

# APCM Meeting 2025 - AGENDA

## Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry Meeting)

1. Prayer
2. Minutes of Meeting (from Previous year)
3. Election of Churchwardens
4. Prayer for new Churchwardens

## Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of Meeting (from Previous year)
3. Matters Arising
4. Reports -
  - Electoral Roll  
(written by the electoral roll officer, with a copy available for inspection at the meeting)
  - Churchwardens –  
(Report on the proceedings of the PCC and the parish in general)
  - Fabric  
(on the good and ornaments of the Church written by the Church Wardens)
  - Treasurer –  
(this must be independently audited and published for at least 7 days - including a Sunday service before the mtg)
  - SGPN Report
  - Governor's report
  - Deanery Synod  
(Report on the proceedings of the Deanery synod written by the Deanery synod representative)
  - Safeguarding Report
  - Vicars Report
5. Elections:
  - Deanery Synod Rep –  
(elected for a 3yr term, 1 if electoral roll is less than 50 2 if up to 100)
  - Election of PCC Members –  
(upto 6 if electoral roll is less than 50, 9 if 50-100, 12 if 100-200)
  - Ex-officio (Chair), Churchwardens, Deanery Synod Rep, ALM's
6. Appointment of Independent Examiner
7. Safeguarding review of Policy
8. Parishioners' Questions
9. Date of next APCM

## **PCC mtg following the APCM:**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Election of PCC officers
  1. Lay-Vice Chair
  2. Treasurer
  3. Secretary
  4. Electoral Roll Officer
  5. Safeguarding officer (local independent person)
3. Signing of "Fit and Proper" declaration by all PCC members (including CW's, Deanery synod reps etc)
4. Dates of PCC mtgs for the coming year (please bring diaries)

# **Claypole Benefice Combined Vestry Meeting & Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting 11:45am, Sunday 7th April 2024 at St Peter's, Claypole**

**Attendees** : Bridget Rosewell (BR) (Chair),  
Fiona Libby (FL), Mike Libby (ML), Catherine Thornton (CT),  
John Padley (JP), Tony Tucker (TT), Linda Tucker (LT), Helen Donger (HD), Barbara White (BW), James White (JW), Martin Parnell (MP), Steve Jarman (SJ),  
Aubrey ??, Paul and Rosemary ??  
Libby Mason (LM),  
Dick Loynes (DL), Lynda Loynes (LL)  
Mavis Arnold (MA), John Lawrence (JL)

## **Agenda Item Action**

Welcome

1. Apologies - Apologies were received from :  
Daphne Streets, Oli Phillips

## **Vestry Meetings**

2. Appointment of  
Wardens

*Prior to this meeting :*

St Martins, Stubton - ML was re-elected.

*At this meeting :*

St Peter's, Claypole - JP and BR were re-elected

All Saints, Fenton - LM was re-elected.

All Saints, Westborough - MA and JL were re-elected

St James', Dry Doddington - DL was re-elected.

## **APCM**

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising. Were circulated prior to this meeting and all present voted in favour of them being a true record.

There were no matters arising.

4. **Electoral Roll** The numbers on the Electoral Roll for the 5 churches are as follows :  
St Martins, Stubton - 43 (Officer - ML)  
St Peters, Claypole - 47 (Officer - BR)  
All Saints, Westborough - 8 (Officer - JL)  
All Saints, Fenton - 12 (Officer - LM)

BR asked if the congregation could join the St James electoral role to improve the ability to form a PCC. This resulted in the following :  
St James, Dry Doddington - 10 (Officer - DL)

#### 5. **Wardens Reports**

Copies of written reports were received from St Martin's, All Saints Fenton and All Saints Westborough and passed to FL. Any relevant highlights were expanded upon in the meeting.

6. **Treasurers Reports** Treasurers reports were circulated from St Peter's, All Saints Fenton, St James, All Saints Westborough and from St Martin's. Discussion around finances again raised the question as to whether the pooling of all church funds may lead to better returns...It was proposed that CT should work closely with OP to resolve finance processes.

7. **Deanery Synod** No report

8. **Safeguarding** There were no issues reported from any of the parishes at this meeting.

