have valued the opportunity to attend St Peter's on the weeks when there wasn't a 10am service.

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Messy Church has really benefitted from the new, bigger team and we have seen a whole range of people attending - from school, coffee plus and Facebook. Exploring Christmas and Exploring Easter have been very well attended by the whole family!

A particular thanks to those involved in our welcome! On the door, making teas and coffees, chatting to people in church and afterwards – we continue to hear how much that is appreciated by visitors, new people and our regular congregation too!

Coffee Plus, our toddler group, continues to thrive. The families come regularly and enjoy play, messy play, refreshments, a Bible story, craft and singing – alongside a lot of chat! We have a fantastic team running this, building relationships with those who attend. And we are seeing several families attend our Messy Church service and Sunday church services - especially our Family Service which we make a big effort to be welcoming to these younger families. Baby Plus group is also thriving and leads to several baptism enquiries each year. (Please see separate report from Claire Boud)

Fellowship Lunch has been going well, meeting on the 3rd Tuesday in the month. It is a great opportunity for people in Tongham (and also Ash) to get together and chat! We have established a new team, with more people involved, sharing the jobs. This has been working really well.

In terms of pastoral care, St Pauls is a remarkable Church family, and a very great deal of friendship, help and visiting goes on all the time – long may this continue! We have been visiting and supporting many through this year and have recruited Martin and Harriet as pastoral visitors.

Last year we had no weddings booked! This is very unusual for St Paul's. We have 3 booked for 2025, one each in January, June and October.

If you do know of anyone who might need help, support or prayer at any time – please do not hesitate to contact Claire.

A huge thank you to all volunteers at all our activities. We continue to get new people and visitors commenting on how welcoming the church is – keep it up!!

And a particular thank you to Wendy in our office, helping us to ensure we keep on top of everything at St Paul's!

3. Twinning Report 2025

It has been a good year to get to know one another better. We have shared prayer, services and events. Claire has tried to attend as many services and events as possible and it has been a great way to get to know the congregations at St Peter's and the range of services and activities they value.

We now have members of both churches at our monthly prayer events – including prayer walks in the better weather and “in church” events over the winter: some at St Peter's and some at St Paul's. It has been great to pray together.

We have had members of both churches at Taizé services and Evensong through the year. And it has demonstrated that we can have more diversity with no extra effort, when we work together.

We have advertised each other's events for fellowship and for fundraising. We now have a regular group of St Peter's at St Paul's Fellowship Lunches, and a new member at St Peter's Mother's Union from St Paul's. Families have been able to benefit from more options as well, including Exploring Christmas and Easter at St Paul's and Pancake Party at St Peter's.

We have also begun to look at some of the practical aspects of planning across 2 churches, especially as we book weddings in for 2025/6. Claire is now attending the monthly booking in session at St Peter's. We have had a first meeting with the 2 administrators and begun to think about how we might work together across the 2 sites – sharing bookings and helping each other wherever we can.

We have had our first joint PCC meeting (January 2025, so maybe it should be in next year's report?!) where we shared thoughts leading to a set of values and a shared Church Development Plan – which we will continue to work on in future joint PCC meetings.

We have also had some joint Eco meetings, where we have been able to share experience and ideas. We set up a joint communications team which has made a big difference in keeping both churches up to date with any decisions and actions, as well as answering questions people have.

And it was lovely to share preparing for first communion for 6 of our children – 3 from St Peter's and 3 from St Paul's (as it happens all boys!) who in January were able to share in a special service in each church as they received for the first time.

There are things which haven't made much progress too! Housing for Claire is still being worked out. The Vicarage site at Tongham will be redeveloped and it is hoped that Claire will have a house provided for her roughly halfway between to 2 churches – so that it is easy to minister to both churches and communities.

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But so far there has been nothing suitable. Please be praying about this. Also, service times haven't been decided (although it is clear that we will need to adjust these so that Claire can attend all services). We will not be making any changes to times before Father Keith retires.

It has been a really useful time of building relationships and starting to plan for the future. We are so blessed to have such faithful and caring congregations and to see some of the benefits of working together already. We continue to pray for God's guidance, vision and provision as we move forward through 2025.

