

Trustees Annual Report for the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Church Olveston 2025

1 Aims and purposes

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, Reverend David Moss, in promoting the parish with the whole mission of the Church - pastoral; evangelistic; social and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church building of Saint Mary's, Church Hill Olveston.

2 Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at Olveston. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and make suggestions on how our services and activities can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, Music and sacrament. When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the commissions guidance on public benefits and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through-

- **Worshipping God** through Worship services and prayer;
- **Growing their Faith** through learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus
- **Serving others** through the provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish, along with supporting charities and other causes, both in UK and abroad, through outward giving donations.

To facilitate this work it is important that we both maintain the fabric of Saint Mary's Church and consider any adaptations to the interior of the Church which might better support the increasingly wide range of activities being undertaken and fulfilment of these objectives.

The objective for Saint Mary's are the same as those for the other four parishes in within the North Severnside Benefice and it follows that some of these activities are undertaken on a shared basis.

Electoral Roll, Attendance, Baptisms, Confirmations, Funerals and Weddings

Statistic	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
No. on Electoral Roll	191	125	145	145	141	139	133	76
Sunday Adult Attendance	85	65			59	40	40	45
Sunday Under 16 Attendance	6	1			0	0	0	0
No. of Baptisms	5	4	2	1	9	13	13	13
No. of Confirmations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of Funerals	11	17	10	8	13	10	15	14
No. of Weddings	3	2	1	4	5	3	2	3

3 Achievements and performance

3.1 Worshipping God

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example, Wednesday morning communion and Sunday evening services provide a time for quiet reflective worship, while opportunities are provided for people to engage in more outgoing worship such as that provided by the Refresh group which meets on a Saturday within our Church.

This year we have increased the number of Messy Church services and continued to grow the links between them and the Refresh group.

We have continued to work hard to emphasise our stewardship of God's creation and work to meet the challenge of being carbon neutral by 2030. The **Greenforce** team meets regularly and publishes articles and papers in local magazines. We also hold occasional services focused purely on improving our Green credentials. We continue to explore recycling opportunities; work with young people and lobby government departments. We have contributed to the Olveston Parish Council's "Climate and Nature Action Plan" and were heavily involved with their Spring Into Action Day during March 2025.

3.2 Growing their Faith

We undertook several initiatives focused on growing faith.

During Lent we studied the Pilgrim's Progress book. This was organised as a book club event. This different approach attracted a higher number of people than in previous years and was very much enjoyed by all who participated.

Bible Study. Members of the congregation continued to support a village Bible Study group which takes place in the home of one of the congregation and which is attended by about eight people each week.

Away day. In September a large group of people from the congregation organised and attended an event at a church in Cheltenham where the newly elected Archdeacon attended. There was a great deal of Bible study and also some Bible related craft experiences designed to build fellowship and work in a different environment. This proved extremely popular and more events will be planned during 2026.

Open the book. Several members of Saint Mary's congregation attend Olveston Primary School weekly, delivering dramatised Bible stories, including role play and participation of the children, as they learn more about the life of Christ. The number of people available to help with this has reduced, however this means that the children now need to get more involved in the role-play and we have been surprised by how this opportunity has been grasped eagerly and the children really look forward to getting involved.

3.3 Serving Others

The pastoral care/support group meets regularly with two Methodist members; three from Saint Mary's and one member from The Vine. At Easter and Christmas small gifts and cards are delivered to 25 parishioners.

In 2025, we introduced the **Big Breakfast**. This is a three monthly, Saturday morning event to which all parishioners are invited for a free full English breakfast. This is proved very popular especially for those who have been living on their own, who have really appreciated the chance for company and chat in a warm friendly environment. Although no charge is made, many who attend make voluntary donations towards the Uganda Project, which is one of the charities we support on an ongoing basis.

In December we once again welcomed the **Salvation Army Brass Band from Easton in Bristol**. They performed a concert linked with a toy service where parishioners can bring along toys to contribute to the salvation armies Christmas efforts to provide disadvantaged children with at least one nice new toy. The village supports this annual concert with the Church being quite full and a substantial number of new toys being donated .

Also in December we showed the Phil Redmond version of "The Nativity" which was well attended.