9. **Ministers Report** No report

#### 10. **PCC Elections**

##### **St Peter's**

BR and LM proposed Helen Donger for the PCC  
BR and SJ proposed Tony Tucker for the PCC  
Both were duly elected.

##### **St Martin's**

ML and CT proposed Ian Phillips to join the PCC.  
He was duly elected.

#### 11. **Independent Financial Examiners**

All parishes were happy with their current independent financial examiners.

#### 12. **Fit & Proper Person Forms**

All PCC members need to complete a form and give it to FL who is maintaining a list and will follow up with those yet to provide.

#### 13. **Any Other Business**

The suggestion was made that we move toward having one PCC covering all 5 churches rather than 5 separate PCC's. To be discussed further.....

#### 14. **Close** -

The meeting closed at 12:15pm

# Stubton

## 2025 Reports

### Electoral Roll

There are forty eight members on the Stubton Electoral Roll.

### Church Wardens/Fabric Report

There has been one Church Warden at Stubton during 2024 - Mike Libby, mglibby14@gmail.com. 01636 626028

In 2024, one evening service a month was held on the 2nd Sunday at St Martins, the only exception to this being in November, when the benefice Remembrance Day service was held at St Peter's, Claypole on the 2nd Sunday.

Thanks go to Revd. Les Batty, Revd. Canon Tony Tucker and to Archdeacon Justine who each led services for us prior to Revd. Jon Speirs-Davies being licensed as the West Loveden LMP incumbent in September 2024.

From January through to December there were a total of 16 services at St Martins, 11 Eucharist services, a wedding service in June (Erin & Ben), 2 baptism services (August and September) a Harvest Festival (October) and a Carol Service (December).

Congregations ranged from 7 to 94 across the services, with an average of 26 per service. Plate giving totalled £956.81, an average of £59.80 per service.

If the Wedding service is excluded from the averages, then the average congregation size falls to 22, although average plate giving increases to £61.30.

If all 'special' services (Wedding, Baptism, Harvest Festival and Carol services) are removed from the analysis, the numbers change notably across the remaining 11 services held. The congregations ranged from 7 to 30 with an average of 15, and plate giving totalled £592.11 (61.88% of the total) with an average of £53.83 per service.

In addition to plate giving, we are blessed with regular donations amounting to an average of £140 per month, although this has fallen when compared to last year. The total Gift Aid claim for 2024 amounted to £661.70.

### Church Meetings

The St Martins PCC met three times during the year, in February, April and December.

The St Martins PCC currently consists of 5 people : Fiona Libby (PCC Secretary), Cath Thornton (PCC Treasurer), Ian Phillips, Ann Treacy and Mike Libby.

In addition to the local PCC meetings, the combined PCC (ex Claypole Benefice Churches) also met in January, March, June and September at Stubton Village Hall.

Following clarification that, as a group, the West Loveden churches covenanted giving was insufficient to cover the recruitment of an incumbent, like the other churches in the group, St Martins PCC reviewed their commitment. The PCC took the significant decision to double the previously agreed level of Covenant giving, deciding that funds donated in the past for specific purposes would be better spent ensuring that we had an incumbent. St Martin's does not have significant cash reserves and this situation requires careful management as we go forward such that we can retain a workable/survivable balance. [See Fundraising below]

The St Martin's Vestry Meeting took place on March 28th 2024 at St Martin's with one nomination received for the position of Church Warden – Mike Libby – who was duly elected.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) took place on 7th April 2024 at St Peter's.

The Church Warden Visitation service was held at Lincoln Cathedral, on 13th June 2024 and led by The Rt Revd. Stephen Conway, Bishop of Lincoln.

There were several informal meetings between the church wardens and others during the course of the year.

### Support for St Martins

We continue to be blessed with a high level of support from our local community, without which we would struggle to manage such activity as we enjoy.

