



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2025/ 2026

Minister's Annual Report:

The usual midweek groups have been running and continue to be strongly supported. These groups are:

- **Sunbeams Toddler group:** Two mornings Mon and Wed. Average 25+ families. Health visitors on site on Wednesday.
- **Mini-Sunbeams Baby group:** Tuesday mornings – 6-8 mothers and baby
- **Monday Evening Youth Group:** Christian teaching for 10 young people.
- **Youth Club:** Wednesday Evening 6-7pm with 7-7.30 Christian session. 20-25 young people attend and most stay for bible activity session.
- **Spinners and Mini- Spinners SEN groups:** Pre-school group 2.15-3pm and primary age 3.15-4.30pm. The older group limited to 8 families who sign up for the term. Now run by grant funded worker. Thanks go to Heather Ratcliffe and team who run these groups.
- **Coffee Stop on Thursday mornings:** A social event for mainly mothers although open to all. English lessons by two volunteers for foreign language speakers. Talking Walkin sessions once a month by NHS children's speech therapists.
- **Short-term training courses:** For families by KCC have been held in the upstairs room.
- **Young Adults House Group:** Monday evening monthly
- **House Groups:** Tuesday and Thursday fortnightly
- **Seniors House group:** Second Thursday morning of the month

Monthly social events include Saturday Breakfasts, Friday teas and Saturday bingo, quiz and beetle evenings.

An Alpha course took place in the early summer on a Thursday evening with the Holy Spirit Day at Chartham Hatch. 10 people participated during the course. Thanks to Revd Rex Morton for leading this initiative.

Ignite continued which was led by a grant funded Enabler. Halfway through the year an additional meeting was started on Thursday lunchtime and the after-school meeting rebranded as Ignite Kids. An average of 12 people attended at lunch time and about 40 people at 3.15pm.

The youth group was led by the grant funded youth worker and highlights of the year included a prom evening, a trip to 'God Loves You' event at Excel London, hosting the Diocesan 'Fuse' youth event and the annual Satellites youth camp at Shepton Mallet.

In September six young people were baptised by full emersion.

In 2024 the average Sunday morning attendance is 62 which includes 11 under 16s.

Monthly services have continued with the Evening service being attended by over 20.

Wild church on the third Sunday afternoon has discontinued as numbers were low. A new Prayer and Praise evening on the third Sunday was introduced with 15-20 people attending.

The mid-week communion once a month on Thursday morning continued and around half a dozen come to this each month.

The total Worshipping community is 189, which is made up of:

- Children (Age 0-10) 64
- Young People (Age 11-17) 10
- Adults (Age 18-69) 103
- Adults (Age 70+) 12

The £20,000 grant awarded by Garfield Weston was used in replacing and restoring the gutters and facias. The church has raised, through generous donations by members, £12,000 to build a garden room for the young people.

'Keeping you going' bags initiative with funding from DDC and Sodexo continues. Distributed from church, local nurseries and school. Bags contain 6 items and food bank leaflet included. These are intended to keep families going until the next time a food bank or The Pantry is open.

School assemblies at Aylesham Primary were conducted 5 times and a year 6 transition talk was carried out.

In total there have been 12 child baptisms, 4 young people and 6 adult baptisms. There were two weddings and one blessing service for couples from the village.

Two funerals were conducted in church and two at the crematorium. Sadly, these included services for Joan Lambert and Marilyn Burrows both longstanding members of St Peter's.

Lent began with the Ashing service, and Mothering Sunday was celebrated. Palm Sunday service and Holy week Reflections, Maundy supper, Joint churches Good Friday walk, Good Friday Nails of the Cross and Easter Sunday services all took place. Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day were celebrated as was Pentecost Sunday. There were a Harvest Supper and Harvest Festival at the end of September.

Remembrance Sunday was observed at the Market Square jointly with Aylesham Baptist and St Finbarr's Roman Catholic churches. The Nativity service and a Carols and Christingle service were well attended, as were Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.