4. Finance Report 2025

Income:

Income is considerably increased this year from £97.5K to £116.5k. However, we should not be complacent. This figure contains a legacy of £5k from one of the church members,; several grants, thanks to the efforts of Mike Smith - £8k more than the previous year; the crowdfunding we did for the heating project and the very successful Fun Day in July which between them raised about £7.5k. We cannot expect this to be repeated every year.

Planned giving and church collections were up slightly this year but the number of overall regular givers has gone down by 3. Hall Hire and parking fees are down slightly. So, I would say that overall income to the church has remained steady when we look beyond the amounts given to due to fund-raising efforts. The continuing viability of the church depends very much on the generosity and faithfulness of the regular congregations.

Expenses:

Now we consider the other side of the balance sheet – the expenditure. The income was up by £19K this year, expenditure is up by £38.2K. Double the increase! If you have bothered to look down to the bottom line you will have noticed that the church has overspent by £15K this year. Hopefully you have picked yourself off the floor and are ready to hear why things are not quite as bad as they seem.

Although some of this increase is due to the rising cost of our utility bills, much of it comes from spending the grants which we have obtained for various projects. Installing the solar heating in the old school cost £17K and we have spent around £7K on the Community Garden project. Then there is the £13K we spent on repairing the clunch work of the church building. This year we decided to spend £12K each year on maintenance projects to keep our church buildings in a good state of repair and to replace that amount by saving £1K each month into the Fabric Fund to create a rolling maintenance fund.

We have also been coping with an increased amount going to the diocese for the parish share. This has sometimes left us with some cash flow problems as evidenced by the bank balance of £143 at the end of December.

So to conclude, God has been good to us this year. We have been able to complete some major projects and they will enable us to save money further down the line. But, we do not have sufficient income to meet our full parish share and this year our cash flow has been pushed to the limit. Thanks to all those who contribute regularly – you are keeping the church going. And thanks to Kay and Wendy for doing much of the clerical work for the accounts – you are keeping me going.

May God bless you all

Sue Treherne
Treasurer

5. Safeguarding Report 2025

Over the past year the parish has continued to use the Parish Dashboard that helps ensure that safeguarding procedures are kept up to date. Our progress in this area has allowed us access to the Safeguarding Hubs which will help streamline our safeguarding efforts. The team, which now includes Claire Holt, Wendy Blight and Helen Maguire alongside Julie Gadsby as Parish Safeguarding Officer; will be working on this in the upcoming year.

A reminder that training for those involved with children and working as PCC members will be reviewed annually and are to be renewed every three years to the highest level of training only. The National Safeguarding Team have developed on-line training for Safer Recruitment and Domestic Abuse, and these are available for self-led learning.

Both Claire Holt and Wendy Blight are now able to submit DBS checks as part of the safeguarding team, and we hope to have Helen trained and approved to do this too soon.

In line with diocesan guidance, we are constantly reviewing and improving our policy and procedures and following these procedures throughout the year. Advice was sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team when needed in 3 situations.

Safeguarding Team

6. Children & Families Reports 2025

There has been a change in the way we have organised Flames and Ignite, partly due to the current numbers of children and also due to Pam stepping back from leadership. Flames and Ignite now meet together, with a 3rd adult ready to step in if numbers are higher or a leader can't be there.

Claire is currently supporting the team with a rota and planning support; giving some ideas to start planning off including prayer ideas.

The groups meet in The Old School 2nd and 4th Sundays, while the service continues in church. And meet in the church on 3rd Sunday when Café church is in The Old School. This seems to be working really well and enabling parents and children to benefit from the services. Karen is taking a lead on Café church weeks, supported by one of the Flames or Ignite team.

Fun – we aim to enable all children, whatever their needs, to be welcome and to have fun. This varies for each child, so there are a variety of activities planned, including drama, food based and craft. And we still enjoy Johanna making bacon butties!

Content – we follow the same Bible passage as in church. Sometimes sharing the whole passage and looking at a story. Sometime focussing on 1 verse. We want children to begin to see how the Bible can help them, to see how they can turn to God in prayer and to strengthen friendships that encourage them in their faith.

The book club has been missed – so Claire is going to look at how we can restart that for children at our Sunday services and also Messy Church.

We love seeing our young people get more involved in church – tech, drums, refreshments, craft and welcoming are just some of the things they do! Please do encourage them and let Claire know if you spot some other ways they can serve.

Thank you to the incredible team of leaders who disciple our children and young people – you do an AMAZING job creating memories that will last a lifetime and we are SO grateful!

