

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE, WHIPSDNADE**



**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

**OF**

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

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The Trustees of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish Church of St Mary Magdalene Whipsnade present their report and financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2025.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Church of St. Mary Magdalene Whipsnade sits on The Green in Whipsnade. It is part of the Deanery of Dunstable and of the United Benefice of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade in the Church of England Diocese of St Albans. It is also a member of the North Chilterns Group of Parishes. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, Clayhall Road, Kensworth LU6 3RF. The PCC form a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity currently excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served at any time between 1st January and 31st December 2025 are:

Ex Officio members:

The Rector: The Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall (Chairman)

Churchwardens:

Mrs Jane Wright  
Mr Martin Rees

Deanery Synod representatives (elected)

Mrs Joan Bailey (from 30 April 2025)  
Mrs Isobel Randall

Elected members:

Mrs Sarah Ayres  
Mrs Joan Bailey (until 30 April 2025) (Secretary)  
Mr Michael Bailey (Lay Vice-Chairman, Safeguarding Officer)  
Mr Christopher Hazell  
Mr Les Randall (Treasurer)  
Mrs Pamela Ward

## **OUR PURPOSE**

The PCC are committed to a life of faith and worship and in their role as PCC members to making our Church a welcoming place of worship and communion that parishioners will want to visit and support. The Church makes a vital contribution to village life and to the spiritual and pastoral well-being of our village community. Our objectives are reviewed annually and fully expressed in our Mission Action Plan (MAP) which is regularly updated.

## **HOW OUR ACTIVITIES DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT**

Through our mission and ministry the PCC provide:

- A focus for worship and prayer;
- Pastoral care for the people living in the Parish.

We work with the Rector, the Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall, in ministering to the people of the Parish, both through spiritual and social action and through the use of the Church building and the Churchyard. Our principal object is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the beliefs and practices of the Church of England. The PCC are also specifically responsible for the maintenance and development of the Church building and the Churchyard.

## **MISSION AND MINISTRY**

The PCC are committed to caring for the people of the community in love and to encouraging as many as can to worship at our Church and become part of our worshipping life. The people of the Parish and those on the Electoral Roll are nurtured through worship and prayer. They knit together in love through their common understanding of the message of the Gospel and their desire to live out the Gospel in their daily lives, through social action and pastoral responsiveness.

Our Ministry team currently comprises our Readers Dorothy Blackburn and Penny Fray. The Benefice team have led services and supported the Rector and the community at Whipsnade to maintain high standards of support and ministry for the congregation and our community. We are particularly grateful to Penny Fray for her frequent leading of our services and to Reverend Dave Heather, our former curate, who supports our Ministry team joining us at Whipsnade once each month.

Our mission and ministry include pastoral care and social engagement in the wider community for example running fortnightly Wednesday coffee mornings, a monthly 'Knit and Natter" group and Sunday School each second Sunday of the month. We join in and contribute to wider village life in Whipsnade including supporting the regular village lunches and participating in the annual village fete.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is at the heart of our ministry at St Mary Magdalene and we do all we can to ensure that there is a culture in which everyone feels welcome, safe and valued. The PCC are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults and to supporting those who have been victims of abuse, as well as those who may present a risk to others.

There have been no issues of safeguarding concern reported during 2025.

Throughout the year, the PCC have worked hard to increase awareness of safeguarding matters. The Rector's sermon on Safeguarding Sunday – 16<sup>th</sup> November – emphasised that safeguarding is part of our Church's caring culture. Notices and posters displayed at the entrance to the Churchyard and inside the Church on a dedicated 'Safeguarding' noticeboard, give guidance to the congregation and to occasional visitors about the help available in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The PCC have complied with the duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have 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".

The PCC have also adopted the following safeguarding policies:

- Responding to Domestic Abuse;
- Responding to a Safeguarding Allegation or Concern;
- Safeguarding Adults;
- Safeguarding Children;
- Safe Use of Images;
- Safe Use of Social Media;
- Safer Recruitment (including ex-offenders).

These policies are reviewed annually by the PCC and were last reviewed and approved at their meeting on 5 June 2025. These documents, together with safeguarding information and contact details for those wishing to obtain advice, raise any concerns or make referrals to the statutory authorities, are displayed on the Church noticeboards and on the 'Parish Link' magazine website at <https://www.parishlink.org.uk>.