A large number of people contribute to the smooth running of St Peter's and I'd like to thank every one who contributes to the life of the church.

Revd Nick Ratcliffe – Mission Priest

St Peters Parochial Church Council (PCC):

The PCC has continued to be chaired by Revd Nick Ratcliffe over the past 12 months and has met on 10 occasions during the year to support the life, mission, and ongoing development of St Peter's Church.

We remain grateful for the time, commitment, and prayerful contribution of all PCC members, not only through attendance at meetings, but also through the work undertaken between meetings to support the church and wider community. Our churchwardens have continued to attend benefice-wide meetings, enabling collaboration and the sharing of good practice across the benefice.

This has been the second full year of St Peter's being part of the Benefice of *Barham Downs with Adisham & Aylesham*. We continue to value the support, encouragement, and shared learning that comes from being part of the benefice, whilst maintaining a clear sense of local identity as a Mission Church serving Aylesham.

During the year, we have continued to benefit from the support of Revd Stefan Thomas in his role as Area Dean and Priest in Charge. As we now look ahead, we are shortly to say goodbye to Stefan, and we would like to express our sincere thanks for the support, guidance, and encouragement he has offered to the PCC and to St Peter's Church more widely during his time with us.

PCC Membership

In 2025–2026, the PCC has comprised of:

- Revd Nick Ratcliffe (Mission Priest)
- Esther Jonas (Reader)
- Clare Marsh (Treasurer)
- Steve Charman (Secretary)
- Neo Matsoso (Church Warden)
- Luke Kennett (Church Warden)
- Jan Gray
- Marion Hadlow (*stepped down in March 2026*)

We give our thanks to Marion Hadlow for her service on the PCC and for her continued support in coordinating building-related matters, which remains greatly appreciated.

Governance and Development

Alongside its regular responsibilities, the PCC has given particular focus this year to strengthening governance and supporting the continued growth of St Peter's.

In December 2025, the PCC formally registered as a charity. This represents an important milestone in the life of the church, enabling access to a wider range of funding opportunities to support future mission and development. Charitable status also brings additional responsibilities in relation to governance, financial oversight, and compliance, which the PCC is committed to fulfilling diligently.

As the life of the church has continued to grow, the PCC has recognised the need to move towards a more structured and sustainable approach to governance and administration. This has included the introduction of administrative support arrangements and clearer oversight in relation to staffing and employment matters.

Staffing and Support

During the year, the PCC has taken steps to strengthen the support provided to the ministry and day-to-day running of the church.

This has included progressing the appointment of administrative support to assist with the increasing demands of church life. We are pleased to welcome Emma, who has taken up the role of administrator. This appointment reflects the growing needs of the church and provides important support to both Nick and the PCC, helping to ensure that the church continues to run smoothly and effectively on a week-by-week basis.

During the year, we said goodbye to Karen, who had been serving as our Ignite Enabler, and Jude, who had been working as our Youth Worker. We thank them both for the valuable contribution they have made to the life and ministry of St Peter's.

We continue to work alongside Michelle, who supports Heather in our children's ministry, particularly through Sunbeams, and we are grateful for her ongoing involvement and support.

We have also been pleased to support Izzy from within our church family as she began her placement this year through the Future Youth (FY) strand of the Ministry Experience Scheme. This has provided her with the opportunity to grow in children's and youth ministry through a combination of practical service, mentoring, and formal training. Izzy has become a valued part of the team, contributing across different areas of ministry, and it has been encouraging to see her developing in confidence, faith, and leadership as she serves among us.

The PCC has also begun to develop clearer structures for supporting staff and volunteers, including more formal oversight arrangements. This reflects a growing awareness of the responsibilities associated with being an employer and the need to ensure appropriate support, accountability, and clarity in roles.

