

**THE PRIORY AND PARISH CHURCH  
OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
ROYSTON**

**ANNUAL YEAR BOOK ENDING 2025**



A summary of our activities and accounts  
for the calendar year 2025

To be approved and celebrated at our  
Annual Meeting on

Sunday 22 March 2026 at 12 noon

PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST ROYSTON

Annual Meeting of Parishioners - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 at 12.00 to be held in Church

AGENDA

Apologies for absence

1. Approval of Minutes of meeting on 23 March 2025
2. Election of Churchwardens

Philip Perry, PCC Secretary

4 March 2026



PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST ROYSTON

Annual Parochial Church Meeting - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 to be held in Church immediately after the  
Annual Meeting of Parishioners

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

Apologies for absence

1. Approval of Minutes of meeting on 23 March 2025
2. Matters Arising
3. Electoral Roll Report
4. Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2025 incorporating the Annual Report of the proceedings of the PCC
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner
6. Churchwardens' Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church
7. Safeguarding
8. Deanery Synod Report
9. Election of Deanery Synod representatives
10. Election of Parochial Church Council
11. Reports of Church Organisations
12. Chairman's Report
13. Any Questions

Philip Perry, PCC Secretary

4 March 2026



**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held in Royston Parish Church on Sunday 23 March 2025 at 12.10**

**Present :** Heather Allen, Alison Bailey, Reg Bailey, Anthea Bird, Lynda Burns, Clare Davies, Jim Dalglish, Milly Dalglish, Lee Dingwall, Linda Dwight, Max Elliot, Andrew Emms, John Fidler, Margaret Fidler, Kim Fox, Rob Fox, Margaret Gardiner, Jennifer Gilson, Sandra Harman, Kay Blayney, Matt Jux-Blayney, Kay Makowiecki, Richard Marais, Mike Maze, Brian Munday, Evelyn Munday, Angela Nicholl, Audrey Nightingale, Bridget Pegna, Anthony Pigg, Philip Perry, Jeanette Perry, Tibor Pollerman, Nancy Reay, Duncan Rodgers, Judith Rodgers, Ruth Savage, Emma Sivyer, Phil Sizeland, Brenda Strangleman, Liz Wainwright, Vaughan West, Charlotte Wicks, Daniel Wicks and Joanne Wallis.

**Opening Prayers** were led by Revd Steven Sivyer who welcomed all those attending the meeting.

**Apologies for absence:** Phil Burchell, Jenny Burchell, Rosemary Burt, Carol Cardwell, Myra Darling, John Dowling, Rosemary Dowling, Rodney Dyer, Yvonne Dyer, Neil Guttridge, Rena Marais, Andy Moorley and Beth Moorley.

**1. Approval of minutes of meeting of Parishioners held on Sunday 19 May 2024**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2024 had previously been circulated. The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record, to be signed by the Vicar.

**2. Election of Churchwardens**

Two nominations were received:

Richard Marais – nominated by Kim Fox, seconded by Rob Fox

Vaughan West – nominated by Duncan Rodgers, seconded by Judith Rodgers

Both nominees were unanimously elected.

There was a vote of thanks to Judith Rodgers for all her hard work as Churchwarden. She will remain as Warden until the Archdeacon's Visitation. Vaughan was thanked for his continuing work. He has said that this will be his last year as Warden. Richard was thanked for responding to God's call to serve as Warden.

All business of the meeting having been completed, it was declared closed at 12.15.

**Present:** As for the preceding Annual Meeting of Parishioners, with Revd. Steven Sivyer continuing in the chair.

**Opening Prayers** were led by Steven.

**Apologies for absence :** As for the preceding Annual Meeting of Parishioners

**1. Approval of minutes of meeting on 19 May 2024.**

The minutes were unanimously accepted as a true record, to be signed by Steven.

**2. Matters arising**

None.

**3. Electoral Roll Report**

Brenda Strangleman said that she had nothing to add to her report. Steven said that he was pleased that the number of people on the Roll was increasing.

**4. Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2024 incorporating the Annual Report of the proceedings of the PCC**

Charlotte Wicks said that it had been a good year financially, with income exceeding expenditure by £3.5k, and we were grateful for God's goodness. There had been some new areas of expenditure, such as CCTV, the roof alarm and the toy cupboard, as well as engaging a new member of staff both to work in the community and to act as choirmaster / organist. Income from the congregation had increased and we were very grateful for this, as well as for the giving of their time and talents.

The accounts were proposed for acceptance and seconded by Kay Makowieki. They were then unanimously accepted by meeting attendees, who also expressed huge thanks to Charlotte & Jonathan.

**5. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Charlotte said that she anticipated continuing to work with Hayley Squires at UHY. She proposed, and Liz Wainwright seconded, the continuation of UHY as independent examiners. This was unanimously accepted.

**6. Churchwardens' Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church**

Vaughan thanked Judith Rodgers and Rodney Dyer for their contributions and also Max Elliot, who had just started work on grant submissions. Vaughan noted that when we took back responsibility for the building 2 ½ years ago, we had not realised how onerous the maintenance of the new technology would be.

There were no questions on the Churchwardens' Report. Steven expressed everyone's great appreciation of the work carried out by the Wardens and by the fabric team.

## 7. Safeguarding

Alison Bailey said that she had nothing to add to the report, and there were no questions.

## 8. Deanery Synod Report

Brenda Strangleman said she had nothing to add to her report. There were no questions.

## 9. Election of Deanery Synod representatives

Richard Marais was nominated by Duncan and Judith Rodgers to fill the one casual vacancy. There were no other nominations and he therefore became a Deanery Synod member unopposed.

## 10. Number of Elected PCC Members

Steven noted that, many years ago, a previous APCM had increased the number of elected PCC members to 15. The figure stipulated under the Church of England's Church Representational Rules for a church with 101 – 200 people on the Electoral Roll is 12. Steven asked the meeting if anyone knew why the limit had been increased, but the reason remained unclear. He also noted that in considering the overall size of the PCC, we should bear in mind the large number of *ex officio* members - potentially nine, namely the Vicar, the new Curate, Revd John Fidler, Reg Bailey, two Churchwardens and three Deanery Synod representatives, (currently seven in practice, as both Vaughan and Richard will be doubling up on the roles of Churchwarden and Deanery Synod representative). To resolve these issues there were two votes :

- 1) It was proposed to revert to the standard Church of England rules on the maximum number of elected PCC members. This motion was proposed by Steven and seconded by Matt. The motion was approved by an overwhelming majority.

Emma proposed that one Reader should represent all of the Readers on the PCC and that the person who will be on the PCC will be decided between the readers if there is more than one licensed reader in the parish.

- 2) The motion was seconded by Reg and unanimously approved. Emma and Reg agreed to continue with the current arrangement whereby Reg sits on the PCC.

## 11. Election of Parochial Church Council

The following members of the congregation were nominated :

	<u>Nominated by:</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Kay Makowicki	Reg Bailey	Alison Bailey
Philip Perry	Anthea Bird	Myra Darling
Ruth Savage	Lynda Burns	Liz Wainwright
Joanne Wallis	Anna Christou	Judith Rodgers

As there were five vacancies, the four nominees accordingly became PCC members unopposed.

Judith Rodgers and Liz Wainwright were thanked on reaching the end of their terms of office.

## 12. Reports of Church Organisations

There had been one error in the report, as Phil Burchell's year of service on the PCC after he had stood down as Treasurer had not been recorded. Apologies were made to Phil. There were no questions on the reports.

Steven said that the report showed the great range of the life of the Parish Church and he thanked the leaders and helpers of the organisations concerned.

## 13. Chairman's Report

Steven said that although he would like to thank everybody by name, this was not possible, so he expressed an overarching thanks and was focussing on new developments in his report.

In January, we held a visioning day, which was leading on to new editions of our MAP. As a result, "Church at Home" had begun, led by Beth & Andy Moorley and Reg Bailey. Ministry work was extending to include the children's parents - for example, craft evenings - as well as last summer's holiday club. Such initiatives had been fruitful, especially at Christmas, with one family also now attending the main Sunday morning service.

Other new services including Blue Christmas, the pet service, hot cross bun praise and evening praise had been introduced. In future there would be incense at some services and a programme of guest speakers.

New groups included knit and natter led by Joanne and Liz. Alex was thanked for his work in starting the Treble Makers.

The Patronal Festival had developed so that it lasted for a whole weekend and the Events Team were thanked for their work on this and on other functions. Eight children had come forward for Communion during the Festival, prepared by Steven and Reg. Clare was thanked for her work on the successful Heritage Day. The Christmas Tree continued to be a great blessing to the town, with record numbers of messages having been left. Steven asked if somebody could come forward to be an apprentice to Chris, so that the future of the Tree could be secured well into the future.

