

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 3pm on Sunday 17th May 2026.

1. Churchwardens Report
2. PCC Report & Vicar's Review of the Year
3. Treasurer's Report (Statement of Accounts published separately)
4. Safeguarding Report
5. Children & Families Report
6. Electoral Roll Report

1. Churchwarden's Report 2026

Churchwardens: Mrs Karen Lambert
Mr Kay Tauschwitz

Claire, Kay and I meet once a month to discuss all that is going on within the church, including building and maintenance, finance, personnel and pastoral issues and also to see how Claire is, especially since September when she became Priest in Charge at St Peter's on top of her full time job here at St Paul's. We are attempting to make sure that she is not overworking.

The Twinning of our church with St Peter's in Ash has been the dominant thread of this year. All the planning and preparation became "real" when Claire was installed as Priest in Charge at St Peter's in a special service on 14th September, presided over by Bishop Andrew.

A number of the things we have done this year have been to try and help reduce Claire's workload. One of these was to re-structure and streamline the teams within St Paul's – Claire had been involved in each one, but we now have either Claire or one of us wardens there, which has eased pressures on Claire. The teams always provide minutes for the PCC to scrutinise, so accountability is still there.

Early in 2025, St Paul's had its Quinquennial inspection and we were very pleased to know that there were no major areas of concern, although there are plenty of smaller things that need doing, as is always the case with a 160-year-old building! We are very grateful to the Maintenance team who have dealt with a number of these jobs. People should be aware of just what an amazing job this team does: our church, Old School and churchyard would all be in a much poorer position without their hard work and commitment.

Work has been on-going towards our Net Zero commitment; Claire Boud organised a couple of fund-raising dinners and money was raised to buy a new, top of the range electric cooker. This, made possible by having solar panels to create the electricity, has meant that we could get the gas supply cut off, so that the Old School is now a net zero building! We are extremely grateful to Mike Smith, in particular, for his vision and drive in this project.

We have created Faculties this year to replace the ring main in church (a step towards net zero as we add extra electrical capacity), to repair the church boundary wall and to rebuild the steps to the vestry. We were very pleased to be able to re-use the old entrance steps and rail to church for this project. Our most recent

APCM 17th May 2026

Faculty is to improve our accessibility by removing two pews and replacing them with one shorter pew, creating a space for wheelchair users or for buggies. We have also worked on getting our due diligence on track this year by updating Risk Assessments and Job Descriptions.

We have welcomed Phil Burns to St Paul's for a year of – can we say – work experience? He has been able to take some of the preaching and service leading load off Claire, for which we are all grateful; we hope that his time with us has been helpful to him as he continues to discern God's will for his life.

Claire has moved house this year! She is now living roughly halfway between the two churches, and we hope that this makes it easier for her to get between the two of them as necessary.

We would like to pay tribute to and thank God for this amazing woman, who, single-handedly, has taken on a huge new responsibility, moved to a new home, looked after all of us, carried out her weekly preaching and leading roles diligently, and set us all an example of humility and dedication.

Karen Lambert

Church Warden

2. PCC Report 2026

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 registered 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 2028) Mrs Marta Smith, Mrs Wendy Blight,
- (until 2027) Mrs Claire Boud, Mrs Sally Banks, Mrs Madeline Manfield
- (until 2026) Mr John Clifton, Mrs Charlotte Palmer-Ladd, Miss Hayley Bunce, Mrs Sue Treherne (Treasurer)

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 are:

Deanery Synod: Margaret Murray and Nicki Bunce

PCC: Charlotte Palmer-Ladd (6 years), John Clifton (6 years), Hayley Bunce (3 years), Sue Treherne (3 years)

(Restanding: Hayley Bunce standing for PCC, Sue Treherne standing for Deanery Synod, Margaret Murray standing for Deanery Synod, Charlotte Palmer-Ladd standing for Deanery Synod, Nicki Bunce standing for PCC)

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 **92** names on the Church Electoral Roll. Average weekly attendance at the main Sunday service over the whole of 2025 is **48**. 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. However, the main focus for this year has been the twinning process, with Claire licensed as Priest-in-charge to St Peter's in September.