Whilst impossible to mention everyone by name, some examples of that support include :

- Those who support St Martins with monthly giving - without which we would really struggle to meet our costs
- The cleaners who give their time freely to ensure that St Martins is kept in a lovely condition
- The team who provide and arrange the flowers throughout the year
- The team who help maintain the churchyard
- All those who help out with services throughout the year reading lessons, providing music, refreshments, etc.,
- The group of residents who decorated the church so beautifully for the Harvest Festival. All donations of food were taken to the Emmaus Trust in Newark after the service
- Stubton Hall who hosted refreshments (mince pies, orange juice and mulled wine) after our Carol Service
- The Stubton Hub for the provision of the Christmas Tree
- The volunteers who erected and decorated the Christmas Tree and the Church ahead of the Carol Service, and dismantled it all in appropriate timeframe

### Fundraising Activity

We held several fundraising events during the year to bolster up our finances in the light of doubling our Covenant Pledge to the Diocese,

A Pop Up Café & Previously Loved Sale was very well supported – but very hard work collecting items for the sale, setting everything up in the Village Hall and getting enough folk to man the stalls– and the kitchen. It was a great success with a lot of visitors – who all spent their money on previously loved items and cake ! The left over items were taken to local charity shops – apart from the books which were taken to St Peter's to add to the book sale stock.

We also held a Harvest Supper evening, which was also very well supported – and a great success judging by the feedback of the attendees. Attendees enjoyed the lovely setting, the hot food, the good conversation, a quiz, a raffle and a Guess the Weight of the Marrow challenge. We will look to repeat this in the coming year.

A special thank you to Fiona Libby and Cath Thornton for the organisational and persuasive skills ! It is by organising and running such events that we will hopefully be able to keep our finances in check

## Church Maintenance / Fabric

### Externally

We continue to benefit from a marvellous team of volunteers who maintain many aspects of the church, the churchyard path, the grass and the boundaries for us. Up to fifteen village residents willingly turn out several times a year, generally on a Saturday morning, to cut the grass, tidy up the churchyard and keep it looking very neat. A special mention must be made of our PCC Secretary who, after seeing to her own area of grass, provides the team with tea, coffee and cake. Following the arboreal survey, undertaken in March 2023, three companies provided quotations for the remedial work and the PCC met to review those quotes. The PCC decided to accept the quotation from Ian Boby Grounds Maintenance Services. This work is scheduled for early 2025 whilst the trees are dormant.

Some external works have become urgent following the storms (Conall and Darragh) at the end of 2024. Several slates were dislodged from the nave roof, some falling to the ground, others still on the roof but badly displaced and ridge tile grouting has worked free. We are hoping that our insurers (Ecclesiastical) will cover most of the cost of repair. Other external fabric challenges exist (aging guttering, blocked and broken downcomers, blocked underground drains, churchyard flooding, movement of headstones/grave plot surrounds, very slippery path) and remain on our list of 'things to do'.

### Internally

The internal fabric is holding up quite well. It is likely that we will need to redecorate areas as damp has caused some paint to start to flake off.

Another key requirement internally is to have the woodwork sprayed to counter beetle attack. Several areas (some pew floors, bell tower floors, etc..) have been attacked – as have items of wooden furniture which are in quite a sorry state. Some of these items will need to be destroyed and replaced. Previous attempts to find a company to undertake the beetle treatment have been unsuccessful.

During a volunteer day, we rolled up the nave aisle carpet to allow the floor to 'breathe', polished the brasses and generally tidied up.

The previous (donated) sound system in the church soldiered on during the early part of the year but was becoming increasingly unreliable. We have now replaced it with a new and more flexible system. A new amplifier, speakers and associated cables were purchased

We continue to have one bell out of action and, given our financial situation, it is unlikely that any repair will be undertaken in the foreseeable future. If/when any repairs are made, it is likely that the current full circle ringing mechanism will be replaced with a simple tolling mechanism.

**Mike Libby**  
**Churchwarden**

## Treasurers Report

The Independent Examiners Report of the financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2024 for St Martin's Church Stubton was received from Charlotte Wilson on 9th April 2025.

I have examined the report and signed them accordingly agreeing with the contents and their accuracy. The PCC reviewed and approved, so I have noted that these accounts as acknowledged unanimously accepted by the PCC

A copy of the signed report is available and a copy of which is posted on the notice board within St Martin's church £	£		
2024		2023	
Covenants / Planned Giving/ Collections		2,951.46	3,115.29
Fund raising		1524.19	112.50
Gift Aid		834.20	650.75
Bank balances		9,746.15	9,533.44
Investments		12,539.81	11,895.82

Overall this year we had a small increase of (income over expenditure) of £620.03. Income boosted by new fund raising events ensured the church costs were covered including the agreed increase to the Covenant pledge. The team also agreed to invest in a new sound systems paid from an accumulation from fundraising events.