In March 2025 five members of our Church were trained as first aiders, which gives us good cover for our congregation and those who join our regular social events. The PCC are grateful to Jane Wright for organising the training.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item for every PCC meeting and includes the Safeguarding Action Plan, which is reviewed, amended if necessary and approved. A report from the Parish Safeguarding Officer was presented to the APCM meeting.

The PCC have been engaged in a self-evaluation process, assessing how well the requirements of the Church of England's five national safeguarding standards are met and have introduced changes where necessary. The

first three Standards have been satisfactorily worked through; the remaining two standards will be addressed when we receive guidance from the Diocese.

Those who work with vulnerable groups in the Parish (all volunteers) are checked through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS). A high priority has been given to raising awareness through training. Although no longer mandatory, the PCC have decided to undertake the online domestic abuse course. DBS checks and appropriate safeguarding training courses are required to be renewed every three years. All those required to be vetted have up to date DBS clearance and training records. Our volunteers understand the agreed procedures for reporting a concern or an allegation.

### **Ministry of Worship**

The Rector and PCC continue to work together with the other Churches in the Benefice of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade to offer a range of services on a Sunday morning. Provision for High and Holy days is made throughout the Benefice. It is our policy to meet the expectations of worshippers by keeping to the same time every Sunday morning, except for the services held on the fifth Sunday of a month. These are held in rotation around the three Churches of the Benefice at the usual time of their morning service. Traditional and modern language forms of Eucharist are both used at Whipsnade, and on the 3rd Sunday of the month we have a Family Service which is a simple non-eucharistic service designed to appeal to families or to people who are not confirmed but wish to take a full part in worship. Those who come to a service for the first time often talk about how welcome they are made to feel. Special occasions are celebrated by services such as Evensong on our Patronal Festival, Christingle, and the making by children of Easter gardens on Good Friday for the Churches of the Benefice. We also take our turn to host services for the North Chilterns Group of parishes.

We were very pleased that people chose during the year to use the Church for the occasional offices of baptism, marriage and funerals. During 2025 there was one funeral, three funerals with burials, two funerals with cremation following, one memorial and thanksgiving service with interment of cremated remains, one funeral at a crematorium and three interments of cremated remains.

Those who attend our services, whether regularly or for the occasional offices, typically express gratitude to the Rector and members of the congregation for their dedication, support and kindness. People are very pleased that we now have a second Garden of Remembrance for the interment of cremated remains which adds much to the beauty of the Churchyard on the approach to the Church.

The annual Tree Cathedral service was again held on 8 June and went well. The Tree Cathedral is now managed by the National Trust and its format is evolving. The Rector remains part of the planning group for the service.

On 9 October 2025 the Village commemorated Major Glenn Hagenbuch, an American member of the US Air Force who, having completed his 25 operational flights and having been moved to a training role, was killed in a plane crash on Whipsnade Green on 9 October 1943. The Village welcomed the family and current and past members of the armed forces, the British Legion and other local groups for a special open air service at the site of the crash, followed by a service at St Mary Magdalene Church and a social gathering at the Old Hunters Lodge. Over 100 people attended the commemoration events, and the family were both moved and grateful for the Village's tribute. Many thanks are due to Ken France, Chair of the Parish Council, and Nicola for their careful organisation and leadership of the events.

### **Mission for children and young people**

We have strong links with the catchment school, Studham Village CE Academy which is part of the Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. The Rector and the Chairman of the Parish Council are governors of the School and Mike Bailey is a Member of the Company. The Rector has continued to offer collective worship to the children, and pastoral support to the staff and governors. She is much valued by the whole school community.

The congregation are pleased to have been able once again to make our work with children a key element of mission and pastoral work at Whipsnade. It is clear that children enjoy coming to Sunday School and working with Glenda Cox, learning through their exciting activities and sharing them with the adult congregation at the end of the service.

A Benefice-wide youth group established before the Covid pandemic for 11-15 year olds has been running again since 2022, and is open to Whipsnade children in this age group.

### **Our Wider Ministry**

We work closely with our sister Churches in the Benefice and the three congregations collaborate well to provide spiritual and social support for the local population, in addition to our regular services.

We also work with local groups of churches through the Deanery Synod, the North Chilterns Group of Churches (NCG) and local Methodists in a number of ways.