In September we welcomed the **Bristol Concert Orchestra** who provided a concert for the church. This has become a popular annual event which we plan to continue as it attracts more people into the Church.

Weekly Coffee Mornings. On Thursday mornings, volunteers from Saint Mary's host a coffee shop in the church. It is regularly supported by parishioners and, particularly, welcomes parents who have dropped their children off at the local school. This attracts people into the church who are not normal Church attendance but we see as a service to the parish.

The Monday Movie Club continues on the first Monday of each month. It is a free event for all parishioners to attend where a selection of well known or new films are shown. Although this is a free contribution to the village life people generally donate as a thank you for the provision and upkeep of the church.

Church Summer Fete This annual event is held in the Road outside the Church, in the church grounds and also within the Church Building. It continues to enjoy very high support from the local villages.

4 Deanery Synod

One member of the PCC sits on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. This year the PCC has also focused its attention on the questions posed to parishes in the deanery about the most effective deployment of stipendry and non-stipendry clergy. The Deanery Synod's report is appended to this document

5 Church Building

Vision for 2025 was; Continue investigation of condition of main nave and side aisles roofs, planning major overhaul in next few years. Continue to support developer proposal for a new graveyard off Elberton Road.

1. **Regular roof inspection**, gutter clearance and occasional slate/tile replacement continued using established roofer. No major failures. Prospect of major repairs in a few years time remains.
2. **Developer, Newland Homes**, continued to assemble a planning application for the site and met PCC representatives to clarify what PCC's essential requirements for a graveyard would be. Further assurances about future graveyard ownership and development costs was being sought by PCC and would be considered by Newland Homes. Clear statement received from Bristol Diocese about essential precursors for consecration of the land.

5.1 SMO Bells restoration project

Expert reports and first estimates of cost of work received from two established bellhangers, Nicholson Engineering, Whites of Appleton and Bristol DAC bells adviser also prepared a report and all three recommended virtually the same issues and cures. Needed to restore the bells, (still in fine condition) and their support and heavy ringing machinery (installed in 1907) now long past the point where much of it needs replacement. PCC supported the restoration in principle and authorised a team to pursue accurate costs, seek faculty permission from Bristol Diocese and raise funds locally and from charities to undertake the work.

5.2 Small Pew re-ordering

The trial continued and a small pew was moved from the rear of the North aisle to the South wall prayer corner. This enabled better storage of stackable stage, stackable chairs and folding tables. Surplus pews are still held at the Elms farm pending disposal. St Helen's continues its trials with 2 x SMO long pews and surplus altar rails.

5.3 Routine Maintenance

1. The church suffered a number of large electrical surges which disabled automatic control clocks on lighting. These had to be renewed and a surge protection device was fitted.

2. Trees in the churchyard were damaged by high winds and fallen wood removal and making safe was carried out by Bamfields, tree surgeons. Volunteer mowers continue to keep the churchyard trimmed for visitors.
3. Church carpets are routinely cleaned by a professional cleaner. Volunteers continue to do a great job Spring cleaning and polishing other fixtures and fittings.

Vision for 2026 is develop the Bells restoration project to a fully specified and costed project approved by PCC and a Faculty obtained from Bristol Diocese. Proceed with local fundraising and grant applications to charities to enable a start date to be set with chosen contractor.

Continue to support graveyard extension on Elberton Road via developers Newland Homes.

Keep watching brief on main roofs for signs of sudden deterioration.

Building projects, Repairs and Maintenance Expenditure

Work Undertaken	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
Minor Repairs and Maintenance	917	1,052	1,583	4,460	3,516	1,997	8,477	8,192
Major Repairs and Projects	18,064	9,342	483	167,039	37,716	54,067	11,077	0

6 Financial review

Total income in 2025 was £122,196, of which £89,131 was unrestricted. This includes £10,873 as Gift Aid and £1,332 in top-ups under the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

Total expenditure was £96,651, of which £88,148 was unrestricted.

Unrestricted general purposes income was £72,342 in 2025, a reduction of £6,679 (8.5%) compared with 2023. The reduction was associated predominantly with parochial fees (a reduction of £2,016 or 29%), fundraising activities (a reduction of £1,738 or 36%) and one-off donations (a reduction of £963 or 39%). There was also a reduction of £635 (1.5%) in planned giving by standing order or the weekly envelope scheme.