As the main outgoings of Church (insurance and electric) are expected to exceed the annual income streams, we have agreed again this year to focus on fund raising events to ensure we can meet the costs and not impact funds raised to support the maintenance and repairs as required

**Planned Giving** the number of planned Giving donations has stayed at 8 per calendar month giving a monthly total £130. There has been a review of the "Givers" with the implementation of the online donation/GiftAid system

### Gift Aid

Received £834.20 in January for 2023, £662.69 received in January for 2024.

### Fund Raising and Donations

There were five successful events during the year which raised just over £1,500, fund raising will continue to be a focus area to allow repairs and maintenance to be completed

### Covenant Pledge

St Martins paid the agreed Covenant pledge for 2024 pledge of £2800 (2025 pledge will be £3000)

### Monthly Ongoing Costs

The Church Insurance increases annually in 2025 and the electricity consumption will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure best tariff – the joint PCC group are continuing to investigate where group charges are beneficial

**Catherine Thornton, Treasurer**

St Martins Church, Stubton  
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

General (Unrestricted) Fund Receipts and Payments Account

	2024	2023
<b>Receipts</b>		
Covenants	2,005.95	1,915.00
Collections	945.51	1,200.29
Fund raising	1,524.19	112.50
Energy support		1,072.30
Donations	10.00	480.00
Village Link	230.00	180.00
Weddings, funerals, etc	581.35	1,234.90
Gift Aid	834.20	650.75
Commonwealth War		
Investment income	643.99	651.36
	6,775.19	7,497.10
<b>Payments</b>		
Covenant Pledge	2,800.00	1,300.00
Heat & light	296.40	475.60
Insurance	1,777.89	1,725.03
Fire extinguisher maintenance		
Clergy Fees & Rector Expenses	250.00	254.33
National Churches	50.00	50.00
Lincolnshire Churches	50.00	50.00
Music System	741.27	
Quinquennial Report		
Sundry	74.60	166.12
EICR		
Organ tuning, fees & repairs	115.00	
	6,155.16	4,021.08
Excess of receipts over payments	620.03	3,476.02
Funds at 1 January	21,174.93	17,698.91
Funds at 31 December	21,794.96	21,174.93

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
<b>Cash Funds</b>		
Bank Account (Main)	561.25	1,729.75
Bank Account (Fabric Fund)	9,184.90	7,803.69
Owed re: Parish Share Top up in 2022		
Owed to Lincoln	(241.00)	
Owed Claypole PC		
Rector expenses	(250.00)	(254.33)
Organ repair		
<b>Investment Assets</b>		
Stubton CE School sale	3,131.72	2,814.09
Stubton CE School sale	(Market value £3,022.60) 2,458.79	(Market value £2,954.96) 2,458.79
Stubton Churchyard (Tustin Trust)	1,641.60	1,506.38
Stubton Churchyard (Tustin Trust)	(Market value £2,774.72) 503.45	(Market value £2,712.64) 503.45
Stubton Memorial Fund (Pullinger)	672.21	588.16
Stubton Memorial Fund (Pullinger)	(Market value £2,219.78) 500.00	(Market value £2,170.11) 500.00
Stubton Memorial Fund (Shucksmith)	1,057.04	949.95
Stubton Memorial Fund (Shucksmith)	(Market value £2,543.50) 575.00	(Market value £2,486.58) 575.00
Stubton Memorial Fund (Walker)	(Market value £4,525.81) 2,000.00	(Market value £4,424.54) 2,000.00
	12,539.81	11,895.82
	21,794.96	21,174.93

Notes:

Wedding fees £241 due to Lincoln  
Accrue £250.00 Rectors Costs 2024-based on 2023 actual charges

Organ repair £115 in 2023 paid Jan 2024

Market value as at end of December 15,086.41 14,748.83





Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name  
Stubton PCC

On accounts for the year  
ended

31 December 2024  
Charity no  
(if any)

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and  
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent  
examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. *Delete [ ] if not applicable.*

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date: 09/04/2025

Name:

Charlotte Wilson ACA

## Deanery Synod Report

The last meeting I attended was 27<sup>th</sup> March at Caythorpe which was poorly attended. We seem to go over the same ground at every meeting, ie very few services and still expected to pay for many of us, a large amount of Parish Share.