Growing in welcome:

We have changed the times to enable services to continue every week on both sites and to be fully resourced

We have extended our communications to include Instagram, with Hayley and Abbie organising regular posts and Liz involved in planning – we are very grateful for all they have done, the posts look great and have encouraged people to come along to things.

We have started a new group based at St Peter's called Tadpoles, for 0-2 age group.

There has been some thinking about different age groups, with some ideas we hope to launch this year.

Growing in discipleship:

We did a skills audit to look at how people can use their gifts in the church, which has enabled new volunteers.

We have expanded Advent and Lent groups and WhatsApp across the 2 churches

We held the Bible Course and had some book recommendations

We did a preparing for first communion group across the 2 churches and have another one planned.

Growing in community:

The communication work has also benefitted advertising to the community more widely. We aim to cover all age ranges and so alongside the Instagram and Facebook posts, we also produce the WhatsOn leaflet which gives dates for the term.

We have built a team for the Food Shed, and they have considered a wide range of ideas, and would love more to get involved! We are now storing the food inside and are hoping to build some cupboards for this, to prevent the damp issues in the shed. We have seen a good increase in donations through our "food item of the month" being advertised in groups as well as through our emails.

We have continued to work with St Paul's Primary School in many ways and are looking to develop a schools team to enable this work to be shared out and expand what we do in Ash schools too.

APCM 17th May 2026

Financially, we have had a difficult year. Income has been down and we have had to pause most projects while we consider how to address this. We ideally need people to review if they can give a bit more and new people to start to give regularly. Parish Giving is ideal, as we get the gift aid monthly too.

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. We added supporting Compassion's water aid project this year with a very successful meal and auction, as well as some monthly giving. The project has been completed, giving fresh clean water to another village, which makes such a difference to health and access for girls to education.

We continue to try to ensure these are ecofriendly 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.

A huge thank you to all on the PCC 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:

This year we were offered the opportunity to support Phil Burns through his final year as an ordinand, getting ready for his ordination as a Deacon in 2026. This was unexpected but has been a great blessing as he has got involved in many areas of church life on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays (around his other study commitments).

Our Children's Team has been fantastic! We are hugely grateful to 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 and more discussion.

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 and Baby Plus continue 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. (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 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.

APCM 17th May 2026

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 Martin and Harriet as pastoral visitors and have benefitted from Phil's involvement as our ordinand.

We had 3 weddings and regular funerals! But we have no weddings booked for the coming year – which is another area that adds pressure on our finances.

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!

Vicar's Review of the Year

What a year it has been! A year that has seen the first stage of twinning as I was licensed at St Peter's Ash. I started in September and I think I would describe the time as like climbing a mountain! It has been hard work! But without climbing the mountain you don't see the small alpine flowers or the view! I have seen much that has been lovely. And I am excited as we are beginning to look forward, to see where God is guiding us.

I have enjoyed getting to know the different services and am delighted that, in particular, the Taizé service, which is planned across both churches, is growing and new musicians getting involved too. But all our services have grown, and we had fantastic numbers over Christmas and Easter.

I have a tendency to try to do things myself (you may have noticed) – mainly because I take my responsibility so seriously. But I am having to learn my limitations and have needed the teams more than ever. I am very grateful for those who have done more to enable me to be at both churches. The first year of any new role is challenging as each church season is tackled for the first time. So, I am confident next year will get easier! The changes of times for services have been challenging for some and very welcome to others (you really can't please everyone!). The Christmas Eve 9pm "midnight service" was very well received by many who now find the 11 or 11.30pm services too late, so there are definitely some good new things that have emerged. And I think looking at how things are done in both churches has also helped to further improve our governance and processes.

Thank you to all who have given financially or with time to support the church, it makes such a difference. But a special thanks must go to the wardens, Kay and Karen, who have done so much over the past year.

And so, I am looking forward to seeing what God is planning for us all! The strap line for the year ahead is **sharing the love of God widely**. Not necessarily about new things, but maybe being more intentional, looking at whether the message of God's love is being understood by our community, thinking how we can bless those around us more and help people to know God's love for them.