At the end of 2025 there were 61 planned givers, a reduction of 3 compared with the position at the end of 2024.

Unrestricted general purposes expenditure was £82,773, which is £942 (1.1%) lower than in 2024. There were two substantial reductions in expenditure in 2025 compared with 2024, one relating to churchyard maintenance costs (a reduction of £2,484 or 70%) and the other (£1,777) relating to payments made to the Family Worker in the first two months of 2024, prior to her resignation. However, these reductions were offset to a large extent by increases of (a) £1,082 in payments made to the cleaner (the full year effect of her appointment in November 2024), (b) £783 (2%) in Parish Share, (c) £760 (or 9%) in utilities, and £784 (14%) in administration costs.

As a consequence of the above, general purposes expenditure exceeded income by £10,431 in 2025.

However, when between-fund transfers are taken into account (including £5,000 transferred from the Friends of St Mary's), the general purposes fund displayed an in-year deficit of £6,674 in 2025.

As far as the Fabric Fund is concerned, no major projects were undertaken in 2025 and no expenditure was incurred in 2025. Income of £21,485 was received in 2025, including a most generous donation of £15,000, and interest of £4,635 from the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund investment.

Outward giving donations totalling £5,722 were made in 2025 to 8 different causes (see Note 3a of Annual Accounts for details). These included £2,000 to the Anandit Charity in Nepal, from the proceeds of a Murder Mystery fundraising event, and £840 to One25 from the Lent Appeal.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to maintain (where possible) a balance on unrestricted general purposes funds (free reserves) equating to approximately 6 months' unrestricted general purposes payments. The purpose of this is to ensure that there are sufficient funds held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow, and to meet emergencies. Average annual expenditure over the last 4 years was £78,000 and so the target for free reserves is £39,000.

At 31 December 2025 the balance of the free reserves was £36,945, which is close to the 6-month target.

However, St Mary's faces some significant financial challenges in the future, given the age profile of our congregation and regular givers, and it should be noted that annual income from planned giving has reduced by 19% (£10,000) over the last 6 years, at time when utility costs have increased by 64% (£3,700) and insurance by 37% (£1,200).

The Vision Fund is an unrestricted fund, designated by PCC for projects and purchases relating to the vision of the church, and is sourced predominantly by legacies. At 31 December 2025 following receipt of two legacies totalling £2,000 in 2025 there was a balance of £87,398, of which £5,000 has been earmarked by PCC for projects aimed at engaging younger generations. In addition, PCC is also considering other projects to which funds could be allocated, including the provision of additional burial grounds, as very little burial space now remains within the churchyard, and the restoration of the church bells.

The Church Fabric Fund is the main restricted fund held by St Mary's. At 31 December 2025 there was a balance of £169,150.

It is PCC policy to invest the short-term investment fund balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund.

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

For a number of years, St Mary's has held restricted funds on behalf of the Severnside Group of Churches. These funds represented donations originally made towards the costs of employing a youth worker. However, this project has since been abandoned and it was agreed that 50% of the funds should be re-designated towards supporting Youth Choirs within the North Severnside Benefice. At 31 December 2025 the total balance was £1,533, with £1,270 remaining assigned to the Severnside Group of Churches, and £263 available for supporting the Youth Choirs.

Going Concern

The trustees have considered the impact of the Covid pandemic on the charity's current and future financial position. Although the impact is now much less the charity will continue to take the following steps:

- Regularly monitoring its financial position;
- Providing our congregation with a range of alternative methods of giving (e.g. by standing order, donations using online banking, online giving page, contactless payment device);
- Critically examining all areas of expenditure and identifying where savings can be made. The trustees consider that the charity will continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which these financial statements are approved for the following reasons:

- The charity holds unrestricted general reserves of £36,945, representing just under 6 months of unrestricted general purposes expenditure.
- Income (including Gift Aid) from **planned** giving accounts for 72% of our total general purposes income. We are confident that the vast majority of this income will continue to be received as 94% of planned giving is by standing order.

The trustees therefore consider it appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of preparation of the accounts, as detailed in Note 1(g) to the financial statements.