Leadership and Capacity

During the year, the PCC has begun to consider future leadership needs and succession planning. This has included changes in Churchwarden roles, forward planning for the Treasurer role and consideration of how responsibilities currently held by clergy can be more widely shared. These discussions reflect a recognition that, as the church continues to grow, there is a need to strengthen capacity within the PCC and wider church family to support its ongoing development.

The work of the PCC has continued to grow in both scope and complexity over the past year. Alongside its core responsibilities, the PCC has been involved in supporting a range of areas including governance, compliance, staffing, and strategic planning. These responsibilities reflect a church that is not only growing in number, but also maturing in how it is organised, supported, and sustained.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all PCC members for their ongoing commitment, service, prayer and support throughout the year.

Steve Charman
PCC Secretary

Church Wardens' Fabric Report:

The past year has seen continued focus on the care, maintenance, and development of the church building and its facilities. We are grateful to all those who have contributed their time, skills, and support in helping to maintain and improve St Peter's.

Maintenance and Repairs

A number of routine and responsive maintenance works have been carried out during the year to ensure the building remains safe, functional, and welcoming.

These have included:

- Repairs to guttering and ongoing monitoring following earlier works
- Servicing and repair of the boiler, including replacement components
- Installation of carbon monoxide alarms
- Repairs to internal fixtures, including radiator covers and ceiling works
- Localised window repairs, including the toilet window

We are also grateful to those who have supported smaller day-to-day maintenance tasks, which are essential to the smooth running of the building.

Windows and Building Fabric

Significant attention has been given to the condition of the church windows during the year. We are grateful to the Diocese for the grant funding received towards the replacement of the windows as part of the Net Zero programme. This support has been instrumental in enabling the church to plan for this important work.

While it was initially proposed to repair the existing windows, further inspection and reflection identified that full replacement would be the more cost-effective and sustainable long-term solution. As a result, the PCC took the decision to proceed on this basis.

At the time of writing, the works have not yet been undertaken but are expected to commence shortly, subject to final permissions and scheduling.

Roof, Drainage and External Works

Work has continued in relation to the roof and associated drainage. While earlier phases of work have been completed, further attention is required, and discussions have taken place regarding phased approaches to future works. Ongoing engagement with contractors and professional advisers has highlighted the need for clear specifications and consistent communication as these projects progress.

The PCC has also explored options for appointing alternative architectural support to help move these projects forward more effectively.

Doors and Access

The condition of external doors has been reviewed during the year, with particular attention given to safety, security, and accessibility. Quotes have been obtained for replacement doors, and funding options are being explored to enable this work to proceed. This remains an important area of focus moving forward.

Heating and Energy Efficiency

The heating system continues to be monitored, with recognition that the current boiler is now over 19 years old, and will require replacement in the future.

During the year, a church energy audit was undertaken, supported by funding from the Diocese. We are grateful for this support, which has enabled the PCC to review the building more holistically and consider where future improvements should be prioritised. The audit has helped to identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and reduce heat loss, and has provided a clearer framework for planning future works. This will support the PCC in making informed decisions over the coming years, ensuring that the building remains fit for the needs of the current church family, while also being sustainable and suitable for future generations.

Initial areas identified for consideration include:

- Improving insulation and reducing heat loss
- Exploring more efficient heating solutions
- Considering longer-term, lower-carbon options

Any work will be taken forward in a phased and considered way.

Garden Room Project

The PCC has continued to explore plans for a garden room to support the growing youth and children's ministry.

Initial designs and costings have been reviewed, and early funding has been secured with grateful support from the church family. Work is ongoing to obtain the necessary permissions and to develop the project further, with the aim of providing additional space to support the life of the church.

Organ

Following investigation, it has been confirmed that the organ contains asbestos. Specialist advice has been obtained, and the PCC has agreed to proceed with removal in a safe and controlled manner.

Looking Ahead

Looking forward, key priorities include:

- Progressing window replacement works
- Advancing plans for door replacement
- Continuing work on roof and drainage improvements
- Developing the garden room project
- Planning for future heating system replacement

The Churchwardens, together with the PCC, remain committed to ensuring that the church building is well maintained and appropriately developed to support both current and future needs.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the care and upkeep of the building over the past year, whether through practical help, professional expertise, or support behind the scenes.

