



ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, SUMMERTOWN

REPORTS FOR APCM 2025

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1. Electoral Roll

There are 85 on the ER of the Parish. (2024: 99 / 2023: 101 / 2022: 113 / 2021: 110 / 2020: 113 / 2019: 107)

The Church Representation Rules require the Electoral Roll to be renewed completely every six years, and 2025 was one such year. Everyone who was on the previous ER had to reapply to be included on the new Roll.

Emma Wilkinson
PCC Secretary

2. Building & Fabric

Quinquennial Inspection

Completed in June 2022 and the B&F Team have been working on the priority items.

External rainwater goods:

Drone survey of roofs completed.

Continued replacement of deteriorated rainwater goods around the perimeter of the church. Latest phase completed spring 2025. Downpipes cleared.

Blockages identified in drains to soak-aways. Further investigation required. May not be economical to clear underground drains on North side. Damp patch in Lady Chapel aisle now ready for re-plastering following external works to drains.

Flue cap replaced on chimney.

Boundary wall: Progress continues slowly.

General Review: Gas boilers and Alarms serviced. CO detectors installed.

Moves towards reducing carbon footprint ongoing.

Threshold

Folding doors recently serviced again. No roof leaks.

Church Hall

Fire alarm system recently serviced.

Defibrillator fitted to Lower Hall outside wall.

Security trellising installed on front steps.

Gutters repaired but more work required.

Comprehensive electrical check completed spring 2025. Minor issues only.

Montessori requests for upgrade of kitchen and toilets in Lower Hall currently under consideration

Adventists requests for improvements currently under discussion.

The above could lead to a major spend if we decide to upgrade the toilet and kitchen facilities in both halls.

Offices are being viewed shortly by a prospective new client.

Aldrich Road House

There are currently no issues.

Steve Hunter
Chair of the B&F Team

3. Deanery Synod

Representatives: Irim Sarwar, Ann Stedman, vacancy

There have been three Deanery Synod meetings during the year and a joint Synod with Cowley Deanery is scheduled in September.

The first meeting took place on 2nd October 2024 here at St Michael's and was Gavin's first as Area Dean. The discussion centred on the ministry of children and young people. The second meeting was on 4th December at St Andrew's with the theme being Our Ministry to Older Adults. There was a talk Debbie Ducille from the Anna Chaplaincy followed by Charlotte Maughan, who is an Anna Chaplain based in North Oxford, describing her experience locally. This led on to a brief discussion on forming local care partnerships. The third meeting was on 25 February 2025 at St Barnabas with discussion on Living Lent as well as action and mission overseas. At all three meetings there were discussions (inevitably) on deanery share allocations and future models for.

Irim Sarwar, Ann Stedman
Deanery Synod Reps

4. PCC 2024

In 2024 the Vicar, the Revd Gavin Knight, was supported by the clergy team at St Michael and All Angels:

Part-time Associate Priests

- Revd Dr Nicholas Bradbury
- Revd Mary Gurr
- Revd Alyson Peberdy

Gavin Knight was appointed Area Dean of Oxford with effect from June 2024, a role he fulfils alongside his Parish ministry work.

Leah Mattinson worked on a freelance basis as Parish Manager, providing administrative support to Gavin, the Treasurer, and the Spaces Team, in addition to overseeing the administration of the Church and Church Hall. Carlos Caban worked on a freelance basis as Caretaker and Operations Assistant. Leah and Carlos both resigned in mid-2024 and were replaced on a similar basis by Paul Sawyer as Caretaker, Ali Jones as Spaces Manager and Caitlin Beswick as Parish Administrator.

The PCC met six times during 2024 (21 January, 17 March, 28 April, 21 July, 15 September, 17 November); the APCM was held on Sunday 19 May 2024. Much of the work in 2024 was focused on the church's commitment to carbon net zero and its Covenant with Creation, and to ensure that its Safeguarding policies, protocols, training and procedures were up-to-date, effective and relevant. In addition, a framework was set up for a new process, given the name "The Gambit Initiative", to discern the direction of travel for St Michael's for the next 10-15 years. The PCC acknowledged that as the volunteer-base and finances became more stretched and as St Michael's became more involved in issues of justice and freedom, the PCC needed to be pragmatic about what was achievable and sustainable. Findings arising from The Gambit process are expected in 2025.

Regular Sunday morning services were held throughout the year, with All-age worship on the first Sunday of the month, High Altar Eucharist with incense and a ministry of healing on the second Sunday of the month, and a Godly Play session for children running concurrently with the main service on the third Sunday of the month. Sunday morning worship was augmented by a 30-minute meditative service of Taizé or Silent Prayer on Sunday evenings. Morning Prayer was said every Monday to Friday throughout the year. The devotional practice of Stations of the Cross is an important part of the Church's Lenten commitment. In the earlier part of the year, a midweek Lent Group studied Guli Francis-Dehqarii's book "Cries for a lost Homeland", and the book group continued to meet in the Threshold on Thursday mornings during the year to study and discuss various texts.