There had been a slight restructuring of PCC committees and Vaughan had initiated an HR Committee which ensures the PCC's commitment to paying the Living Wage. The Parish Magazine had been moved to a new monthly format, so that it was now freely available on the website and consequently environmentally friendly.

Steven was pleased to note that the Ministry Leadership Team had now been more formally constituted. The Team had led our consideration of the Prayers of Love & Faith initiative very well and the congregation had responded positively.

Steven then moved on to the Electoral Roll, noting that more people had been added to the Roll than had moved on. He was also pleased to note that the Roll shows that we are now younger and more diverse and thanked God for this. He thanked Brenda for all of her work on the Roll.

Moving on to Finance, 2024 had been a good year, but there were continuing challenges ahead, notably as a result of the necessary refurbishment of 12 Prince Andrew's Close. Charlotte & Jonathan Wicks were thanked as Joint Treasurers and Jeanette Perry was thanked for leading the Stewardship Committee.

Looking briefly ahead, the Parish Church would soon be responding to its continuing growth in numbers by launching neighbourhood ministries.

Steven concluded with expressions of thanks. Mike was thanked for being extremely supportive throughout his time as PCC Secretary. The Churchwardens, PCC members, committee members, the leadership team including Emma were also all thanked – we are all responding to God’s calling on our lives.

#### **14. Any Other Questions**

There were none.

The meeting ended with grace at 1.00pm.

Phil Perry

PCC Secretary

**ROYSTON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH CHURCH**

**ROYSTON HERTS**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2025**

## **St John the Baptist Parish Church, Royston**

### **Annual Report of the PCC for 2025**

The layout of the Annual Report meets the recommendations of the Diocese and complies with the Charities Act.

#### **Aim and Purposes**

The primary object of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC co-operated with the minister in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church - pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC has regard to the Charity Commission Public Benefit guidance and is keen to support activities which reach out and benefit the wider community. Amongst our activities in 2025 in this respect were -

- Development of weekend of events as part of our Patronal Festival
- Weekly Tots in Church for young children and their carers continuing to thrive, with usual attendance of 35 – 45 children. This had been expanded to include a summer holiday club, with an average of 50 children attending each day in 2025
- Supporting Royston Arts Festival by making the church building available for performances, including providing an organ recital
- Royston Choral Society's and Town Band's concerts in our church
- Our annual Christmas Tree project attracting a wide section of the community, enabling members of the public to write messages regarding people that they will not be spending Christmas with. Church members were present in the church to greet visitors and 1,056 message tags were put on the tree.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

The PCC's main objectives are covered by the five marks of Mission of the Church of England:-

1. to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. to teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. to respond to human need by loving service
4. to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The new Outreach Committee is continuing to review the PCC's objectives, as outlined below.

The regular pattern of services is to hold three Eucharist services each week, two on Sunday morning and one on Wednesday. This is supplemented by a monthly Teatime Praise service on a Sunday afternoon for all age groups, attracting many parents with young families. We also hold numerous special services throughout the year to reflect the church's calendar.

The HR (Human Resources) Committee comprises of Vaughan West as a Churchwarden, Charlotte Wicks as a PCC Treasurer and the Vicar. They reviewed pay for church staff, reviewed HR related policies such as a Grievance Policy which was then presented to the PCC to redact and then adopt. The Committee was also involved in the recruitment process for the Minister of Music and Director of Music Outreach post, which was advertised twice in 2025 following Alex Trigg's resignation due to poor health. Candidates were shortlisted on both occasions, with interviews on one of them, but unfortunately no appointment was made.

The Outreach Committee meets regularly and are responsible for recommending to the PCC which mission charities we should support in the year. The committee has considered in depth our policies for giving financial and other support to outside missions and charities. The PCC has a long-standing policy to give 10% of our committed income to missions and charities. Over the years, the list had grown to 15 missions. It was decided to limit the number by aligning our giving to the Church of England's Five Marks of Mission. By reducing the number of outside missions to five, the aim is that the congregation will learn about them and identify with them more than hitherto.

The Marks of Mission, with the mission we will continue to support in each case, are :

- \* *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers* : The Bible Society
- \* *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom* : GenR8
- \* *To respond to human needs by loving service* : Royston & District Home Start
- \* *To transform unjust structures in society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation* : Tear Fund
- \* *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth* : Church Mission Society

It is acknowledged by the PCC that the day to day running requirements can only be met by unpaid volunteers who are called and inspired by Christ and then offer their time and services freely, and the life of the church is reliant upon this continued provision of mission and ministry for its ongoing welfare and strength. The Times and Talents that they offer is now managed through the Ministry Leadership Team.

### **Achievements and Performance**

The electoral Roll had 155 names on the updated version at the time of the 2025 APCM (146 in 2024).

The average attendance figure (including children) in October 2025 was 125 (136 in 2024).

A youth house group "Church at Home" continued for young people aged 11 to 17.

Children being included in the choir for the first time in many years.

There were fourteen baptisms, two children receive Holy Communion by the register and four people were confirmed.

14 tea time praise / evening services were held.

The church building was taken off the “Heritage at Risk” register on 6<sup>th</sup> November. This was celebrated by a feature on “Look East” which featured church members Rodney Dyer and Phil Burchell who had led on much of the work. Despite this watershed moment being achieved, various improvements to the building continue to be prioritised and, notably in 2025, a new cupboard for the folding tables was installed.

In the first half of the year, thanks to tremendous efforts by Mike Maze, Tracy Reader, Richard Marais and Brad Jones, the Curate’s house was made vacant and given a far-reaching refurbishment, all in record time and within budget. The house was furnished with a new kitchen, new carpets, new radiators and new doors, redecorated and thoroughly cleaned. Jaime Roberts, joined us as Curate in June. A coach has been organised so that a good number of the congregation can attend her priesting at St Albans on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

During September to November, Kim Kingston came to Royston on placement as part of her training towards becoming a Reader, a lay minister in the church.

The PCC continued to receive reports on safeguarding issues. The Safeguarding Action Plan was approved by the PCC on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Financial Review**

The PCC is responsible for the finances of the Church to ensure that we can continue to support the work of our Ministry Team, the life of our congregation and our role helping to share the Good News of God’s Love to the wider community. We also wish to maintain our beautiful church building at the heart of Royston now and for the future. This report is a summary of some of the key points detailed in the accounts.

#### *The money we received this year*

Total income for the year was £192,474 (2024: £218,886). £168,910 of this income was unrestricted relating to the ongoing general activities of the Church (2024: £191,761). Stewardship income totalled £85,645, an increase of £3,903 on the previous year. We were grateful for the positive response to our stewardship campaign in the autumn. Gift Aid recovery from all sources amounted to £23,711 down slightly from £24,084 in the previous year. This Gift Aid recovery was again helped by the inclusion of a claim arising from the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS).

This year for the first time we are reporting on the small donations we received outside of regular stewardship giving. This includes money given on the contactless card payment machine at the back of church as well as money given on the plate at services or in the wall safe. Small donations this year totalled £6,658, down from £7,022 last year. We also collected £357 for other charities including the retiring collections taken at weddings and baptisms for our local Children’s Hospice, EACH.

Sundry donations were £17,490 (2024: £14,958). Included in this figure was a donation towards choir costs and a donation given with the request that it be put towards the refurbishment of the vestry or some other future project.

Fundraising in the year was £12,472 and after expenses this contributed £10,103 (2024: £10,714) to general Church funds. As well as profits from our popular Saturday Morning Coffee, other key fundraising events were the Church Quiz, the Book Fayre and a host of other events organised by our Events Committee. We continued to receive donations to our "Sponsor a Chair" scheme, which raised a further £1,750 plus Gift Aid. This has been set aside as restricted income to pay for the further refurbishment of the church.

Fee income from weddings and funerals was £13,498 (2024: £18,699). This reduction arose as there were fewer of these special services held in our church this year. Fewer services did mean some of our costs were reduced but overall this impacted adversely on our finances for the year as the fee income we receive goes to support other areas of our ministry.

We received legacies in 2024 totalling £7,266. We are grateful that these parishioners chose to remember the church amongst their final gifts.

During the year we were paid grants of £12,653 in total. This included the second instalment of a grant over three years from the Diocese to assist with the cost of employing our Minister of Music and Director of Music Outreach. We also received a grant from the Purcell Club at Westminster Abbey towards the same project and one from the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust towards the recent installation of our roof alarm. The PCC would like to record its thanks for all grants received this year.