### **Deanery Synod**

The Synod met three times in 2025, with the commitment of those who represent our Church and Benefice providing us with an important link between the Parish and the wider structures of the Church. In March, the Synod was hosted by St. Mary's Eaton Bray. The speaker at this meeting was Phil Evans, the Church Engagement and Fundraising officer (Home Counties) for Christian Aid, in this, their eightieth anniversary year. He gave a very engaging presentation on the history of the Charity and its current work. The Revd. Preb. David MacGeoch was appointed to Deanery Standing Committee. In July Synod met at St. George's Toddington, which was then in vacancy, the incumbent, the Revd. Linda Washington, having retired (the new incumbent, Revd. Ian Smith was installed in October). The meeting was minuted for the first time, and very ably, by our own Penny Fray, who has taken on the role of Clerk to the Synod. The presentation was given by Suzanne Clackson and Mike Wallis of the Diocesan Dispute Advisory Service. This service is available to all in ministry in the Diocese and can be a very helpful aid to dealing with the conflict which inevitably arises from time to time at parish level. Synod was reminded about the various opportunities for retreats and events going on for the Year of Spiritual Renewal and Wellbeing in the Diocese, and a number of people reflected on how helpful they had found things. Both the Revd. Dr Stephen Burge and the Revd. Dave Heather had been licensed to different parishes within the Deanery; Stephen to St Barnabas Linslade, and Dave to All Saints Leighton Buzzard (but retaining a monthly presence in Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade). The Revd. Rachel Phillips received the good wishes and prayers of Synod on the occasion of her retirement, due in September. The last Synod of the year was in November at St. Fremund's Dunstable. Synod welcomed the Revd. Mark Rodel, the Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry for the Diocese, who led the members in a diocesan-wide listening process focused specifically on shaping the future of ministry. Synod addressed the following three questions in small groups: firstly, where have we seen ministry (lay or ordained) make a real difference? Secondly, what is helping people discover and step into lay and ordained ministry in the Church? And thirdly, what helps ministry (lay and ordained) grow and flourish? Synod enjoyed reflecting together on these areas; and the fruit of their thinking and consideration will be put together with all the Deanery Synods from across the Diocese to build up a picture for the new Bishop of St Albans. At every meeting the standing agenda included a General Synod report, a safeguarding update, eco-church information, the sharing of good news and a treasurer's report.

### **North Chilterns Group**

All three Churches in the Benefice are members of the North Chilterns Group of Churches, a partnership of eight rural parishes in South Bedfordshire which work together to provide a mutual support network. The Lent course in 2025 was on the theme of 'Scripture and Story' and was led by the Revd. Joy Cousans, incumbent of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough and Dagnall, along with Martin Rees, Churchwarden at Whipsnade, and hosted by Eaton Bray Methodist Church. It was well attended, and those there particularly relished Martin's stories at the end of each session, which were both thought-provoking and enjoyable. Candidates from Kensworth and Eaton Bray were confirmed this year in the Priory Church in Dunstable, along with candidates from that parish. The annual NCG service was held at the end of August this year and hosted by Kensworth for 'Climate and Creation Sunday'. At the start of September, the annual Quiet Morning was again held at St. Mary Magdalene and led by Penny Fray, Reader in the Benefice of Kensworth, Studham and Whipsnade and Kerry Smith, Reader in the Benefice of Totternhoe, Stanbridge and Tilsworth, with Revd. Joy Cousans celebrating the Eucharist at the end of the morning. It was well-attended and much appreciated. In October St Mary's Eaton Bray hosted a 'Talking Point' with Canon Tim Bull from the Cathedral who gave an engaging presentation on the pros and cons of artificial intelligence. This had been very well attended and was both interesting and reassuring.

The Advent Sunday Service was at St. Giles' Totternhoe, with music and readings especially chosen on Advent themes. The chairmanship of the NCG continues to be rotating, with a volunteer from each Benefice leading in turn and Penny Fray has become NCG Secretary, for which all are thankful.

There is no Methodist church in Whipsnade, but the Rector has developed good relationships with the Methodists in the Benefice parishes of Kensworth and Studham, and we have opportunities to join with our Methodist friends for worship and activities from time to time.

### **Eco-Church**

Conscious that the Gospel is good news for God's earth, the Diocese of St Albans is encouraging churches locally to become environmentally aware and carbon-neutral in line with national Church aims. Representatives from the three parishes have continued to work together over the past year, exploring different ways to engage all of the congregations and the wider community in this initiative.