A Huge Thank you to:

Flames: Isabella, Nina, Anesa, Charlotte, Becci, and Kay

Ignite: Pete, Adanna, Hannah C, Julie G, Pam & Johanna

Café church: Karen and Flames/Ignite team

Revd Claire Holt

Coffee Plus

We have about 20-25 regular families who attend. Many have come up through Baby Plus, but we are also seeing new families coming from the new housing estates and we also get a good number returning with their 2nd and 3rd children.

We use both rooms each week, the North room hosts the story area, craft table and has most of the main toys. The South room tends to be set up for more messy or exploratory play. We were fortunate to gain a lot more of this type of equipment when Tongham Toddlers folded, along with some more low tables and chairs.

The community garden was well used during the dryer months last year and everyone is waiting with anticipation for the weather to improve this year so we can use the newly developed area and climbing frame once it is erected.

A massive thank you to Mike for completing the grants and organising the work to make this new area a reality.

Baby Plus

Baby Plus continues into its 6th year, with about 15 regular mums coming along. We have seen an increase in the number of Dads attending, and it has been so nice to welcome them along. I have been wondering whether a Saturday morning Dads session would be well received. Conversations with attendees always prove that groups like Baby Plus are highly valued.

Grandparents' Coffee Mornings

This is one of the 2 new regular sessions we have begun this year.

2 successful sessions in October and February have been run. These are very relaxed, informal coffee mornings for all grandparents whether they are caring for grandchildren or not, however we do have some toys and activities out if grandchildren will be in attendance.

The next one will be on Wednesday 9th April, 10.30-12, so do put the date in your diary.

Picnic & Prayer

This is our second new initiative for this year.

We have run these at the end of each half term, (July, Oct, and Feb). Parents stay after either Coffee Plus or Baby Plus for an extra hour, during this time we share lunch together and then we have 3 different prayer stations to engage with; Prayers related to either Please, Thank you and Sorry.

The idea is that this is a really accessible means of talking about faith and engaging children in faith filled activities. None of the prayer stations are complicated and most are quite active and easy to engage a child with.

Some examples of the activities we have done include planting bulbs, blowing bubbles, posting things, hanging items on a washing line, water pouring and floating things.

In December instead of Picnic and Prayer we again ran the Toddler Nativity and the Baby Plus Christmas Lunch like previous years. Both were relatively well attended and enjoyed by those who came, although the high levels of illness throughout the winter months this year has impacted numbers at many sessions.

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Family Fun Day

The greatest achievement this year was undoubtedly the Family Fun Day in September. Thankfully the weather was kind to us and we had an amazing turnout of past and present attendees of Baby Plus and Coffee Plus, alongside Church members.

We raised an incredible £2500, the majority of which came from the silent auction which Lizzie Reynolds organised. I would like to say a massive thank you to her and everyone else who helped out either on the day or with preparation for the event.

It wasn't just a fundraising event though, it was a day full of fun activities, good conversations and fellowship.

Links

We continue our links with various local family organisations, including the Guildford Family Centre and the Surrey Home Birth Team. We have been able to refer a few parents whose children have more complex needs to Guildford Family centre, which has been very beneficial for those involved.

Future

This year has been a year of consolidation whilst we have been waiting for the finalising of the twinning process and all the benefits, challenges and exciting opportunities this will bring. We have plans for increasing our outreach to families over the coming year, but there are multiple factors affecting how these plans transition into reality.

A big thank you to everyone who helps as a volunteer at the sessions and supports me generally with prayer, friendship, admin and pencil sharpening!

As a couple of the regular volunteers are looking to step back this year, please consider whether you would have time to come along once a month to make refreshments and engage with the parents. Do speak to me if you would like further information.

Claire Boud
Community Worker

7. Electoral Roll Report 2025

At the time of the APCM last year there were 84 names on the Church Electoral Roll. This year we had to renew our roll – a process that takes place every 6 years and means starting from scratch and getting new applications from everyone who would like to be included. Normally this would lead to a decline in numbers but this year we've increased to 85 names, and we have some applications waiting to be added later in the year (when they become eligible) which is really encouraging! I am grateful to Claire and Karen for their help in renewing the roll this year. If one of them badgered you to fill in an application form, please know that they were doing so on my behalf!

Wendy Blight
Electoral Roll Officer