Luke Kennett and Neo Matsoso-Ndlovu - Church Wardens.

Treasurer's Report:

Our Bank Balance as at 31/03/26:

Barclays £35,071.89

Savings Account £15,628.76

Total £50,700.65

Restricted Funds £38,371.40

Unrestricted Funds £12,329.25

Restricted Funds as at 31/03/26:

Building Project £14,592.64

Admin Fund £1,982.79

Children's Worker £4,134.26

Ignite £912.20

KYG £1,163.91

Satellites £1913.93

Support Fund £1,124.01

Garden Room £12,509.64

There are a few other smaller restricted funds.

The Parish Share for the year was £11,262.04, and we have been able to pay our Parish Share in full at the beginning of the year.

We still have money to come from the Diocese, and all utility bills are paid to date.

We have a couple of regular hall hires, which generates a regular income. We have a steady amount of money coming in from the Parish Giving Scheme.

As treasurer, I make a claim every month to HMRC for the giving that does not go through the Parish Giving Scheme, this also allows me to claim tax back for the donations given in the collection plate. This claim gives us a refund of about £200-£300 per month.

There are various fund raising activities that happen monthly Friday Teas, Breakfast and a social event (usually Bingo or A Beetle Drive) The Youth wrote a quiz to raise funds for Satellites. Sunbeams also helps to raise funds and offer a service to the community.

We had another successful Ladies Night, Harvest Supper, the Youth have arranged cake sales.

The busier the church gets, the more we need to raise funds. We still need some more renovations to the roof and windows. (A bit of an understatement)

Marion, Steve and Heather have applied for various grants, some being successful and some not.

We thank everyone for their generosity.

Clare Marsh – Treasurer.

Safeguarding

PCC members have all completed both Basic and Foundation courses for safeguarding. There are some PCC members who need to renew theirs this year, they have been made aware of this. I have completed my Basic, Foundation and Leadership modules.

There has been one notification from Diocesan House about a person of interest, but he did not attend our church.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Dashboard is now available to parishes, I will finish ours after the APCM, in case there are any changes in church officers etc.

Disclosures (DBS)

2025 saw a breach by APCS, the company who carry out DBS's for the Diocese. Unfortunately a few people at St Peter's were involved. The Diocese gave them advice about the issue. This caused the Diocese to change companies for DBS's, we now use DDC (Due Diligence Checking).

I have had a DBS done for the Bridge Benefice, so I have had first hand experience. Since then I have completed one DBS and have several in progress. There are DBS's due for renewal this year and those people are aware. My own DBS is due in August.

Esther Jonas - Parish Safeguarding and Disclosure Officer.

Electoral Roll Report

I am grateful to Richard Jonas who has undertaken this role for many, many years, concluding in the completion of a new Church Electoral Roll last year. This year has therefore involved a routine revision of the roll.

The Electoral Roll now contains 70 members, representing a significant increase of 39 individuals. This is a very encouraging development and reflects the continued growth over a number of years of those who want to formalise their membership and worship at St Peter's Church.

During this revision, two names were removed from the 2025 roll following the sad passing of members of our church family over the past year. We remember Joan and Marilyn with gratitude and give thanks for their contribution to the life of the church.

Anyone who is not currently on the Electoral Roll, and who wishes to be included, is warmly invited to complete an electoral roll form. These can be completed at any time following the conclusion of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Applicants who live within the parish can join at any time, and there is no minimum attendance period required. Applicants who do not live within the parish need at least 6 months of regular attendance at church before joining the electoral roll. If you have any questions, please speak to Steve or Nick.

Steve Charman – Electoral Roll Officer

Deanery Synod:

The April meeting was at St Peter's which was about Support for Parishes in Mission.