During 2025, we have continued to work on our environmental action plan; sharing information through the Parish Link to raise environmental awareness, making use of environmentally friendly and recycled materials and products within our church and beginning work on the silver A Rocha award. Whipsnade also hosted Earth Hour in March 2025, including opportunities to reflect, create, sing and consider our own pledges to help protect the Earth. We look forward to the 2026 Earth Hour to be hosted at Studham, as well as an exciting opportunity to hear guest speakers on environmental topics there in September. A set of guidelines, to support environmental awareness in the planning and running of events, has also been created and accepted by the PCC.

### **The Good Book Club**

In September Whipsnade Church hosted a first session of the new Good Book Club which now meets monthly in one of the three benefice churches to discuss devotional and informative books that give insight into different aspects of the bible and scripture. Our first book was 'The Meaning in the Miracles' by Jeffrey John, followed in December by 'The Shack' by W.M. Paul Young. The Group has been a success and its members are grateful to Penny Fray for organising and chairing the meetings, as well as to Nicola for her support; they are both busy people and we thank them for giving up precious weekend time to lead the Group's discussions.

### **Serving our Community - Ministry through pastoral and practical care**

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness, disability or age. Holy Communion at home is taken by the Rector and a team of volunteers to those in need, and parishioners are visited at home and in hospital. Some members of the congregation help frail or elderly people in Whipsnade by shopping, providing transport or by talking to them regularly to ensure that they are coping.

The Rector has been unfailing in her caring for people who have been ill, or died during 2025, and their loved ones, in the true spirit of Christian service.

Over many years the Rector has led special services and activities for those who have been bereaved and at which all are welcome. As well as the biennial 'In Loving Memory' service, due to be hosted at Whipsnade in 2026, there is also an annual service for those who have been bereaved or who find Christmas difficult, called 'Light out of Darkness' which was held at Kensworth this year on 14 December 2025 and which attracted a large number of worshippers, many of whom expressed thanks and appreciation afterwards.

The Village Lunch continues to grow in popularity and is much enjoyed by those who attend, some 35 people each month. The Village community are grateful to Tracy and Ed Stockdale who give up a Wednesday each month to do the cooking, supported by volunteers. For many people this monthly get-together is an opportunity to meet up with friends and make new ones. Everyone who attends enjoys a hot meal, bread roll, tea and cake. The Christmas Village Lunch attracted 71 people and a live entertainer was a festive addition to the normal lunch format. The Village Hall Committee kindly contributed to the costs. The Lunch continues to be financially sustainable raises substantial funds which are donated to the Church, some £2,210 in 2025.

A new-style Village Fete was held on 12 July. Organisation was led by the Parish Council and the Village Hall Committee who underwrote the event. The PCC strongly supported this arrangement, members of the congregation joined in the organising committee and many also ran stalls (Isobel and Sarah cakes and sweets), managed the raffle (Pam with Paul Wright), served refreshments (Jane) and counted the money (Les) all of which contributed to the success of the day. The Church were given a donation of £600 from the proceeds of the Fete by way of thanks.



'Knit and Natter' has taken place monthly in the Church and continues to be popular. A special project this year was a new display for Remembrance Sunday, to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, featuring those who served in the various armed forces, along with nurses, horses and, as usual, many red poppies for remembrance. The Church looked beautiful and was widely admired.

Daily open access to our peaceful and beautiful church is greatly appreciated. One of the ways we know this is from the extent to which visitors use our Prayer Tree, kindly donated by Glenda Cox in memory of her parents Monica and Eric Todd. We also receive very many positive comments in our Visitors Book about the Church and Churchyard. We know too how much parishioners and local walkers visiting the village appreciate being able to go into the Church for a moment of private reflection and prayer during their daily walks.

Following the installation of a fibre broadband internet connection to the Church in 2022 and an electronic card reader for use at services it has been easier to take collections and donations, including for retiring collections to support charities. We have also been able to use the internet for music accompaniment at concerts and at services when we have no organist available having purchased a tablet now loaded with accompanying music. We have also benefited from a loan from Kensworth Church of a 'boom box' to transmit the music. Grateful thanks to Penny and to Barrie Huggins for helping us get the arrangements set up.