We took back possession of the Curate's house in the Spring of this year to make it available for our new trainee Curate. Our rental income from the first part of the year was £4,318 (2024: £15,328). We will not receive any rental income in 2026. The fact that we have not been receiving rental income for most of the year is one of the main reasons why our incoming resources were less this year. Looking forward to next year, this shortfall in rental income will be made up to a large extent by a reduction in the Parish Share requested of us. This reduction acknowledges our cost in providing accommodation to our trainee Curate.

We received £4,718 this year for the use or hire of the church for one off events or recurring activities. This was less than the £5,751 we received last year when we had made the church available for the local school to use for a lengthy period in the Spring.

Finally, lower interest rates resulted in decreased income from investments of £2,295 (2024: £2,660).

#### *The money we spent this year*

Total expenditure for this year was £181,579. This was less than our expenditure in 2024 (£216,207). Of this total unrestricted expenditure from general church funds was £165,749 (2024: £188,191).

Mission expenditure allocation followed our standard agreed practice of giving away 10% of our total stewardship income, including Gift Aid tax relief, and £10,273 was made available to

the Missions Committee. The other charitable expenditure of £459 is the amount paid out following the collections for other external charities noted earlier.

Our most significant expenditure is the Parish Share which, for 2025, was £76,989 compared to £80,613 in the previous year. We paid the amount requested in full. We were asked to pay less this year than last year, because since the early summer we have been providing accommodation to our trainee Curate. Paying our Parish Share is central to the life of the Church as it pays not only for our Vicar, but mission and ministry across the Diocese and the Church of England, such as our Archdeacons, Bishops and central Diocese staff.

Clergy expenses were £4,810 (2024: £7,004). This figure now includes the expenses of both our Vicar and our trainee Curate. We have continued to support them both with necessary expenses relating to their ministry. The higher figure in 2024 was due to the cost of bringing in other ministers to take funerals.

We spent £27,343 on church repairs and maintenance this year compared to £55,265 in 2024. £7,811 of this expenditure came from restricted funds, being grants and the donations we continue to receive for sponsoring the chairs. The two major items of expenditure were for the new table storage cupboard in the nave and for repairs to the external south wall near the kitchen. The other significant expenditure incurred this year was to update the Curate's house ready for our new trainee Curate and her family. We had already recognised much of the upgrade costs in our accounts for last year, but inevitably there were further costs this year. We are grateful to a number of individuals within the congregation who helped with this work. It should also be noted that included in the figure above was the £4,263 we spent on the regular annual maintenance of the existing systems in church such as the heating system, the AV system and the roof and fire alarm systems.

Church running expenses at £22,462 were similar to 2024 (£22,517). All of our electricity comes from renewable wind energy. With our new contract that started in December 2025 the gas we use is now 50% biomethane gas increased from 25% earlier in the year. This reflects our wish to be good stewards of God's creation around us.

There are no other significant year on year variances to report.

We are aware of the importance of social, environmental and ethical considerations and issues of sustainability in reaching investment decisions. Our investments are held with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund and the CBF Church of England Investment Fund which we understand to be in line with these concerns.

### *Overall summary*

In summary, we are pleased to report that unrestricted income exceeded expenditure to leave a surplus of £2,441 for the year (2024: £3,549 surplus). Restricted funds show a surplus of £8,438 (2024: £889 deficit). With regard to endowment funds there was an unrealised loss of £1,211 on investments.

It remains a challenge to grow our income to meet our ever-increasing expenditure but we remain grateful for God's generosity to our Church. In the light of this continuing generosity – manifested through our congregation and our local community and detailed in this report and

accounts – the PCC believe there are no uncertainties to be noted about the Church’s ability to continue as a going concern.

### **Reserves Policy and level of Free Reserves**

The PCC has a policy of maintaining sufficient reserves to continue to carry on God's work and keep our presence as a Church in the community of Royston and to meet, for a reasonable period of time, our regular commitments regardless of levels of income. At 31 December 2025 the Free Reserves were £61,752 (2024: £59,311) which was in line with the policy.

### **Plans for future periods**

In 2026, we plan to:-

- Review the objectives of the Church through the work of the Outreach Committee
- Continue the trend in 2025 to grow the church in numbers attending and particularly the encouraging growth in the number of children, young people and their parents attending church
- Look at ways to increase our income as a church through the oversight of the Finance Committee
- Increase the depth of people’s walk with God and discipleship of Christ

### **Risk management**

- Our income is not rising as fast as costs. One area of increased expense is the maintenance of the greatly improved facilities we now have, since we returned to the church building after the fire. Many of our costs have increased recently, the same as for our congregation. We focussed on Stewardship this year highlighting this risk to parishioners and we will continue to keep this in mind in the year ahead.
- Mindful of our need to be good stewards of God’s wonderful creation, we have pledged to become carbon neutral as a church by 2030. This is a particular challenge in our 800 year old building. We hope for leadership from the Diocese and the Church on a national level to help us achieve this within our mission to our congregation and the wider community.

### **Structure, governance and management**

- The PCC is a corporate body established by the Church of England.
- The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure and is a Registered Charity.
- Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules 2022.
- The PCC met nine times in 2025 (eight in 2024) with an average attendance of 77% (in 2024 also 77%).
- Regular Reports were received on the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and policy documents approved. New PCC members completed the online Foundations and Domestic Abuse training courses and DBS checks continued in line with our Safeguarding Action Plan. We have complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

- Decisions are taken by PCC at their regular meetings but if an urgent decision is required, the Standing Committee can decide, subject to agreed restrictions.
- Arrangements for setting the remuneration of the church's employees is agreed by the PCC, and we use the benchmark of the "Real Living Wage", as a minimum pay level.
- Day to day management is delegated to the incumbent, Revd Dr. Steven Sivyer.

The PCC operates through a number of committees which meet as and when required and report back to the PCC:

Standing	The only committee required by law. It is empowered to transact urgent business of the PCC between meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC
Sustainable living	Seeks to promote a greater awareness of ecological issues and recommends measures to reduce the church's carbon footprint
Fabric	Advises and implements the decisions of the PCC on the management of the church building and the house provided for occupation by a curate; also oversees the management of the churchyard and additional burial ground
Finance	Oversees the general financial direction of the parish, monitors income and expenditure, reviews budgets and liaises with other committees on financial matters. This committee has taken over responsibility for the financial side of stewardship
Events	Raises funds for the church and to organise parish and social events to promote friendship within the congregation. These events may have no fundraising objectives
Human Resources	Manages recruitment, contracts of employment and appeal process for employees of the church
Outreach	The PCC took the decision last year to establish the Outreach Committee in order to make a renewed commitment to this important aspect of the life of the Church. The Committee has reviewed the priorities identified in the <b>Mission Action Plan</b> , and monitored the progress we are making in each. These are:

- \* *Embedding prayer in our daily lives*
- \* *Establishing small groups at the heart of church*
- \* *Equipping people to share their faith*
- \* *Establishing a stepped approach for children to grow as disciples*
- \* *Extending our provision for parents*
- \* *Increasing our support for those who are lonely, housebound or bereaved.*

The Committee has also looked in depth at our use of social media, and communications.

Youth & Children	Encourages and supports existing children's work. Determines new ways of sharing the faith with young people through whatever appropriate means. Encourages training and support of leaders
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## Administrative Information

### **Name of Church**

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist, Royston (Hertfordshire)

### **Registered with the Charity Commission**

The Church is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales under the name “The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St John the Baptist, Royston” with charity registration number 1132876.

## Membership of the PCC

During the year 2025 the following served as PCC members:

Ex officio	The Reverend Dr. Steven Sivyer	Incumbent
	The Reverend Jaime Roberts	Curate from 25 July
	Mr Reginald Bailey	Reader
	Mr Richard Marais	Churchwarden and Deanery Synod from APCM 2025
	Mr Philip Perry	Deanery Synod until APCM 2025
	Mrs Judith Rodgers	Churchwarden until APCM 2025
	Miss Brenda Strangleman	Deanery Synod
	Mr Vaughan West	Churchwarden and Deanery Synod

### Elected members

Dr Clare Davies	
Mrs Yvonne Dyer	
Mr Robert Fox	
Mr Neil Guttridge	
Mr Matthew Jux-Blayney	
Mrs Kay Makowiecki	
Mr Michael Maze	Secretary until APCM 2025
Mr Philip Perry	From APCM 2025, Secretary
Mr Anthony Pigg	
Mr Duncan Rodgers	
Mrs Ruth Savage	From APCM 2025
Mrs Joanne Wallis	
Mrs Charlotte Wicks	Joint Treasurer
Mr Jonathan Wicks	Joint Treasurer

### Co-opted members

The Reverend John Fidler	Priest
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## Insurance

The Church is covered by the St Albans Diocesan group insurance scheme for Churches (effected via Ecclesiastical Insurance Group). This policy includes public liability indemnity of up to 10 million pounds. It also satisfies requirements within Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance

Act of 1969). Other costs, including losses due to fire and theft, legal expenses, minor building works and consequential loss are also covered within the policy.

