

St Mary's Church, Houghton with Wyton

Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council

for the year ended 31 March 2026 (report)
and 31 December 2025 (finances)

Chair

The Reverend Geoffrey Boucher
The Rectory, Rectory Lane
Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Bank

Lloyds Bank plc
99 High Street
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Independent examiner

Ray King Underwood
46 Victoria Crescent
Houghton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Background

St Mary's PCC has responsibility for supporting the Rector in promoting the ecclesiastical & municipal church, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance and redevelopment responsibilities for the Church buildings, although up-keep of two churchyards, St Mary's & Wyton (near to the closed Church) and the Council are responsible for both but the war Graves Commission also look after part of the latter. To our financial advantage, church members kindly carry out this vital maintenance work.

The full PCC has met six times since the last AGM. The various Committees have gathered between the PCC meetings and reports of their work and achievements have been received and discussed by the PCC at their meetings.

Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation rules.

During the year, the following served as members of the PCC:-

The Rector	The Reverend Geoffrey Boucher	Chair
Church Wardens	Mr Guy Morton	Church Warden
	Mr Mike Batchelor	Church Warden
Deputy Church Warden	Position Vacant	
Deanery Synod	Mr Matthew Challis	
	Position Vacant	
Elected Members	Mr Simon Summers	Treasurer
	Mrs Patricia Hawitt Palmer	Secretary
	Mr Mike Batchelor	
	Mr Roger Churchill	
	Mrs Sarah Holden	
	Mrs Debbie Hollis	
	Mrs Liz Lee	
	Mrs Pam Longland	
	Mr Guy Morton	
	Mr Matthew Challis	

Committees

The PCC operates through a number of Committees, which meet between full meetings of the PCC, and on an ad-hoc basis wherever there is a need to transact specific relevant business.

Standing Committee

This is the only Committee required by law and has the power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the full Council. It has not met since the 2025 AGM.

Safeguarding Report – Revd Steph Pedlar (Safeguarding Officer)

There have been no safeguarding-related incidents. We work closely with the Diocese, following their recommendations on how we keep up-to-date and follow new initiatives. One such recommendation is working with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, an online tool designed to help churches to keep on track with all safeguarding requirements, including training, action planning and policy development. There are three levels on the dashboard and over the last year we have attained all the requirements of Level 3.

Reports are provided to the PCC at each of their meetings and the dashboard recommendations are considered and worked upon.

Safeguarding-related policies are being continually written, updated and formally approved/adopted by the PCC.

All PCC members, including the Church Wardens, are continuing to achieve the required training; DBS forms have been processed and are up-to-date, with thanks to Liz Lee who ensures all relevant people have DBS clearance and that all safeguarding training requirements are met at the appropriate level.

During the year there was a data breach by a company outsourced by the DBS checker and unfortunately some of our members' data was compromised. Related issues have been overseen and managed by the Diocese.

All clergy and lay ministers are up-to-date, and all training and checks are overseen by the Ely Diocese.

EcoChurch Report – Liz Lee

The A-Rocha Eco church survey is a framework for action to help us respond faithfully to the climate and nature crises. It is a self-assessment tool to help us connect environmental issues with our Christian faith and mission, and respond with practical action in the church, our lives and the community.

There are surveys to be completed covering five areas which then act as inspiration for future action and activities. The 5 key areas of church life that the survey covers are:

1. Worship and teaching
2. Buildings and energy
3. Land and nature
4. Community and global engagement
5. Lifestyle

Points are gained for each question answered, depending on the answer. Awards are gained depending on the points awarded - giving bronze, silver and gold. Each survey has to achieve a specific level before that award can be gained. Further information can be found at [A Rocha UK – Caring for creation](#)

Currently the Eco church team are small in number including Liz Lee, Trish Hawitt Palmer, Ed Sowell, Matt and Izzie Challis. We have been working through the surveys and using these as prompts to guide us to plan how we can take action within the church and share information with the congregation.

The re-ordering work within the church has helped us achieve sufficient points for a bronze award in the Buildings and Energy survey, but the Land and Nature, Community and Global and Lifestyle Surveys need some further work. We are hoping to achieve bronze overall at some point in 2026.

We have begun the process of developing some of the required policies. We had a visit from a representative of the Wildlife Trust – Diana Cook – and have started to make plans for the churchyard and SMC garden based on her advice on how to make these areas more welcoming to nature. Consequently, there will be a few changes over the coming months, including leaving some of the grassed areas uncut and introducing native spring bulbs and wildflowers.