7. Volunteers

We are very grateful and would like to thank all those who give their valuable time to enrich our services and our Church. St Mary's Olveston is very fortunate in having a large number of volunteers to ensure all activities undertaken by the Church are successful and we would like to thank all them. Under normal circumstances, people help in many ways including:

- the daily cleaning of the Church - in 2024 a church cleaner was appointed, although some members also help keep the church tidy
- The voluntary churchyard maintenance team of 10 continued their splendid work keeping the grounds in excellent condition, including areas allocated to wild flowers and observing no-mow areas as advised by the Greenforce group.
- provision and arranging of flowers in the Church by a team of 13 volunteers.
- moving chairs and erecting staging for events
- catering after weekly services and at large events
- safety inspections
- manning the equipment for Movie Club
- and many more small jobs to numerous to mention.

Friends of St Mary's

We are very grateful for the work of Friends of St Mary's, who have supported the church through fundraising activities for over 25 years. Over £100,000 has been donated in that time

In 2025 we were especially grateful that once again they donated £5,000 into Church funds. They also sponsored one of the films shown at Monday Movies.

8 Vicar's Annual Report 2025

I want to start this APCM by thanking you all for the love, support, care, and financial help you give to St. Mary's. As your Vicar, my main goal is to help St. Mary's develop into a warm and lively community. The APCM report highlights many new and exciting projects happening at St. Mary's, and I am truly grateful for them. Over the past eight years, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and I have agreed that having a dedicated focal minister is vital for our church's growth and that such a person would help to weave these projects into the life and worship of the church.

The journey towards appointing a Focal Minister has been fraught with considerable challenges. These include a reduction in clergy deployment across rural parishes, the consolidation of several parishes into a single Benefice managed by one stipendiary priest, the sale of Rural Vicarages, the unexpected early retirement of the previous associate vicar, and unfortunate mismanagement, which led to the loss of an application for a curate and ongoing uncertainty regarding future support for the Benefice.

In mid-2025, Revd. David Lloyd kindly offered to become our Associate Vicar. However, the Archdeacon was concerned about making this appointment before the new Diocesan Bishop arrives. Instead, the Archdeacon suggested that the PCC could appoint Rev David Lloyd as a trustee and approve him as Chair, without going through the Diocesan process.

Our joy this year has been saddened by the loss of a few familiar church faces: Linda and Pauline, whose choir singing contributed so much to the life and worship of the church, and Richard Lloyd, for his support and encouragement to the Greenforce Group. May those who rest in peace rise in glory.

Thank you everyone, for all you do

8 Administrative information

St Mary's Church is situated at 2, Church Hill, Olveston, South Gloucestershire, BS35 4BX. It is part of the Diocese of Bristol within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The PCC Secretary, 16 Ley Lane, Olveston BS35 4DG.

The Vicarage is in Alveston, and the contact details are:

St Helen's Vicarage, Gloucester Road, Alveston, Bristol BS35 3QT,

Tel. 01454 415190, Mob. 0789 0262 334 or email: mossds@gmail.com.

The website: <https://www.sthelensalvs.co.uk/stmarys/about/> and the recently established North Severnside Facebook are important means through which the church communicates its activities with the community.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission:- number: 1134397.

PCC members who have served during 2023 and until the date report was approved are:

Role on PCC	Name	Date of Election
Priest in Charge	Rev David Moss	2nd November 2017
Wardens		
Churchwarden	Mrs Debbie Harries	24th May 2023
Churchwarden	Mrs Sue Farr	24th May 2023
Deanery Synod		
Deanery Synod Rep	Mrs Sue Farr	24th May 2023
Elected Members		
PCC Treasurer	Dr David Prothero	28th May 2023
PCC Secretary	Mr Bernard Amos	28th April 2024
PCC representative	Dr Michael Wright	28th May 2023
PCC representative	Mrs Stephanie Fairhead	28th May 2023
PCC representative	Dr David Shaw	28th May 2023
PCC Representative	Mr Phil Savage	28th May 2023
PCC Representative	Mr Lindsey Henniker-Heaton	28th April 2024
Ex Officio Members		
	Rev Ann Lloyd	
	Rev Lady Helen Webb	
	Rev David Bone	