It was noted that Archdeacon Justine is moving on after 10 years in our deanery, but no mention was made of who is to take her place.

We were reminded that there should be a Deanery representative from every church in the Benefice as some churches are not represented at meetings and it is important that all are aware of the latest news from the Diocese.

The Local Mission Partnership Poster is to be updated as some church situations have changed.

The new Loveden areas are, **Loveden West** comprising Long Bennington, Claypole (these two being Hub churches), Community churches at Sedgebrook, Allington, Foston and Stubton; Festival churches at Dry Doddington, Fenton and Westborough. The local priest is Rev Jon Speirs-Davies.

**Loveden Central** comprising Hub churches at Welbourn and Caythorpe; Community churches at Marston, Hougham, Hough on the Hill, Fulbeck and Brant Broughton; Festival churches at Carlton Scroop with Normanton, Brandon, Leadenham, Beckingham and Stragglethorpe. The local priest is Rev Sara Davies

**Loveden East** with a Hub church at Ancaster; Community churches at Belton, Syston, Barkston and Wilford; Festival churches at Honington, Kelby, Rauceby, Welby and Heydour  
The local priest is Rev Georgie Machell.

Rev Georgie Machell and Rev Sara Davies need licensing to cover the extra churches that have been added to their original parishes. They have been ministering to these churches but it needs formalising. If agreed there would be one PCC for each groups and a DCC for each church for general organising and maintenance.

Each parish would operate as now but Rev Georgie and Rev Sara would be fully licensed. This was voted on and the motion carried, so licensing will now happen.

The Bishop has requested that all priests should have 36hrs rest per week. Individual priest to work out and implement this.

A training course To love and serve the Lord will start in September in Grantham. Everyone is invited to join if they feel a calling.

The APCM's dates are set.

Churchwardens can request help from churchwardens in other parishes if needed at any time. No date has been set yet for the Churchwarden Visitation Service.

The Church Electoral Roll has to be accurate, so notes on the form must be followed. Safe storage of the forms is required.

PCC members have to be confirmed and take Holy Communion at least three times a year This led to interesting discussion about losing PCC members if the rule is enforced.

There is a lay vacancy at the Diocesan Synod if anyone is interested. This should be raised at the APCMs. They must be on the electoral roll and a communicant.

As the Deanery Rep should only be in post for three years and I've now been a rep for Claypole and Fenton for 11 years, I am not prepared to carry on and so would be grateful if someone else took on the role.

*Report from Libby Mason (Fenton & Claypole)*

## **Safeguarding Report**

No safeguarding issues were raised across the church group during the year. Each Parish has a nominated local Safeguarding contact and Mike Libby is the Safeguarding Officer for all of the Parishes.

All those nominated safeguarding contacts have either undertaken – or are in the process of undertaking – the designated training. Efforts are made locally to track both the PCC members and the Safeguarding team through the training.

DBS applications have been processed across the West Loveden LMP churches for all those identified as requiring them – all PCC members, Messy Church helpers, Safeguarding team.

There have not been any significant problems identified during the processing of DBS clearances and the process of utilising the thirtyone:eight online system is working well.

## **Vicars Report**

It's a joy to write this first report for West Loveden Church, having arrived in the parish in August and been formally licensed in September. Since then, it has been a season of settling in, building relationships, and beginning to discern what God is already doing among us—and how we might join in.

### **A Season of Beginning and Welcome**

My first few weeks were full of welcomes. I'm so grateful for the kindness, patience, and hospitality extended by so many across our villages. The early part of my time here was marked by our Harvest celebrations. In many ways, a perfect opportunity to meet lots of people around our parishes, not just at the core of our worshipping community but also those who support and cheer on our endeavours in a broader sense. From school services to traditional harvest suppers, I was struck by how much goodwill and care flows through these villages. I particularly enjoyed how relaxed and joyful each celebration was—and my youngest clearly agreed, dragging me to the front for a boogie.