### **Ministry through Charitable Giving**

Charitable giving covers many activities by the PCC and individual members of the congregation, including charitable donations and volunteering in the community. All members of our congregation contribute in their different ways to share their diverse gifts and talents for the benefit of others. Maintaining the fabric of the Church of St Mary Magdalene and the surrounding Churchyard are top priorities, and we are grateful to those volunteers who have continued to work to this end.

Guided by the Charities Committee, the PCC have established a tradition of giving to charity on behalf of the congregation. We divide our giving between local, national and international charities, with a focus on issues related to spiritual growth, health and the alleviation of poverty. In 2025, and despite continuing pressures on our finances, we shared a donation of £700 between 7 charities. We continued to donate to our usual charities such as the Bishop's annual Harvest Appeal, to the Royal British Legion on Remembrance Sunday, and to the Children's Society which at Christmas is the focus of our fundraising related to carol-singing (again in 2025 around the Home Park) and carol services. In 2025 the congregation also made donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Myanmar Earthquake and Gaza appeals and the Hurricane Beryl appeal. £673 was donated from the Church's September Macmillan coffee morning. In October the congregation gave gifts to residents of Whipsnade Park Homes, and the food donations blessed at our Harvest Festival service were donated to the Food Bank. Details of the Church's charitable financial giving are in the annual accounts. The Church donated some £3053 in total to charity in 2025. In The PCC are proud to represent a congregation which makes it a priority to support those in need.

The *Parish Link*, our Benefice magazine, is distributed monthly, free to every house in all three villages, providing vital means of communication for all those who live in the villages, be they churchgoers or not. The Link website, [www.parishlink.org.uk](http://www.parishlink.org.uk) makes the *Link* available to Church supporters and friends who do not live in the three parishes. The Church were pleased to accept a donation of £750 from the Link.

### **The Churchyard**

The PCC are very conscious that our large and beautiful Churchyard plays an important part in the ministry of the Church in Whipsnade and how much it is enjoyed by local walkers as well as visitors from further afield. A small and dedicated churchyard working party continued to work hard to maintain the Churchyard. It has come to be regarded as an outstanding example of wildlife and plant conservation.

Our achievements in wildlife and plant conservation are in large part due to the work done in 1993 by Charles Baker to produce a Churchyard Management Plan. This had not been updated since 2009 and was updated in 2024 by Jane Wright. The revised plan is based on the original text and includes a drawing of the Churchyard to incorporate the second Garden of Remembrance and update the position of trees including new and replacement trees. The Plan includes photographs and notes on recent work carried out and work planned for the future. It will be reviewed again in 2029.



Our two Gardens of Remembrance are much valued features of the Churchyard both for their beauty and for the interment of ashes of loved family and friends with a connection to the Church.

The PCC have paid the bulk of the cost of regular grass-cutting and hedge-trimming, with regular support from the Parish Council. We are grateful for their generous contribution to our Churchyard maintenance costs. We are also grateful to Andy Ward who keeps the grass and hedges in tip-top order.

In January all the headstones in the Churchyard were checked to make sure they were upright and safe. Two of the headstones have been laid down and two others are now regularly rechecked.

The kissing gate at the rear of the Churchyard was repaired **WHEN JANE?**

We are grateful to Jane and Ben Wright and the team who keep the Churchyard and new Garden of Remembrance in such excellent condition. Pam Ward, Paul Wright and Teresa Williams are loyal members of this team. The first Garden of Remembrance is lovingly maintained by the Kingham and Bedford family in honour of their deceased relatives; this is greatly appreciated by mourners.

## **FABRIC REPORT**

### **Property Register**

The Property Register, Terrier and Inventory have been updated.

A hard copy of the Property register is kept in the Vestry and a data stick is kept in the safe.

### **The Log Book**

The Log Book, which relates to maintenance work done during the year has been updated and is kept in the Vestry.

In March/April the Church was decorated and it now looks fresh and clean. The electrical inspection was carried out in May 2024 with no recommendations. Fire extinguisher checks were carried out in April 2025. A fire inspection was carried out by Dunstable Fire Station in November following which a notice was displayed setting out action to be taken in case of fire.

In October we fitted a lock to the bar across the West Door for added security.

During the hot dry summer debris began to fall from the Nave roof which is connected to the Tower and the beams across it. We therefore consulted the Architect who inspected the damage. He has recommended that we monitor the cracks to see whether there is worrying movement or whether this was due to the summer weather.