We have started to include eco-related tips in the weekly Pew Sheet, have shared a 'Carbon Fast for Lent' initiative from Climate Stewards, and encouraged people to sign up for the 'Big Plastic Count', all with the aim of raising awareness of some of the issues that are faced in daily life.

It would be really appreciated to have some volunteers to help with certain areas, so please take a look at the online surveys [Eco Church - An A Rocha UK Project](#) If there is anything that is of interest to you and you could help with - even one small section - or perhaps assist Roger Churchill and Bob Walker with the mowing/gardening - or taking action/raising awareness on social or environmental campaigns, any offers of support would be hugely welcomed. Please speak to either Liz, Trish, Ed, Izzie or Matt for further info.

Report of the Fabric Committee – Mike Batchelor

St Mary's Church and Churchyard

- 1) Reordering works complete with only minor defects and sign-off to be completed. Some additional works to be carried out.
- 2) Lighting and heating completed, some minor amendments to the heating required.
- 3) Dias completed.
- 4) AV system completed, minor changes required. Units to be relocated into AV cabinet. Cabinet to be completed and installed.
- 5) Cleaner's cupboard to be completed and installed.
- 6) Main door to be replaced, inner door to be modified to insert glass panels.
- 7) Other maintenance works carried out including floor cleaned, fire extinguisher checks and replacement installed as required, lightning protector tape tested, gutters cleaned out and organ refurbished.
- 8) New safe installed.
- 9) Churchyard maintenance continuing with areas identified for rewilding project.

St Mary's Centre

- 1) New hot water system installed to sink unit in kitchen.
- 2) Cold water tanks removed as they were highlighted as a possible source of Legionella.
- 3) Fire alarm and detection system and fire extinguisher maintained as was the heating boilers.
- 4) We are currently identifying other works including removal of sanitary ware and cubicles to create more storage, and brick pillars in main hall to be investigated as to their requirement.

Wyton Churchyard

- 1) Section of external wall requires removal and replacement
- 2) Other maintenance work continuing.

Social Committee Report

No formal Social Committee currently exists, although a small group of the congregation continue to kindly work on an ad-hoc basis, organising several very successful events across the year, for which their input is acknowledged and very much appreciated.

Pastoral & Worship Committee Report – Sarah Holden

This Committee, as well as planning church services, undertakes responsibility for overseeing arrangements for children's activities, bible study and prayer groups, in addition to ensuring pastoral care visiting is in place to those who need and benefit from this.

2025 was an exciting year for the worship in St Mary's. We were thrilled to be able to move back into the church building after the renovation works and to continue our pattern of worship in the building. Revd Steph added an All Age Service on Good Friday this year which was a much-appreciated addition. Other highlights of this year include the service to reopen the church and a visit from Bishop Dagmar. It was great to also welcome the nativity scenes exhibit to our church, this was a wonderful exhibit and also attracted visitors into the church. Geoff invited the school for a visit which was a lovely opportunity to have the children in church and seemed to be enjoyed by all.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Christine, the choir, our ministry team and the whole congregation for the contribution we all make to the worship life of our church.

Report of the Electoral Roll Officer – Debbie Hollis

The number on the Electoral Roll has decreased by three since last approval, which reflects the confirmed removal of committed and valued congregation members through death experienced this year as follows:

Names for Removal:

Shirley Anne Holmes
Colin John Holmes
Joyce Ellen Brinkhurst

There have been no new additions to join the Electoral Roll for the 2026 AGM, before the stipulated church notice board submission passed. However, with newer church attendees settling into our congregation, there remains potential applications for adjustments during the next church year ahead.

Therefore, the 2026 Electoral Roll now stands at 74 members (comprising 56 residents of Houghton, Wyton and Wyton-on-the-Hill and 18 non-residents) and is submitted for consideration.

Report on Children's Church - Liz Lee & Matthew Challis

God's Gang continues with a small group of children from two families and it is an enjoyable time spent with them as we all learn and grow in our faith. The majority of sessions in 2025 was spent in the upstairs room of the St Mary's Centre due to the main services being held downstairs. It eventually worked well, if a bit squashed, but it was pleasing to return downstairs during the autumn.