**The address for correspondence is:-**

The Parish Administrator  
Parish Church of St John the Baptist  
Melbourn Street  
Royston  
SG8 7BP

OTHER ADDRESSES :

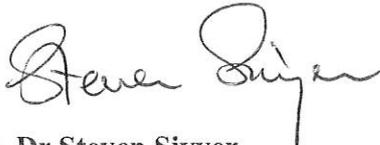
**Bank :**

Lloyds Bank Plc  
3 Sidney Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 3HQ

**Independent examiner :**

TC (East) Limited t/a TC Group  
Chartered Accountants  
The Nexus Building  
Broadway  
Letchworth Garden City  
Hertfordshire SG6 3TA

**On behalf of the PCC :**



**Revd. Dr Steven Sivyer**  
*Chairman*

.....*2nd*.....*March 2026*

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Royston

Statement of Financial Activities  
For the year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Endowment</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2025</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2024</u> £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>						
Incoming resources from donors	2(a)	127,822	5,682	0	133,505	127,806
Other voluntary incoming resources	2(b)	19,738	1,750	0	21,488	31,203
Income from charitable and ancillary trading	2(c)	10,157	3,341	0	13,498	19,445
Other ordinary incoming resources	2(d)	9,036	12,653	0	21,689	37,772
Income from investments	2(e)	1,437	842	16	2,295	2,660
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		<b>168,190</b>	<b>24,268</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>192,474</b>	<b>218,886</b>
<b>Resources Used</b>						
Grants	3(a)	10,273	459	0	10,732	12,052
Activities directly relating to the work of the Church	3(b)	136,531	15,371	0	151,902	186,036
Fund raising and publicity	3(c)	2,369	0	0	2,369	3,323
Church management and administration	3(d)	16,576	0	0	16,576	14,796
<b>Total Resources Used</b>		<b>165,749</b>	<b>15,830</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>181,579</b>	<b>216,207</b>
<b>Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources</b>		<b>2,441</b>	<b>8,438</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10,895</b>	<b>2,679</b>
<b>Gains and Losses on Investments</b>						
- unrealised		0	0	-1,211	-1,211	678
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>		<b>2,441</b>	<b>8,438</b>	<b>-1,195</b>	<b>9,684</b>	<b>3,357</b>
<b>Balance Brought Forward at 1 January 2025 (2024)</b>		<b>72,685</b>	<b>50,121</b>	<b>31,183</b>	<b>153,989</b>	<b>150,632</b>
<b>Balance Carried Forward at 31 December 2025 (2024)</b>		<b>75,126</b>	<b>58,559</b>	<b>29,988</b>	<b>163,673</b>	<b>153,989</b>

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Royston

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2025

	Note	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
		£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible fixed assets	5(a)	13,374	13,374
Investment assets	5(b)	29,079	30,291
		<u>42,453</u>	<u>43,665</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	7	25,047	30,099
Short term deposits		27,173	26,041
Cash at bank and in hand		85,039	96,477
		<u>137,259</u>	<u>152,617</u>
<b>Liabilities : amounts falling due within one year</b>	8	-16,038	-42,292
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>121,221</u>	<u>110,325</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<u>163,673</u>	<u>153,989</u>
<b>Funds</b>			
Unrestricted	6	75,126	72,685
Restricted	10	58,559	50,121
Endowment	9	29,988	31,183
		<u>163,673</u>	<u>153,989</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2025

1 Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 together with applicable accounting standards and the Charities SORP (FRS102). The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention except for the investment assets, which are shown at market value. We have adopted all of the accounting policies as set out in the model set of accounting policies issued by the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England. The financial statements have been prepared on the basis that the PCC is considered to be a going concern for the foreseeable future.

2 Incoming Resources

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Endowment</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2024</u>
	£	£	£	£	£
2(a) <i>Incoming resources from donors</i>					
Christian stewardship	85,645			85,645	81,742
Gift Aid tax refund	23,235	476		23,711	24,084
Small donations incl. collections on the plate	6,301	357		6,658	7,022
Sundry donations	12,641	4,849		17,490	14,958
	<u>127,822</u>	<u>5,682</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>133,505</u>	<u>127,806</u>
2(b) <i>Other voluntary incoming resources</i>					
Legacies	7,266			7,266	12,279
Fund raising events	12,472	1,750		14,222	18,924
	<u>19,738</u>	<u>1,750</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>21,488</u>	<u>31,203</u>
2(c) <i>Income from charitable and ancillary trading</i>					
Magazine revenue	0			0	746
Fees	10,157	3,341		13,498	18,699
	<u>10,157</u>	<u>3,341</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13,498</u>	<u>19,445</u>
2(d) <i>Other ordinary incoming resources</i>					
Grants		12,653		12,653	16,693
Rental income	4,318			4,318	15,328
Payments for use of church building	4,718			4,718	5,751
	<u>9,036</u>	<u>12,653</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>21,689</u>	<u>37,772</u>
2(e) <i>Income from investments</i>					
Dividends and interest	1,437	842	16	2,295	2,660
	<u>1,437</u>	<u>842</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>2,295</u>	<u>2,660</u>
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<u>168,190</u>	<u>24,268</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>192,474</u>	<u>218,886</u>

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Royston

Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2025

3 Resources Used

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Endowment</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2025</u> £	<u>Total</u> <u>2024</u> £
3(a) <i>Grants</i>					
<i>Missionary and charitable giving:</i>					
Church overseas mission	5,700			5,700	5,100
Church home mission	2,800			2,800	2,762
Other non-Church charities	1,350	459		1,809	3,203
Unallocated	423			423	988
	<u>10,273</u>	<u>459</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,732</u>	<u>12,052</u>
3(b) <i>Activities directly relating to the work of the Church</i>					
Ministry : Parish share	76,989			76,989	80,613
Clergy expenses	4,810			4,810	7,004
Altar expenses	1,269			1,269	1,084
Mission within parish	4,124			4,124	3,548
Organist and music	5,716	4,219		9,935	8,577
Bellringers and other fees	1,630			1,630	1,905
Magazine printing	0			0	1,920
Church repairs	19,532	7,811		27,343	55,265
Church running expenses	22,462			22,462	22,517
Fees to Diocese		3,341		3,341	3,602
	<u>136,531</u>	<u>15,371</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>151,902</u>	<u>186,036</u>
3(c) <i>Fund raising and publicity expenses</i>					
Fund raising events	2,369			2,369	3,323
	<u>2,369</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,369</u>	<u>3,323</u>
3(d) <i>Church management and administration</i>					
Parish office administration	14,957			14,957	13,530
Office equipment depreciation				0	0
Licence fees	1,619			1,619	1,266
	<u>16,576</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>16,576</u>	<u>14,796</u>
<b>Total Resources Used</b>	<u>165,749</u>	<u>15,830</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>181,579</u>	<u>216,207</u>

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Royston

Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2025

4 Staff Costs

Salaries & fees

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
	£	£
	<u>13,157</u>	<u>11,876</u>

During the year the PCC employed an administrator and until 22 April 2025 the PCC employed a Director of Music. The administrator, Mrs. J. Wallis, is a member of the PCC and was paid £8,532 during the year. The administrator's salary is included as a cost under Parish Office Administration at note 3(d). Apart from this no other member of the PCC received any remuneration. The salary and occasional fees of the Director of Music are shown as a cost under Organist & Music at note 3(b).

5 Fixed Assets for use by PCC

		Freehold Land and Buildings	Office Equipment	Total
		£	£	£
<b>5(a) Tangible fixed assets</b>				
Gross Book Value	At 1 January 2025	13,374	1,184	14,558
	Additions	0	0	0
	Disposals	0	-485	-485
	At 31 December 2025	<u>13,374</u>	<u>699</u>	<u>14,073</u>
Depreciation	At 1 January 2025	0	1,184	1,184
	Charge for year	0	0	0
	Eliminated on disposals	0	-485	-485
	At 31 December 2025	<u>0</u>	<u>699</u>	<u>699</u>
Net Book Value	At 31 December 2025	13,374	0	13,374
	At 31 December 2024	13,374	0	13,374

The freehold land and buildings are comprised of the Curate's house in Royston which is included at historic cost and does not need to be shown at market value as it is regarded by the PCC as a functional asset rather than an investment asset. The additional burial ground was acquired in the 19th century at an unknown cost and is included in fixed assets at £nil cost.