Revd Claire Holt

Ephesians 3, 17-19

APCM 17th May 2026

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

3. Finance Report 2026

As you will see from the figures, this has been a difficult year for St Paul's. In 2024 the parish share went up but, as we felt that we could not afford it, we only paid half the increase. This stretched our finances but we seemed to be coping. This year, the twinning did not take place until September, so we had to continue with the increased payments.

In addition, we were trying to keep our Maintenance fund topped up by saving £1000 per month. This proved to be too ambitious and we found that we were having to withdraw it again to cover our running expenses.

When we examined the figures more closely, we found that giving, in general, was down. You will see that compared to 2024 collections are down, one off donations are down, grants are down but they mostly relate to specific projects and we had a lot of projects ongoing in 2024. Church groups income is slightly down, funerals and weddings are unpredictable and self-funding.

Church events income is down by a massive £7,500. This is not because we didn't have any, or because they were failures, but the events organised benefitted some of the charities we support rather than the church itself, so the proceeds were donated to them. Also the events were smaller than the previous year.

This cash flow crisis was masked by the fact that we had received a generous legacy of £10,000 to repair the vestry steps (which has been done) and the front wall (which will be worked on this summer). Both of these being jobs which were very much in need of attention.

On the other side of the equation, whilst we have cut back on project work, to give ourselves a breather, we have still been working on becoming net zero energy users. This has involved removing the gas appliances (boiler and cooker) from the Old School and installing solar panels and more batteries so that we can provide our own electricity. As you can see, this is not cheap but has already brought savings from our energy use.

So, to summarise: the lack of income from church events was compensated for by the legacy but we are still showing a £1000 deficit over the year. Our Parish Share is reducing by about £200 per month now that we are twinned, but the diocese still want to collect the deficit from 2025 so we will need to maintain this higher level for one more year, which should just about see us in the clear. On the up side, we are holding events to raise funds for St Paul's such as the Baked Potato meal which you may have supported. There is also a Skittles event to come and, later in the year a Quiz Night, and a Harvest Supper to look forward to. Hopefully these events will appeal to church families and also the local community.

The message I would like you to take away is that your contributions are important to us. We cannot manage without them and we hope that you support our events and enable us to continue providing a service to the community around us and also maintain our buildings in a good condition. Thank you to everyone who supports us.

Sue Treherne

Treasurer

4. Safeguarding Report 2026

Safeguarding remains a priority for St Paul's. New and continuing volunteers have completed training sessions both online and in-person and DBS checks have also taken place. Training for those involved with children and working as PCC members is reviewed annually and is to be renewed every three years to the highest level of training. Our church wardens have both renewed their leadership training, a course that reflects on making safeguarding an intrinsic part of church culture. Guildford Diocese have changed DBS supplier but both Claire & Wendy have learned how to use the new system and submitted checks through it.

The parish has continued to use the Parish Dashboard that helps ensure that safeguarding procedures are kept up to date. The goal for next year is to begin using the Safeguarding Hub instead which will help streamline our safeguarding efforts.

Wendy Blight is willing to stand as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer, taking over from Julie Gadsby who has served as PSO for many years now. We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Julie for all her hard work in the role and for agreeing to remain as an invaluable source of knowledge on the team.

Helen has worked on creating and reviewing role descriptions for our volunteers. These role descriptions help to make clear what the requirements and expectations are for various roles within St Paul's. They form part of the Safer Recruiting requirements which are being rolled out across the church nationwide and include other measures such as references being sought for volunteers and probation periods, alongside the expected training and DBS checks. St Paul's will be adopting these next year.

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.

If you ever have any safeguarding concerns, please email dbs@stpaulstongham.org.uk or speak to Wendy Blight, Claire Holt, one of the wardens (Karen Lambert or Kay Tauschwitz) or Claire Boud (our children & families worker).

Safeguarding Team – Revd Claire Holt, Julie Gadsby, Wendy Blight, Helen Maguire

5. Children & Families Report 2026

Coffee Plus

Coffee Plus has continued to thrive this year, with about 20-25 regular families who attend. Some weeks are busier than others as you would expect, but everyone who comes says how warm, welcoming and supportive the group is. Many attendees have come up through Baby Plus, or are returning with subsequent children, but we are continuing to gain new families coming from all the new housing estates and as far afield as Aldershot and Farnborough!