There was a Deanery Roadshow on the 8th July at Lower Hardres village hall where there were presentations and opportunity to discuss with Diocesan officers a number of topics.

The meetings in September and November were about the Deanery Mission Plan. We have a new lay chair – Paul Allen who is a member of Chillenden Church.

Revd Nick Ratcliffe – Mission priest

Youth and Children's work

Sunday Club

Sunday Club has continued to grow during 2025–2026, with the benefits of the increase space upstairs, although on occasions we still find we need more! The larger, open area has created a more flexible and welcoming environment for both leaders and children.

Attendance has remained consistent over the past year, with an average of around 15 children most weeks. Communication with parents remains strong, supported through the WhatsApp group, which has helped maintain good engagement and regular attendance.

We continue to align our teaching with the themes from the main Sunday services wherever possible, helping children to feel connected to the wider church and reinforcing key messages in an age-appropriate way. We have introduced memory verses for the children, who have responded so well and enjoy sharing these and their work with the church family.

Sunbeams

Sunbeams has maintained steady growth and continues to be a well-established and valued part of our midweek provision. Our partnership with health visitors on Wednesdays remains strong, and we have further developed our support for families by hosting monthly 'Talk and Walk-In' speech and language drop-in clinics in collaboration with the speech therapy team.

We also continue to work closely with an Early Help worker, providing additional support for families where needed. Over the past year, we have been able to offer basic first aid sessions for parents through ARCH, further strengthening our community support role.

Michelle Marsh continues to make a very positive impact. She has successfully developed a popular parent and baby group on Tuesdays, which continues to grow. Overall, Sunbeams remains a welcoming and well-resourced space, offering engaging activities, crafts, singing, and healthy snacks, and continues to be well attended by families in the community.

Spinners

Spinners continued to run each Wednesday afternoon, providing a supportive and inclusive space for children with additional needs, along with their siblings and parents. The group has also played an important role in offering both social interaction and a sense of community for families who may otherwise feel isolated. We stopped this group at the end of 2025 as we need to re design and re start this to better provide of the children and families needs. This will re open in Spring 2026.

This year, we have also continued to benefit from the ongoing involvement of an Early Help worker, who has been able to offer 1:1 support sessions for parents, adding further value to the group and strengthening the support available to families.

Youth Group:

The youth group has enjoyed a vibrant and varied year, with a programme of activities designed to build friendships, encourage personal growth, and deepen faith. The year began with a fundraising quiz in February, which proved to be an excellent team-building opportunity, helping young people to work together and strengthen relationships. This was followed by a diocesan Fuse Diocese Event in March, where powerful talks enabled attendees to engage more deeply with the Holy Spirit and reflect on their individual faith journeys.

Spring and early summer offered a range of social and outward-facing activities. In April, the group organised a lively prom, creating a relaxed and enjoyable environment for young people to connect through food, dancing, and conversation. A circus visit during the same month added a sense of shared fun and humour, with memorable moments that brought the group closer together. In May, a fundraising cake sale saw the group step out of their comfort zone into the community, raising funds while developing confidence and a sense of outreach with their cake sales – perhaps the start of their new ‘cake ministry’. This was complemented in June by both a peaceful walk through Nonington Park—encouraging connection with nature—and attendance at the God Loves You Tour, where young people joined a wider community of Christians in worship and celebration.

The summer period continued this strong sense of community and faith. Participation in Satellites in August provided a significant highlight, bringing together young people for a shared experience of faith, friendship, and reflection at the end of the school year. Alongside this, activities such as bowling and a visit to the driving range (in October) offered opportunities for light-hearted competition and the discovery of new skills, helping to build confidence and camaraderie within the group.

Overall, the year has been marked by a healthy balance of social, spiritual, and community-focused activities. Each event has contributed to strengthening relationships, encouraging participation, and supporting young people as they grow in both confidence and faith.

We thank all the parent volunteers who help and support all aspects of our children’s and youth ministry at St Peter’s Church.

Heather Ratcliffe – Children and Youth Lead