5(b) Investments

1310 shares in CBF Investment Fund - value at 31st December 2025 amounted to £29,080 (2024 £30,291) - historic cost £1,081.

Parochial Church Council of St John the Baptist, Royston

Notes to the Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2025

6 Analysis of Net assets by Funds

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Endowment</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Total</u>
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	13,374	0	29,079	42,453
Current assets	76,733	59,616	909	137,259
Current liabilities	-14,981	-1,058	0	-16,038
Fund balance	<u>75,126</u>	<u>58,559</u>	<u>29,988</u>	<u>163,673</u>

7 Debtors

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
	£	£
Income tax recoverable	21,732	23,777
Prepayments and accrued interest	1,751	966
Other debtors	<u>1,564</u>	<u>5,356</u>
	<u>25,047</u>	<u>30,099</u>

8 Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year

Creditors for goods and services	4,686	9,352
Other creditors	11,352	16,268
Provision for repairs to Curate's House in Royston	0	16,672
	<u>16,038</u>	<u>42,292</u>

9 Analysis of Endowment funds by type

Expendable funds	612	612
Permanent funds	<u>29,376</u>	<u>30,571</u>
	<u>29,988</u>	<u>31,183</u>

10 Fund Details

The Restricted Funds are comprised of the Additional Burial Ground Revenue Fund £19,517 for the maintenance of the Additional Burial Ground; the Ongoing Refurbishment Fund £4273 for projects to upgrade the church building and facilities; the Music & Choir Fund £16606 for music outreach work in the church and the local community; the Insurance Claims Fund £18062 arising during the recent refurbishment of the church and the Stoneybridge Income Fund £95.

The Endowment Funds are comprised of four Grave Trusts and the Stoneybridge and Welsh Endowments.

Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist, Royston, Herts.

**Independent Examiner's Report to the  
Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist, Royston**

This report on the attached accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 14 is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 ("the regulations") and s.145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

**Respective Responsibilities of the PCC and the Examiner**

As the members of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of the Regulations and s.144(2) of the Act does not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Regulations.

**Basis of this report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under s.145(5)(b) of the Act and to be found in the Church guidance, 2006 edition. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the 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 I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

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

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act, and the Regulations have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



TC (EAST)  
SUITE 501  
THE NEXUS BUILDING  
BROADWAY  
LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY  
HERTS  
SG6 9BL

PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST ROYSTON

Parochial Church Council - Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 to be held in Church immediately after

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

AGENDA

Apologies for Absence

1. Co-option onto the PCC
2. Election of Vice-Chair
3. Election of Secretary
4. Election of Treasurer
5. Election of Electoral Roll Officer
6. Membership of the Standing Committee
7. Times of future PCC meetings and the date of the next meeting

Philip Perry, PCC Secretary

4 March 2026

## **AGENDA 6**

### **Church Wardens and Fabric Report**

As my (Vaughan) time as church warden comes to an end can I begin this report by thanking all those who have assisted me over the past three years, particularly my fellow church wardens, past and present, Clare Davies, Linda Dwight, Judy Rodgers and Richard Marais and members of the Fabric Committee.

Whilst things have settled down since the completion of the post fire restoration, managing the building remains a challenge, particularly the ongoing costs in maintaining the tech, plant and machinery we now rely on.

However, we can, with some satisfaction, point to two very successful outcomes in the past year.

Firstly, the refurbishment of 12 Prince Andrew's Close, which allowed us to welcome Jaime and her family as our curate in the summer. Thanks, should be given to Tracy Reader, who project managed this to a very tight timescale.

Secondly, we were informed by English Heritage that they were removing the church from the Historic Buildings at risk register, last November, following the repair to the Tower turrets.

### **Acquisitions and Major Repairs**

Refurbishment of 12 Prince Andrew's Close  
New Laptop for Church Office  
Removal of small elder tree adjacent to South Kitchen Wall  
Repair to South Kitchen Wall  
Installation of vent grills to AV desk plinth to prevent condensation/damp  
Installation of bird spikes and extra fire gel deterrent on north facing roof  
Telescopic Boom Microphone Stand  
Upper Storeroom cleared out and loft floor boarded  
Microphone and lockable storage box for AV equipment  
External Church Notice Board facing Melbourn Street updated  
Eight small chairs for use for children's activities in the upper storeroom  
Storage cupboard for folding tables on south wall near kitchen  
Dolley for 40 Howe chairs  
Curtain track for upper store  
Donation of new thurible, charcoal tongues, incense boat and spoon  
Self-Adhesive Photoluminescent Fire Exit Sign on upper storeroom stairwell  
Premises license to sell alcohol

### **Disposals**

A small number of hassocks continue to be sold for church funds

A full list of building and maintenance activities is available for inspection in the church logbook held in the vestry.

### **Future Plans**

If any member of the church wishes to see the Fabric Committee/PCC complete 'Wishlist' of future plans and projects, please contact Vaughan West at [Vaughan.west@ntlworld.com](mailto:Vaughan.west@ntlworld.com)

Future plans include:

Refurbishment of the vestry and storeroom above  
Possible erection of a 'garden room' on south side of the church  
Replacement of the additional burial ground chapel roof

Installation of more internal CCTV cameras to provide greater coverage  
Installation of cameras to allow services (particularly funerals) to be live streamed  
Erecting a boundary fence to the southside of the church  
Disposal of more hassocks

### **Training**

The church wardens and others have attended diocesan training events online, including safeguarding training.

Future training will include refresher fire marshal training for sides people/welcomers

### **Energy Audit**

We recently undertook an energy audit with Inspire Efficiency and are awaiting their report and recommendations.

### **Conclusions**

Can we thank all those in the congregation who continue to assist us, with their time and talents, so that our building continues to be an asset, as a welcoming and open space, and a monument to our witness in the centre of the town.

**Vaughan West**

**Richard Marais**

## **AGENDA 7**

### **SAFEGUARDING REPORT** APCM 2026

The Parish is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others. The PCC has complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The PCC have adopted all the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance, as well as "Promoting a Safer Church" (child protection and vulnerable adults policy) and the Domestic Abuse statement, at their meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

The PCC has been informed throughout the year of any safeguarding matters and two matters have been notified to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Revd. Steven Sivyer and I have found the advice and support given to us through these issues to be invaluable.

When the church reopened three years ago everyone who participated in a church activity was asked to complete the required level of safeguarding training. Therefore, during 2025, 75 people were contacted to renew their training and the majority have been successful in doing this. Safeguarding training is an ongoing process and I am grateful that it is taken on with such willingness by the congregation.

Joanne Wallis has ensured that DBS checks have been done where necessary and most people have signed up to the automatic renewal system.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer has completed the required training provided by the diocese.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer about any queries or advice.

Alison Bailey  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

## AGENDA 8

### DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Report requested, none received

## AGENDA 11

### CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

#### BELL RINGERS

Report requested, none received.

#### CHILDREN'S CHURCH REPORT, 2025

Children aged 4 -14 have continued to gather in the vestry most Sunday mornings. Some have been with us for several years so we have seen them grow with Jesus alongside them on their journey of faith within the wider church family.

Some also sing with the choristers, and some older members join the Church at Home group meeting monthly on a Sunday evening.

We thank those who have recently helped tidy the room above the vestry, meaning that the older children can now meet there on some Sunday mornings. This gives them more space for their own activities, whilst allowing the younger children to spread out more for their own age-appropriate crafts, puzzles etc in the vestry. This has been invaluable on days when we have visitors too and we are reminded just how small the vestry is!

The Roots material continues to be a valuable resource for sharing our faith with the children, with the same general theme being used by the adult congregation.

It is always a privilege to encourage children on their journey of faith, and we thank all the leaders and helpers on the rota and those who support us with encouraging words and prayers.

Most of all we thank God for his continued loving guidance and presence.

Milly, Yvonne and Charlotte

#### CHRISTMAS TREE

Our beautiful Christmas Tree in the church has again provided an enduring focal point for the local community during the festive period. It lasted well until Candlemas and a record 1056 messages were placed upon it. The tree proves to be a wonderful Mission to the town and is appreciated by all who come into Church.

Thank you to Chris Wallis, and all who helped to put up and dispose of the tree.