The set up remains the same as last year in that 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, the clear up from this type of play is not always a fun job, but a lot of the children do not get offered these opportunities elsewhere, so it is worth doing.

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 this wonderful facility. We planted the pea and bean seeds during the sessions last year, most of the plants thankfully thrived and the children were very excited to be able to pick the various produce later in the year. We also planted sunflower seeds and ran a competition to see who could grow the tallest one, the winner topped out at 2.4m!

A massive thank you to Mike, Andy & Jim for all their hard work in maintaining this area and helping us with the planting and a massive amount of the watering.

Baby Plus

Baby Plus has always been my 'baby' and my most favourite time of the week, and I can't believe we are now into its 7th year! We regularly have about 15 mums coming along for a chat, a hot drink, piece of cake and some care and support. My motto has always been 'Happy Mum', 'Happy Baby' but to achieve that we need to look after the mum; providing for some of their basic needs in terms of a hot drink and sustenance, a chance to go to the toilet on their own and most importantly of all to be listened to properly and their concerns to be taken seriously. Social media and families being spread far and wide have created a situation where mothers often feel isolated and judged. At Baby Plus we try to reduce that isolation and have honest and open conversations about the reality of parenthood. Feedback from attendees proves that groups like these are highly valued and necessary.

Grandparents' Coffee Mornings

These sessions are now a firm staple in the diary, running 5/6 times a year on the Wednesdays during the school holidays, we regularly have 7/8 grandparents attending with or without their grandchildren to chat, play, share experiences and have a laugh.

The next dates are Wed 1st April, and Wed 27th May 10.30-12, so do put the dates in your diary.

I am in the middle of attending a Grandparenting for Faith course, both for my own benefit but also to see if it would be appropriate to run the sessions here at St. Paul's. Grandparents are in a unique position to influence their grandchildren's lives, and the course very simply gives some ideas and tips on how this influence could be faith based. If you would be interested in hearing more, do not hesitate to get in touch.

Picnic & Prayer

These proved very popular sessions during the warmer months last year. We would gather in the community garden after Coffee Plus or Baby Plus to eat lunch, usually once each half term. We would then

APCM 17th May 2026

engage in some prayer activities using the concept of tsp prayers (Thanks, Sorry and Please) Some good conversations occurred with both children and parents alike about faith, prayer and God. We have taken a break during the winter months as we found people are less likely to stay for an indoor picnic, but the sessions will be back in the spring!

Christmas

As in previous years, we hosted a very successful Toddler Nativity and the very yummy Baby Plus Christmas Lunch. Plus this year, since we are all gluttons for punishment, we also ran a Toddler Christmas party! All were well attended and the feedback showed that not only had people enjoyed being with us, but that the Nativity was particularly special for a number of the mums. We handed out a gift of a nativity story book to all the children at the party, a big thank you to the person who donated the money for these and to Madeline for wrapping them all!

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. The Family Centre have also sent out several support workers over the year to attend the groups, get to know the parents and provide information on what they do and what support is available. You will notice that their posters and information are now on the noticeboard.

Future

Since November we have added the Tadpoles group at St. Peter's, to our overall provision for families. This runs on a Tuesday morning in their centre, 9.30-10.45. This group is a smaller, quieter group especially aimed at the crawling/ just walking children in the 0-2 yr age group, Hopefully this fills a gap between the baby group and the more rambunctious toddler group we run. It has proved popular with some overlap of attendees from our groups but also with new faces being supported and welcomed into the church environment. We hope this will continue to thrive and grow over this year, and there is a huge potential to expand the families work at St. Peter's further.

A massive thank you to our dedicated volunteers, without whom I could not run the successful sessions we do. A big thank you too, to those who support 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. Or if you fancy a 'behind the scenes' role I can always find an array of tasks that need doing which are equally beneficial to the smooth running of the sessions. Do speak to me if you would like further information.

Claire Boud
Community Worker

6. Electoral Roll Report 2026

At the time of the APCM last year there were 85 names on the Church Electoral Roll. There are now 92 names on the Church Electoral Roll, many of these additions were applications received during the roll renewal last year that became eligible to be added later on in the year.

Wendy Blight
Electoral Roll Officer