The Scripture Union Mosaic books were used for small groups, starting the year exploring prayer and discovering that God speaks and always listens to us, using Jesus' example and teaching. During April, Easter and the events leading up to it was explored. In the autumn the A Rocha Eco Church materials were used, with bible passages and activities to explore the five different areas of the surveys.

A successful Christmas season was enjoyed with two Christingle services taking place, one for the Houghton Scout Group which was very well attended (and apparently one of the highlights of their year), and the Crib service which was a joy as always, following the Posada journey around the Parish and beyond. It was a pleasure to be able to hold these in church with the new heating system after the re-ordering had taken place.

This Spring we are studying Moses in Egypt and how Moses and God's people discover that God loves them and will keep them safe, as God rescues them from Egypt.

Liz is joined in leading the God's Gang sessions by Wendy King-Underwood and Sarah Holden, usually in a combination of two, which works well.

Over the last year Matt & Izzie have successfully launched a Youth Programme, which was in the embryonic stage this time last year. Matt reports they are currently pursuing this along 3 main lines of effort:-

1. We have set up a 'Bean-Bag Gang' on one Sunday a month, which runs parallel with God's Gang, and covers similar topics, in a more youth-age relevant way.
2. We are engaging with St Ives Methodist church with their Sunday evening 'Rock Solid' youth hangout sessions, who have a pre-existing youth set-up that we are docking into, to provide regular youth-to-youth interaction, and a mainly games oriented space, with some spiritual content at the end.
3. We are taking our church Youth to a Christian Youth Sailing Holiday on the Norfolk Broads, this is serving functionally as our Youth Week Away.

We are aiming at roughly 11-16s, but we are aiming to be needs-led so will flex this as necessary. We currently have one youth member, but there are two regular God's Gang attendees who are in year 6, so are hoping to grow next year. Please pray for us as we grow and shape our youth provision, and consider whether you'd be able to offer any time to support us in any way.

Thank you to all who give their time and energy to support our Children's Church work and if there is anyone who would like to join us in helping the children of our church grow in their faith, either to lead sessions or to provide adult numbers for child safeguarding purposes, or have ideas for new activities, please contact us.

Church Fabric

The fabric of the Church is generally in good order. The fixtures, fittings and ornaments of the Church have been accounted for in accordance with the Terrier.

Church Attendance

In accordance with the Church Register, the combined average attendance at both the 8.30am and 9.45am Sunday services was around 41 including children under the age of 16.

During the reporting year there have been 7 funerals held in Church (including 2 in the St Mary's Centre during the reordering), 3 funerals held in other churches and 5 at the crematorium. There were 2 baptisms and one wedding.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Treasurer's report - *Simon Summers*

In summary, the Extension Project is almost complete and has been fully funded by Donations and Grants, which is a very satisfactory outcome indeed. The General Fund, once again, shows a surplus for 2025 and the St Mary's Centre hiring charges continue to cover the building's running costs, which is further good news. While we should anticipate pressure to increase our support for other local parishes which are not in such a fortunate position, and the risk of higher energy costs from 2027, we can face the financial future with confidence.

Turning to the details, firstly in the General Fund - regular giving has bounced back after a dip last year, whereas fee income remains below the immediate post-Covid levels. Total income rose from £55,000 to over £61,000. As to the Church's operating expenses, charitable giving rose, only partly due to the late payment of some collections made in 2024. The Parish Share rose from £33,000 to over £37,000, as we agreed to pay more to support other local parishes struggling to meet their contributions towards both Clergy stipends and central Church costs. Other expenses were well controlled. A surplus of £12,164 is a very good outcome.

The St. Mary's Centre had strong hiring income once again and a surplus of £2,415 over operating costs was recorded. However energy usage rose significantly, and this requires a review, especially as our fixed rate energy deal ends in December 2026.

The Extension Fund received further donations from parishioners in 2025, and we were also fortunate to receive two substantial Grants, from the Mick George Community Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation. The remaining balance on the Fund is sufficient to cover the expected final costs.

The Belltower Fund now appears in the Church annual accounts as the two bank accounts have been merged to save costs.

The PCC continue to maintain reserves in case of urgent expenses in one of our buildings, and to meet the anticipated costs of work identified in the recent Quinquennial review of the Church building. Overall the financial position is very robust, for which we should be very thankful.

Review of the Year (Rector's Report) to be given verbally at the meeting

Reverend Geoffrey Boucher

Chair, 31 March 2026