Chris Wallis

#### PRESERVES ETC.

During 2025 Chris Wallis managed to raise £4270 towards church funds mainly through the sale of preserves and tomato plants. The amount also included ~£300 left in the donations box located near the Christmas Tree. This brings the total raised by him since 2015 to £27000. Many thanks to all who have supported him over the past 10 years by purchasing his produce.

Chris Wallis

## **FLOWER ARRANGERS**

Our small team of volunteers aims to provide displays of flowers and greenery throughout the year, usually two displays every fortnight, with the exception of Lent. We choose suitable seasonal UK produce whenever possible.

For Mothering Sunday, we make around 160 small posies of daffodils for distribution during the Sunday morning services. On Easter Saturday, we enjoy filling the church with flowers in readiness for Easter Sunday. The Patronal Festival, Harvest Festival, and Remembrance Sunday are also important dates in our flower arranging calendar. At the start of Advent, we 'green up' the church in readiness for Christmas, with flowers added on the morning of Christmas Eve.

We rely on a financial contribution from the Church, but also invite donations for Easter flowers and accept donations for flowers for special occasions such as baptisms, flowers requested in memory of a loved one, and general donations, which we use towards our regular weekly displays. We also rely on members of our team, plus one other member of our church, to donate virtually all of the greenery used in the displays.

Our intention, going forward, is to gradually increase the use of artificial flowers and greenery in certain displays, whilst continuing to try to enhance the beauty of our Church and provide a welcome to all who enter the building. This will help to cut costs in the longer term, support a sustainable approach, and reduce the time spent sourcing, buying, and preparing flowers, creating, maintaining, and dismantling displays.

Angela Sassoli

## **LIFTS TO CHURCH**

Since its inception in 2003 our small team of volunteers has supported people who cannot actually make the journey to Church (but would otherwise be fit to attend) by giving them a lift to the 10.30am Communion service.

We organise the rota four times a year, about 12 weeks at a time. We aim to take people to Church as frequently as they would like to go, although this can't always be achieved as it depends on how many people are in need of this service at any given time and similarly how many volunteers we have available. In 2025 we had one person asking for a lift and three volunteers. We were able to take this person to Church on 40 occasions during the year.

Angela Sassoli

## **HOME GROUPS**

St John's currently has 5 Home Groups, but what is a Home Group? It's a place where people meet together for friendship, mutual support and to learn something more about the God that Jesus reveals to us. There is usually time for cake and conversation and it is a safe space to ask the questions about our faith that are puzzling us. Rest assured, we all have those questions, no matter how long we have been a Christian.

The Home Groups meet at different times, frequencies and places and have their own character. Some may have space for others to join. It would be great if so many people wanted to join that we have to create some new Home Groups.

Here is just a little of the feedback of the existing 5 groups. Perhaps it will encourage you to become a member of a Home Group.

- We share responsibilities for hosting and leading sessions, although this is entirely voluntary, with no pressure or expectations
- For Advent, we followed a six-session course "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", by John Cox.
- To prepare for Christmas we reflected on the meaning of Advent and compared Matthew and Luke's versions of the Christmas story.
- We studied "Clothed in Christ" by Raymond Tomkinson, looking at the spiritual clothes God gives us to wear as we journey with him.
- "Praying by Heart" by Stephen Cottrell. It is a detailed examination of the Lord's Prayer which we often say by heart without thinking about what the words really mean. We have all enjoyed this book and have all learnt something from it; often something surprising despite the words being so familiar.

- In the Autumn we used a video from the Keswick Convention 2024 entitled “What on Earth is Heaven” which was quite a demanding study but covered a very important understanding of God’s Kingdom now and in the future.
- After our study we have a time of sharing concerns and thanksgiving, before the leader for the evening concludes in prayer.
- For much of the year we have used the Lectio Divina format following the Sunday service lectionary, guided by resources found online.
- ‘Showing God’s loving care for his people’ was the theme that came through as we studied the book of Esther; the only book of the Bible that does not mention God.
- We start with about 30 minutes of conversation and light refreshments, followed by a more structured study.
- Throughout the year we support each other through prayer and when needed practically. We have our own House Group WhatsApp group which enables us to quickly communicate prayer needs and answers, a very useful tool.
- Leading up to Christmas we had our first AI created study! It was entitled “Jesus’ Birth Foretold”, which helped us look at the prophecies found in the Old Testament linked to Jesus’ birth.
- For 6 sessions we were joined by Jim who guided us through a study book entitled “Clothed in Christ”, which provided us with very stimulating discussion evenings.
- Before Easter we used a study series from “Hope Together” which compared characters in the bible with lives of contemporary Christians.
- We enjoy a variety of Bible and faith focused gatherings as well as regular social events throughout the year, usually sharing food!
- We have commenced a study entitled "Gracious Dialogue: A Guide to Listening and Speaking Well About Israel and Palestine", produced by Embrace the Middle East.

If you are encouraged to consider being a member of a home group, then please speak to **Val Neather** or **Jim Dagleish** for more information.

Give thanks to God for the fellowship, learning and pastoral care that takes place within these groups and pray for the work that they are doing in building the body of the Christ.

**Jim Dagleish.**

## **JULIAN PRAYER**

Julian Prayer meetings are every month ( except August) at 11 Middle Drift at 7pm.

Someone leads the time of contemplative prayer with a reading, prayer, or poem etc and ends the 30 minutes of silence with a prayer. We then enjoy cake, refreshments and fellowship.

All are welcome. Some people attend every month and some once or twice a year.

Carol Cardwell

## **KNIT AND NATTER GROUP**

After much talk about outreach ventures Liz and I decided to try a knit and natter group on a Wednesday afternoon.

Christine Baker was asked to help lead and we have been meeting now for over a year We have about 20 members. Ranging from 10 years old to older ladies and 1 gentleman.

Our first project of making lap blankets and shawls for St George's nursing home and have achieved 30+ and were well received. We had spare to sell at the Christmas Craft stall together with tree decorations, scarves and gloves, which raised £82 towards Church Funds. We plan to have more during the year.

You do not need to knit or crochet to join us, all are welcome Wednesday from 1 pm -3 pm in church and some weeks there is more nattering than knitting going on.

**Joanne Wallis**

### **LADIES GROUP**

The Ladies Group continue to meet in church at 2-30 pm on the first Thursday of the month where we very much enjoy tea, cake and fellowship for a couple of hours. We had some very good speakers again this year, including an interesting talk about Royston Museum in March and as a follow up to a visit some of us had made to the Essex & North Herts Air Ambulance station at North Weald, a retired Doctor who now promotes their excellent work, came to up date us on all they are doing. We were amazed how much this service costs to run and the dedication of the staff both on the helicopters and on the ground.

In April, 13 of our group went to Blickling Hall in Norfolk for the day, supposedly to see the Cherry Blossom, only to find they don't have any Cherry Trees at Blickling therefore no blossom !! They did have some very beautiful Magnolia trees which were a great compensation.

A few of us enjoyed a trip to the seaside in September with a day in Southwold. We were able to sit on the Pier in the sunshine before walking up to the town for a very good fish & chip lunch and yes, on the way back to the coach we enjoyed an ice cream too, it doesn't get better than that!

**Kay Makowiecki**

### **NEIGHBOURHOODS**

God has blessed St John's with a growth in the number of people attending our regular services. This is wonderful and exciting. It also gives us the challenge of getting to know people and making connections, when there are so many of us. How do we build new people into the fellowship?

Hopefully, you may remember the plans to create geographic Neighbourhoods, sub-groups of the church family who live in the same neighbourhood. For each Neighbourhood a Neighbourhood Link would be appointed. Their role would be to help people in their Neighbourhood to make meaningful connections and so help newcomers to feel part of the family. Please note that this is in addition to any existing groups and friendships. It does not replace them. It is an attempt to ensure that everyone feels they belong to the family at St John's.

Unfortunately, Neighbourhoods have not progressed as fast as we had hoped. This is due to a number of factors: other activities taking precedence, trying to ensure the church database is accurate and up to date, ensuring that we comply with rules on data security and privacy.

Enough of the excuses! The intention is to get Neighbourhoods, with the Neighbourhood Links, up and running during 2026. To do this please:

- Pray that the work that needs to be done is given priority and makes progress.
- Pray for those called to be appointed as Neighbourhood links. Give thanks for those who have already agreed and pray that others with the right pastoral gifts will feel called.
- Please ensure that the church database has a correct record of your contact details and permissions for contact. Look out for details later of how to do this.
- Meanwhile, do welcome the stranger among us and help them to feel part of the church family.

We give thanks that God has trusted us with new growth and we pray that he will help us to carefully nurture that growth so that it bears much fruit.