### **Implementing the 2021 Quinquennial inspection Report**

A copy of the Report and recommendations is available for inspection in the Church. The recommendations include items requiring attention within 6 months; within 18 months; and within 5 years. The report made a total of 25 recommendations.

All the Report's recommendations have now been completed within the 5-year deadline. The next Review is due in 2026.

During the year modifications to the North Door were carried out to make it more accessible to wheelchair users, which reflects a suggestion in the 2021 Quinquennial Report that wheelchair access could be improved.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Total receipts during 2025 were £39,607.44 as detailed in the attached financial statements.

Total expenditure over all accounts was £39,387.18. The Parish Share increased in 2025 to £23,790 (+3.92 %) which continues to be a significant expenditure for such a small church.

St Mary Magdalene has no charitable endowments.

We wish to record our thanks to Barrie Huggins for kindly examining the PCC accounts again this year.

### **General Fund**

The General Fund account balance stood at £44,290.74 at the end of December 2025 compared with £39,802 in 2024.

Total income during the year was £36,167 compared to £31,804 in 2024. This higher income from was from the village lunch and donations including an anonymous donation of £2,250. Total expenditure was £31,679 compared with £33,275 in 2024, a saving of £1,596. This was due to lower church expenses and a substantial saving on electricity by renegotiation of rates.

We were pleased to send £700 of donations shared between 7 charities and £2,352 collected in church was sent to other charities.

Overall, the account showed an in-year surplus of £4,488.49.

### **Designated Fund**

The Designated Fund covers specific projects including restoration. Income for the year was £1,088. Expenditure was £5,356. The deficit of £4,268 included a cost for redecorating the church of £3,950. The end of year balance was £14,753 with £13,942 being designated for restoration and £811 for the Bell Fund.

### **General issues**

Interest on all accounts totalled £2,372 compared to £2,141 in 2024.

### **Reserves Policy and Risk Management**

The PCC aim to retain sufficient funds in the PCC account to enable the smooth day-to-day running of the Church, that is, payment of the Parish Share to the Diocese, and meeting our administrative expenses. Funds for the maintenance of the fabric are kept in the Designated Funds to provide for emergencies. The Church is insured following the advice of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, to cover any potential damage to the building and the Churchyard, and to meet the cost of any potential claims against the PCC. As part of the terms of this policy, we follow advice in taking precautions against theft, fire or damage to the building, goods and chattels.

### **Legacies policy**

The PCC welcome all gifts in Wills, however large or small. Our policy is to use gifts for the benefit of the Church and its community and to ensure that there continues to be an active and thriving church in Whipsnade, both now and for future generations.

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

At present the PCC form a Charity within the Church of England which is regulated by the Charities Commission but excepted from registration, as gross annual income is below the threshold of £100,000. The Charity is, however, regarded by HMRC as having charitable status for tax purposes.

The PCC are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the Parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Mary Magdalene's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Rector), Churchwardens, members elected to serve on the Deanery Synod and lay members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll of the Church. All those who attend our services regularly are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and to stand for election to the PCC.

The Annual Parish Church Meetings were held in April 2025.

A new Electoral Roll was compiled in 2025, a Church of England requirement every 6 years. The number now registered on the Roll, and reported to the APCM, was 46 of which 11 are resident in Whipsnade Parish. This

compares with 51 people on the Roll in 2024. As a result the number of PCC members able to be elected from the Electoral Roll each year has reduced from 9 to 6.

The legal requirements in relation to the holding and publishing of personal data are strictly observed. Each member of the Electoral Roll is given an assurance that we only use the information to enable us to collate church membership statistics and report them to the Diocese, and so that we can communicate with members. We do not keep any unnecessary personal data.

Sub-committees were re-constituted and members appointed in June 2025 following the APCM: the Standing Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Lay Vice-chair); Charities Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary plus one other available member); Purchasing, Works and Contracts Committee (Lay Vice-chair, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary); Children Committee (Rector, Churchwardens, Sarah Ayres, Sylvia Kendrick, Mike Bailey and Glenda Cox, Secretary); Churchyard Committee (Churchwardens, Pam Ward, Paul Wright, Secretary); Social Committee (Jo King, Sarah Ayres/Sylvia Kendrick (Music), Isobel Randall/Jane Wright (Catering)).