Next was the season of remembrance and, again, this occasion was marked with evident care and attention. Of the many examples of this, the way the various scouting and guiding groups were enabled to participate at the service in Foston beautifully captured the sense of togetherness that was clear across all the West Loveden services. It was a wonderful picture of the community coming together and filling the church to honour those who took seriously the call of Christ that there is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends (John 15:13).

As we moved into Advent and Christmas, I was again encouraged to see so many come and participate in the carols and celebrations marking the birth of Christ—some perhaps for the first time in a while, some regularly, and others for the first time ever. I have to congratulate all those who planned and presented such unique and special carol and Christingle services. It felt like such an encouraging picture of our path forward with everyone enabled, encouraged and emboldened to get stuck in and share together. Instead of nine identical carol services (which is likely what I

would have been able to manage on my own), each service, whether quiet and reflective or joyful and bustling, helped tell the story of Christ's coming, and I want to thank everyone who played a part in making that season beautiful and meaningful.

Other particular highlights were some of the very popular events that saw our buildings packed. The Cranwell Military Wives Choir concert at St Swithun's Long Bennington was packed with people enjoying the choir's wonderful talent. Also, the gospel music concert at St Peter's Claypole so joyfully led by the Sing It Bold Community Gospel Choir was a massive success. Thank you to all who put in the time and effort to plan and organise those and other events throughout the year.

## Looking Ahead Together

A key theme emerging in our conversations and shared work has been that of *becoming more God's church across West Loveden* as the legacy groups of Saxonwell and Claypole continue to grow closer together in mutual support and communion. Each parish community brings something different to the table—different traditions, gifts, and styles of worship—and part of our calling now is to explore how we can cherish that diversity while growing together into something more united. Not “one-size-fits-all,” but one family of faith made up of many parts. As is repeatedly stated in the scriptures, “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another” (Romans 12.5). To be the Church, the Body of Christ, is to confidently assert that we are each valued and important while also humbly elevating others and encouraging them that they are just as important and valued.

This isn't about efficiency for its own sake or streamlining for administrative tidiness - it's about deepening our shared identity as the Church in this place and becoming more able to support one another in worship, mission, and care. I've already seen signs of this taking root, and I'm hopeful about where God is leading us next. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his disarming digression instructing the early church, “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don't need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don't need you!’” (1 Corinthians 12:21). If I may add, the wonderful thing about being human - rather than just a body part - is that we can be and do many different things. As we stand shoulder-to-shoulder at the foot of the cross, nothing is beneath or above anyone and everything is an opportunity and a blessing.

## Gratitude

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to the bellringers, churchwardens, cleaning crews, flower arrangers, ministry leaders, musicians, pastoral visitors, PCC members, priests, readers, refreshment servers, school contacts, and so many others who faithfully serve—often behind the scenes. Your work is deeply appreciated. Thank you also to those who have simply taken the time to talk, to pray, or to offer advice and context—it's made a huge difference.

A special thanks to all who give, tithe, and financially invest in the life of our worshipping community.

As well as being generous with time and skill, it's a joy to witness such a widespread response to God's invitation to worship in generosity. It's so clear how, by pooling our carefully stewarded resources, we are enabled to reach out with the gospel together better than any of us could on our own. I want to particularly acknowledge the sizeable and generous legacy left in a parishioner's will for the church in Allington. This money has been prayerfully invested in accessibility for the building with a ramp, kitchen and toilet facilities as well as more space for gathering and fellowship. A final special thanks to those who source and secure grant funding that is so vital in helping to maintain the building heritage that we steward. It's such a blessing to be part of such a generous community. Thank you.

## **2025 and Beyond**

As we step into 2025, I'm looking forward to deepening relationships across the parishes and continuing to explore what it means to be one Church in many places. I hope we can build rhythms of worship and life that sustain our congregation and help us engage meaningfully with those beyond our church walls.

God is already at work in our villages. Our task is not to invent something new but to pay attention to the Holy Spirit and unleash the creativity God has placed within each of us. As we grow in confidence and faith, let's keep inviting others into the life of Christ. Please keep praying—for our church, for our villages and for one another.

**Rev'd Jon Speirs-Davies**