**Jim Dagleish.**

### **CHOIR REPORT ROYSTON PARISH CHURCH 2025**

Early in the year the numbers in the choir swelled as some of the "Treble Makers" became choristers and were welcomed into the choir. It has been lovely to see them grow in confidence as they sing with the adults.

In April 2025 we said a sad farewell to Alex Trigg, and since then the role of "Minister of Music and Director of Music Outreach" has been vacant. We are continuing to advertise for this post and pray that suitable candidates

will come forward. We are very grateful that in the meantime the Revd Dr Steven Sivyer has stepped in to lead weekly choir practices during the vacancy, and along with various visiting organists ensured continuity for the sung services.

The choir has continued to support worship at the 10:30am Sunday service. We usually had all four parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) covered, and were joined by an expanded choir for major events such as Easter, Christmas and a special Patronal Festival Choral Evensong.

Clare Davies and Ruth Savage

### **TAIZÉ SERVICES**

There were four Taizé services in 2025 including the Maundy Thursday vigil. These services are quiet and reflective and consist of readings, prayers and a meditation followed by a short time of silence, interspersed with short 'chants' (songs), which are repeated and sung prayerfully. These are accompanied by the piano and a few musicians.

We are very sorry to report that Chris Hills, a member of the Roman Catholic Church and who played the violin and viola in the group for decades, sadly passed away towards the end of 2025. He will be greatly missed.

All denominations are most welcome at this service, which is usually at 6.30 on a Sunday evening. (Except Maundy Thursday).

Carol Cardwell

### **TEA TIME PRAISE (TTP)**

TTP normally takes place on the first Sunday in the month in the afternoon in church. With an informal style of worship, we attract a good number especially families with children. Over the past year our numbers have fluctuated between 30 and 60 and average around 50. In addition, the TTP Christingle Service had some 206 people in attendance, whilst "Hot Cross Buns and Praise TTP" on Good Friday was attended by 74 people.

Over the past year, we have continued to encourage a participatory approach to our services with signing of songs, family involvement in prayer, as well as the short readings and talks suitable for a very diverse congregation delivered by members of the team.

We are pleased that some families have now joined the welcome team and the regular rota of those who supply cakes and refreshments for the very hungry children alongside our faithful regulars, and good relations are being built as we all get to know one another. We are very grateful for all the support and encouragement we receive.

This past year, one of our younger members who expressed an interest in playing alongside our regular band began to play and now plays on a regular basis.

The TTP team of Andy, Beth, Emma, Rachel, Reg, and Ruth are thankful for all the support we receive in this ministry.

**Reg Bailey**

### **Events Committee Report 2025**

The Events Committee once again had a busy year in 2025, organising a number of social and fund-raising events.

In February we had our annual church quiz, with thanks to Duncan Rogers as our excellent quiz master, and his team of helpers. In March we hosted Cambridge University Schola Cantorum, for an evening of sublime choral music.

In April we did an Easter Egg hunt, which the youngsters thoroughly enjoyed. We introduced a new event - Scones of Praise, where people could share what particular hymns meant to them, each hymn was sung, followed by a cream team.

Our Book Fayre drew a number of folk from Royston in to the building to purchase books and refreshments. In May it was lovely to be present at the wedding of Alex and Eduardo Andrade, and support the serving of refreshments at the reception. In June the Patronal Festival Weekend included Hymns and PIMM's, a performance from a Saxophone Quartet, and ended with a Come and Sing Choral Evensong.

Thanks goes to Carol Cardwell for hosting a Sparkling Cream Tea at her house, and raising £257 for children's work within our church. In July we welcomed Jaime Roberts as our new curate, and had a bring and share lunch to coincide with her first service in our church. Jaime was also welcomed on to our Events Committee, and she has been working to get us an annual alcohol license so that we will be covered to sell alcohol at more events when needed.

In September Revd. Dr. Steven Sivyer gave a delectable Organ recital to coincide with the Royston Arts festival. In October we had our annual Harvest Supper. This year we had cottage pie as the main course, as change from our usual casserole and baked potatoes. This was well received. Thanks to all who prepared the food.

In November Ros Holbrow and friends did a lunchtime concert with music for the season of Remembrance. At the end of November the church was open to coincide with the Royston Town Christmas lights switch on. There was a large footfall as people came to buy refreshments, participate in the Christmas Jumper Swop in conjunction with Royston Environmental Group, and to do children's activities that had been provided. The following day the church was open for the switch on of our Christmas tree lights, with refreshments on sale. We sold refreshments during the Royston Town Band Christmas concert in December.

We organised raffles at various times of the year, most noticeably Easter, Patronal Festival, and Christmas. Many thanks to everyone who donated raffle prizes and bought raffle tickets. We couldn't do this without your support.

Over the year these events and activities raised over £8,000 after expenses, for church funds. Thank you to everyone who has supported us by baking cakes, serving refreshments, manning stalls, buying merchandise, donating Easter eggs, books and other items, and for coming to the events.

Thanks also to the members of the committee for all their hard work.

If there's an event that you would like to see us organise, or would like to be on a sub-committee to organise a Church Fete, or would like to join the Events Committee, please speak to Ruth Savage, or any other member of the Events Committee. We welcome new people, new ideas, and extra pairs of hands!

Ruth Savage

#### **MEN'S GROUP.**

The Men's Group has met, and continues to meet, on the first Wednesday of every month in Wetherspoons opposite the church from 7.00pm onwards. There is no official membership it is a social gathering of men with a connection to the church; conversation is light, friendships are made, often with those who attend different services. Attendance averages about 10 - 12 and ages vary. Recently we have welcomed a few from other churches in the town. Our only point of procedure is that we all buy our own drinks and/or food, no rounds.

Although there is no obvious spiritual or religious element to these evenings it creates a sense of fellowship which along with the principles of whole life discipleship make this a valuable part of church life, new members are always welcome.

Anthony Pigg

#### **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

The Outreach Committee has met regularly since it was established last year.

It has reviewed the priorities identified in the **Mission Action Plan**, and monitored the progress we are making in each.

These are:

- \* *Embedding prayer in our daily lives*
- \* *Establishing small groups at the heart of church*
- \* *Equipping people to share their faith*
- \* *Establishing a stepped approach for children to grow as disciples*
- \* *Extending our provision for parents*
- \* *Increasing our support for those who are lonely, housebound or bereaved.*

The M.A.P. is a fluid document which may evolve, change and be updated.

The committee has considered in depth our policies for giving financial and other support to **outside missions and charities**. The P.C.C. has a long-standing policy to give 10% of our committed income to missions and charities. Over the years the list has grown to 15 missions. It was decided to limit the number by aligning our giving to the Church of England's Five Marks of Mission.

By reducing the number of outside missions to five, we hope that the congregation would learn about them and identify with them more than hitherto.

The Marks of Mission, with the mission we will continue to support in each case are :

- \* *To teach, baptise and nurture new believers* : The Bible Society
- \* *To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom* : GenR8
- \* *To respond to human needs by loving service* : Royston & District Home Start
- \* *To transform unjust structures in society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation* : Tear Fund
- \* *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth* : Church Mission Society

As well as reviewing the areas identified in the M/A.P., .....such as work with children, young people and parents, house groups, neighbourhood schemes, prayer meetings, courses.....the Outreach Committee has looked in depth at our use of social media, and communications.

Duncan Rodgers 16.01.26

## **TOTS IN CHURCH (TIC)**

### **Thursday TiC Sessions**

Tots in Church continues to meet every Thursday morning in term time to enjoy the opportunities to build relationships with young parents in the community and share God's love. A small number of our older children turned 4 and moved on to nursery but it is good that a couple still pop in occasionally to say hello. Several parents for 4 year olds arranged their nursery hours to continue coming to Tots on Thursdays. We have had many people say this tots group is the best they have been to – we really pray that it is because they feel God's presence here.

We have had between 35 and 47 Tots each week over the year which is ideal. Since September we have had several parents with new babies arriving. It is so good to see new mums making friends with each other and being supported.

### **Volunteers:**

TiC could not happen without the commitment of our 8 volunteers preparing amazing crafts, welcoming, keeping account of our finances and registrations, refreshments, a few minutes of song, story and worship. It can be hard work but each one of them go above and beyond so often and cheerfully too! It is so good to have Rev. Jamie and Rev. Steven who attend often. A grandmother of a Tot now at nursery has joined our volunteer team.

### **Donations:**

Donations from parents have covered our refreshments and equipment, and we have a surplus to add to church funds. However, we will need to replace some mats and equipment this year which will use a part of it.