The PCC met five times during 2025. Members considered matters relevant to the development of ministry, the health and safety of people attending the Church, and the maintenance of the Church fabric and Churchyard. Matters of a pastoral nature and issues concerning safeguarding were reported at each meeting. Minutes are displayed in the Church so that all details of discussions are available to all. Each meeting received reports from the Churchwardens, the Treasurer and the Safeguarding Officer as well as from representatives of the Deanery Synod, the North Chilterns Group and the Eco-Working Group.

### **Some thankyous**

A huge thank you from the PCC to all those who have worked during 2025 to fulfil our purpose and continue to provide public benefit through much needed worship and pastoral support, while keeping the Church open and both it and the Churchyard safe and in good order. A church would not function without the commitment and service of people of faith who work tirelessly and selflessly for the wider good. There are so many who merit thanks this year.

Thanks are due in particular to our hard-working Churchwardens for all that they do, and the responsibility they carry throughout the year.

We are grateful also for the work of Les Randall, our Treasurer, particularly in the challenging times of the past few years, and of Joan Bailey, the PCC Secretary. And our grateful thanks go to Mike Bailey for his chairmanship of the Purchasing, Works and Contracts Committee, and all the work involved for him as Parish Safeguarding Officer in these times of evolving Church safeguarding requirements.

The quality of our worship has been enhanced by the music provided by Chris Hazell. We are very grateful for Chris's substantial contribution to the work of the Church and have missed him greatly during his recent period of illness. The congregation at our Christmas Eve Carol Service were again delighted in 2025 by the music accompaniment of the Kendrick and Ayres families in Chris's absence. We are grateful to Matthew Huggins for playing at our Christmas services in Chris's absence.

Our dedicated band of bellringers led by Pam Ward, summon people to worship in the traditional way. We are very grateful to the Kendrick/Ayres family for their service over so many years.

The Church is made beautiful by the efforts of flower-arrangers. Ann Brinklow and Teresa Williams have ensured that the Church looks beautiful throughout the year, giving great pleasure to the congregation and to all those who visit or use the Church.

Sidesmen, readers and those who administer the Chalice support our worship by their regular assistance in services. Volunteers have also opened the Church each day for the benefit of the community and those who visit the Church.

Thanks to the Ayres, Whalleys and Glenda Cox for supporting our very successful Sunday School.

We have a wonderful team of Church cleaners who make the Church safe every day for those who use it for private prayer, rest and contemplation. The whole community are extremely grateful for their hard work.

This year we have been blessed by the efforts of those who have organised or supported fundraising events to bolster Church funds. The Hornby family, particularly Helen and David, held a third concert in the Church in celebration of the life and contribution of Vanessa, in aid of the Food Bank and the Church; this is now a much-valued annual celebration.

We supported the Bedfordshire Churches 'Bike and Hike' event in September; there was the usual Macmillan Coffee morning held in the Church in September, for which Isobel baked scrumptious cakes; and the Poppy Appeal was once again strongly supported across our Benefice.

Sincere thanks to Fiona McDougal and her Parish Link team, to Les Randall the website editor and to Jane Wright our Whipsnade correspondent.

Heartfelt appreciation to our Rector for her inspirational leadership. Her caring and conscientious pastoral and ministering support sets a fine example to us all in our Christian living.

Signed on behalf of the PCC by the Reverend Canon Nicola Lenthall (PCC Chairman)

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Date: .....

**ST. MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH, WHIPSNAD**  
**Income and Expenditure Account 1st January 2025 - 31st December 2025**