## Events to support parents of young children

Following our first simple 'holiday club' in August 2024 we organised another with three morning sessions for toddlers and primary school age children this year. This was focussed on listening to, following and serving Jesus. The first session started with 45 children and built up to 57 by the final session. We had a super time with crafts, treasure hunts, games and messy play etc Emma and Jamie leading the story sessions thank to our amazing volunteers.

We also held a Christmas craft evening in December so that we could spend more relaxed time with parents and have uninterrupted time talking. The atmosphere was so happy and relaxed. The team were wonderful, nothing was too much trouble to support the event. Gill, Andrea, Lynda and Milly prepared some amazing crafts and the volunteers prepared lovely Christmas treats to eat. Home-made goodie bags were given with a Christmas message, and a list of all the Christmas Services.

### Going forward:

We continue to pray for our Tots and parents. We had 3 of our Tots parents attending the crib service, 3 families of our tots attending one or more of the morning services, two saying the reason they are there is because the Tots wanted to come to a church service. The toys must be the main pull but parents feel that it is just a place they love being in.

Emma, Milly and Jim have started an Introduction to Faith Course. This is something that we pray some of our Tots and parents might feel ready to move in to.

The Tots in Church Team.



### Sustainable Living Group – APCM Report for 2025



The Royston Parish Church "Sustainable Living Committee" was formed in 2020 in response to the Church of England commitment to reach net zero by 2030. We continue to use the A Rocha Eco Church scheme as a framework for our activities. Having achieved the Bronze Award in 2022, we are now working towards the Silver Award. Our report follows the five key areas of the Eco Church scheme:

#### Worship and Teaching

In Spring 2025, Steven and Clare delivered the *Carbon Literacy for Congregations* Course, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project as a Lent Course. In the Autumn, Jim, Pauline and Lee, having qualified in the Lent Course, went on to lead a further course for those who were unable to attend in Lent. Over 25 members of the church have now undertaken this training, with many gaining formal certification as "Carbon Literate". This represents a significant increase in climate awareness and practical understanding across our congregation. Many thanks to everyone who participated or helped out to make these a success. We celebrated Creationtide in our liturgy and were delighted to host Professor Rachel Warren (Tyndall Centre, UEA) who spoke on what we can all do to mitigate Climate Change. We are very grateful for her time and expertise.

Sustainable living themes continue to be included regularly in our weekly news sheet, monthly prayer diary, in intercessions at services, and in youth work such as Tea Time Praise and the Holiday Club.

#### Buildings and Energy

Our church's carbon footprint is largely driven by gas and electricity usage. We currently source 100% renewable electricity. The PCC agreed to increase the proportion of biogas in our gas supply from 25% to 50% starting from December 2025 to support reducing our overall carbon footprint. We are aiming to source 100% renewable fuels by 2030. We will now start to monitor and report our consumption from this baseline as we work towards our goal towards net zero carbon.



Energy Footprint	2025	Comment
Electricity Used	17,231 kWh	100% green tariff

Energy Used	117,543 kWh	25% Biogas, increasing to 50% from December 2026
Carbon Footprint due to energy use	29.79 tCO <sub>2</sub> e total → 18.79t CO <sub>2</sub> e	Carbon footprint reduced by renewable fuel use

### Land and nature

We continue to encourage participation in national wildlife surveys including the Big Garden Birdwatch, Big Butterfly Count. Churches Count on Nature. Data gathered in our churchyard and the Additional Burial Ground have been uploaded to national biodiversity databases such as iNaturalist, contributing to wider scientific understanding.

During Churches Count on Nature/Big Green Week, we hosted a very successful visit from St Mary's school to carry out nature surveys in the Churchyard. We thank Lee for co-ordinating this and the staff and pupils for their enthusiasm and engagement.

Native seeds have been scattered around the "bug church" area, alongside log piles to encourage wildlife habitats. Both the churchyard and the Additional Burial Ground remain open and accessible spaces for quiet enjoyment of nature by the wider community.

### Community and global engagement

The Parish Church hosted a stall at the Royston Green Fair held during Great Big Green Week in June 2025 and participated in "Love Your Burial Ground"/ "Churches Count on Nature". Many thanks to all who helped run these events.

We are pleased that our group is now represented on Royston Town Council's Climate and Biodiversity Working Group, strengthening links between church and town initiatives.

A Christmas Jumper Swap was held in conjunction with the Royston Environmental Group, encouraging reuse and reducing waste.

Through Mission Gifting we continue to support creation-care organisations such as Tear Fund and CMS.

### Lifestyle

The Sustainable Living Committee writes articles for the monthly "Across Royston" church magazine to encourage green living, including:

- Jan 2025: How can we mitigate Climate Crisis?
- Feb 2025: Introduction to "Carbon Literacy for Congregations" Lent Course
- March 2025: Personal thoughts on what we can do to reduce our Carbon Footprint
- May 2025: "What's my Carbon Footprint? ... and why does it matter?"
- June 2025: Great Big Green Week/Love Your Burial Ground Week
- July 2025: Celebrating Creation: St Mary's Year 4 Wildlife Count in our churchyard & Big Butterfly Count
- August 2025: Autumn "Carbon Literacy for Congregations" Course – Save the Dates
- September 2025: Minister's Musings – Creationtide
- October 2025: Choosing Compassion: Why non-dairy milk is a better choice for creation and community + report on Creationtide talk "Climate Change: Science and Solutions"
- November 2025: Christmas jumper swap event
- December 2025: Gift Ideas for a more sustainable Christmas + Great British Birdwatch promotion.

Participants of the Carbon Literacy Course calculated their Carbon Footprints and shared their results with the congregation via display boards, helping to stimulate wider discussion and behavioural change.

A non-dairy milk tasting session was held at church coffee time to enable people to compare lower-carbon alternatives. Vegetarian and vegan food is offered at events like the Harvest Supper.

Looking ahead - in the coming year, we will continue working towards the silver Eco Church award. By means of the 360 Carbon survey, we plan to make a more accurate assessment of the total carbon footprint of our church. Thank you to all the members of the Sustainable Living Committee, and to the wider church family, for their continued support and commitment.

If you would like to know more or join us, do get in touch.

Clare Davies

February 2026

### VERGER DUTIES

Over the past year it has been my pleasure to act as Verger at ..... Weddings, .... Funerals and ..... Baptisms.

It is always enjoyable to meet the Bride and Grooms at their Wedding rehearsal which is usually the evening before the big day. They are often looking tired and nervous with many questions, hopefully we are able to put

them at ease, taking note of any requests they might have and answer any questions such as where are the loos, where can Great Aunt Mary, who is in a wheelchair sit. We meet the ushers and make sure they know their duties. I say we as I share these duties with Lyn Simons.

We also prepare the church on the day, lighting the candles and putting order of service books out on chairs for the immediate families and making sure that Steven has all he needs. When the Bride arrives with her bridesmaids we check that she has everything and sometimes calm her down! Each wedding is different and each a very special and moving occasion.

Baptisms are different again, we prepare the font and put out anything Steven is going to need then welcome the families and their guests and tell them about the children's corner and where the loos are, very important when there are small children. If there is more than one family, we show them which side they are to sit and generally make them feel welcome. We take part during the service by reading a prayer and then on behalf of the congregation of the Parish Church, we welcome them.

Funerals, are a sad solemn occasion, but a welcome at the door can make such a difference. Just showing people to their seats, handing out order of services or making room for latecomers takes the worry off the family. I prepare the church beforehand and make sure any requests the family or undertaker have are dealt with.

At the end of the service there is usually a bit of tidying up to do ready for the next service or visitors.

Kay Makowiecki

#### **YOUTH WORK: "CHURCH AT HOME"**

Our once-a-month Sunday Young People's group is called "Church at home", a name the young people chose. It is a great name since we meet in a home (Beth and Andy's House) and we very much feel we are "church" even though we don't meet in our beautiful building. The group is now a Year 7 up group. This year we didn't get any new joiners in September but there will be a few regular Junior Church members who will reach that age for next school year.

The group meets, usually on the first Sunday of month, from 6:30pm until 8pm. Our evenings always include food and drink, chat, some silly games, a short bible study usually based around a video clip and often linked to themes we are considering in the wider church; and a brief time of prayer/quiet. Once again, we did Link-to-hope Shoeboxes and that lead to some really good discussions around extreme poverty and especially lack of sanitation. The group would like to do some kind of fundraising, so watch this space for more news on that in the coming weeks!

Over the year we have had 12 Young People on our list mostly get about 7. As leaders, we appreciate spending time with and sharing our faith with the young people. We are thankful for the family members who drop off and collect them each month. Please keep our "Church at Home" in your prayers as this is a crucial stage in young lives.

Beth, Andy and Reg.