	<u>2025</u>				<u>2024</u>			
	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total Funds	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total Funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>								
Church Fees	3,121.00			3,121.00	2,106.40			2,106.40
GASDS	3,955.69			3,955.69	3,924.34			3,924.34
Planned Giving - Tax Efficient	14,270.00			14,270.00	15,221.00			15,221.00
Tax recovered on Gift Aid/GASDS	5,716.53			5,716.53	4,663.49			4,663.49
Donations	4,804.04			4,804.04	1,601.56			1,601.56
Bank interest	1,677.98	694.04		2,372.02	1,514.51	626.43		2,140.94
Village Lunch	2,235.00			2,235.00	1,171.00			1,171.00
Events	386.95			386.95	1,601.50			1,601.50
Charity Events			2,352.68	2,352.68			2,434.38	2,434.38
Garden of Remembrance						231.81		231.81
Church Restoration & Development		319.53		319.53		348.25		348.25
Bell Fund		74.00		74.00		12.00		12.00
	<u>36,167.19</u>	<u>1,087.57</u>	<u>2,352.68</u>	<u>39,607.44</u>	<u>31,803.80</u>	<u>1,218.49</u>	<u>2,434.38</u>	<u>35,456.67</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>								
Parish Share	23,790.00			23,790.00	22,892.00			22,892.00
Church Expenses	4,546.19			4,546.19	6,265.71			6,265.71
Utilities	1,472.39			1,472.39	2,307.94			2,307.94
Clergy and Admin support	528.77			528.77	475.88			475.88
Clergy Expenses	532.39			532.39	470.55			470.55
Charities	700.00		2,352.68	3,052.68	725.00		2,434.38	3,159.38
Bank charges	108.96			108.96	137.94			137.94
Garden of Remembrance						1,200.00		1,200.00
Church Restoration & Development		5,355.80		5,355.80		590.00		590.00
Bell Fund								
	<u>31,678.70</u>	<u>5,355.80</u>	<u>2,352.68</u>	<u>39,387.18</u>	<u>33,275.02</u>	<u>1,790.00</u>	<u>2,434.38</u>	<u>37,499.40</u>
Balance of Income less Expenditure	4,488.49	-4,268.23		220.26	-1,471.22	-571.51		-2,042.73
Add Opening Balance	39,802.25	19,020.78		58,823.03	41,169.99	19,592.29		60,762.28
<b>Balance called forward 31 December</b>	<u>44,290.74</u>	<u>14,752.55</u>		<u>59,043.29</u>	<u>39,698.77</u>	<u>19,020.78</u>		<u>58,719.55</u>

**Bank Balances**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
CCLA PCC CB3033610-001	31,726.10	30,048.12
CCLA Restoration CB3033611-001	13,122.47	12,428.43
HSBC BANK 281	14,170.37	16,346.48
Add cheques not cashed previous year	775.47	671.99
Deduct cheques not cashed this year	<u>-751.12</u>	<u>-775.47</u>
	<u>59,043.29</u>	<u>58,719.55</u>

**Breakdown of Funds**

	Opening	Receipts	Payments	Balance
<b>Designated Funds</b>				
Church Restoration & Dev.	18,283.43	1,013.57	5,355.80	13,941.20
Bell Fund	737.35	74.00		811.35
Total of designated funds	19,020.78	1,087.57	5,355.80	14,752.55

**Restricted Funds**

Bishop's Harvest Appeal	386.77
British Legion Poppy Appeal	139.82
DEC Earthquake Appeal	80.00
DEC Gaza Appeal	180.00
Dunstable Foodbank	141.95
Macmillan Coffee Morning	673.02
The Children's Society	751.12
Total of Restricted Funds	2,352.68

**Donations by the PCC**

Dementia UK	100.00
Keech Hospice	100.00
Rennie Grove Hosp	100.00
Smile Train UK	100.00
Society of Mary & Martha	100.00
St Martin in the Fields	100.00
The Salvation Army	100.00
Total of Donations by the PCC	700.00

**Total Expenditure**

Architect Fees	320.40
Altar wine, breads, linen, candles & Music etc	291.19
Bank charges	108.96
Broadband	476.10
Charity giving	700.00
Charity giving (restricted)	2,352.68
Church Decorating	3,950.00
Church expenses paid by the Rector	1,123.52
Church Flowers	200.00
Churchyard grass & hedge cutting	760.00
Church door modification & restoration	584.40
Clergy and admin support	528.77
Clergy expenses	532.39
Electricity	1,364.82
Fire extinguisher examination	138.00
Gift for retiring Bishop of St Albans	50.00
Heating parts	81.00
Insurance	866.40
Lectionery App	9.99
Lightning Conductor test	156.00
North Chilterns Group of Churches Levy	100.00
Paper Towels	65.99
Parish Share	23,790.00
Plaques for Garden of Remembrance	234.00
Poppy Wreath	25.00
Subscriptions	50.00
Tower repointing	420.00
Water Bills	107.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,387.18</b>

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Whipsnade Church.**

I report to the PCC of Whipsnade Church on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

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

It is my responsibility to:

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

### **Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

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

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mr E B Huggins  
93 West Hill  
Dunstable  
Bedfordshire  
LU6 3PN

Date: 16/3/26