During the year, the Church Choir had a full programme of musical activity, singing on Sunday mornings and at three Choral Evensongs in March, July and November. In August 2024 the choir visited Tewkesbury Abbey to sing services there for a weekend. St Michael's hosted the partnership Advent Carol Service in 2024 with members of St Peter's Wolvercote choir joining. The Christmas Carol Service was a choral highlight of the year. Duncan Saunderson continued as Director of Music, Duncan Angwin as Organist, and Alice Stainer led the St Michael's Choristers in weekly term-time rehearsals and monthly contributions to worship.

In 2024, during continued nationwide debate around the Living in Love and Faith agenda, St Michael & All Angels remained an official member of the Inclusive Church Network, to demonstrate to the local community that it is a church "which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation." The Bishop of Oxford presided and preached at a Sunday service in mid-June and remained in Church to be interrogated by members of the congregation at a Question and Answer session. The Church also hosted local MP Layla Moran to speak on the crisis in the Middle East, and opened to the local community for a pre-General Election 'green' hustings event focussed on the environmental crisis, with representatives from the major political parties.

Throughout the year, the congregation continued its monthly collection of items for the Community Emergency Foodbank and Cutteslowe Community Larder, participated in the Oxford Historic Churches Trust Ride & Stride event, supported Oxford's homeless charities, collected for The Children's Society via the box scheme, and organised a big campaign during Christian Aid Week which raised more than £2,500. The ECO-Church team continued to develop and expand "reuse, reduce, recycle Sundays" and ran an ECO-themed lending library. David Smith ran a fairly-traded goods stall after Sunday services, well supported by the congregation. Several members of St Michael's continued to work with Oxford Welcomes Refugees, helping a Palestinian family resettled in Oxford.

The Baby & Toddler group met throughout the year on Tuesday mornings and continued to thrive. Children are mostly aged new born to three, except in holidays when older siblings often come. Adults are a mix of parents, grandparents and other relatives, and a loyal cohort of nannies who reappear with a new set of children every so often. The families also cover a wide range of nationalities, often challenging the linguistic skills of the team! Numbers per week range from 10-12 families in term time to over 20 in the holidays. Over the year B&T have welcomed over 100 families, some of whom will only have visited once, where others may have come 30 or more times. The B&T team this year has been Julie Bell, Juliet Field, Ruth Fowler, Kate Lack, Mary Horwitz and Lesley Noakes; new volunteers are welcome to join at any time.

Once a month on a Saturday morning, a group gathered in Church for a 'Men's Breakfast' – food and fellowship – and participants included a mix of members of the congregation and local non-church-goers. The Church hosted an Artweeks exhibition by six artists which enjoyed a footfall of more than a thousand visitors.

The Building & Fabric Team continued its work looking after the Church, Hall, and Aldrich Road house. In addition to extensive routine maintenance and servicing tasks, the Team worked on options and plans for decarbonising the Church. Additionally, it prepared for the installation of a defibrillator at the Church Hall, funded by the local community.

The Gardens Team worked on enhancing the garden, including tree- and bulb-planting, and organised regular Work Parties, some of which included Ukrainian guests from the Friendship Centre, and students working for their Duke of Edinburgh awards. Church garden guide/information sheets are to be found under the Lych Gate; for every season, Suzanne Dalton has created a guide to the Church garden. These are for visitors and neighbours in order to share in the wonder of the bio-diversity found in the garden space. To further develop bio-diversity, the Church observed 'No Mow May', and has blue/great tit bird boxes, bat boxes, swift boxes, a hedgehog hibernation box, solitary bee boxes and bug houses installed. A new flower bed was prepared in memory of the late Margaret Clarke. On the first Sunday in September, the morning service dedicated to Creation Sunday was held in the Church garden.

The Church's website (www.stmichaels-summertown.org.uk) was regularly updated with news and links to recorded and streamed services and sermons; in 2024, all the documents for the APCM were made available on the website to reduce the environmental impact of printing. The Vicar circulated his weekly email blog to approximately 360 people and St Michael's continued to have a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the consequent arrival in the UK of many Ukrainian citizens under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, St Michael's established a weekly Friendship Centre to support them and their hosts. This began in April 2022, and has operated weekly, without exception, ever since with the support of a huge cohort of volunteers drawn from throughout the local community, including students from St Edward's School. On an average Wednesday, between 50 and 60 Ukrainian guests are welcomed for practical help, advice and support, home-cooked food, supervised children's play, and the opportunity for social interaction. The Ukrainian community is now looking on St Michael's as a hub, and Ukrainian leaders are emerging who are themselves organising activities based in Church: fortnightly art classes, yoga classes, a weekly choir rehearsal, a huge party for Ukrainian Independence Day in August 2024, and a Christmas celebration with live Ukrainian musicians.

St Michael's is a founding member of both the Cutteslowe Church Partnership and the Summertown-Wolvercote-Wytham Church Partnership. Partnership activities in 2024 have included the Pavilion Service in Cutteslowe, a Lent quiet day, a Partnership breakfast at St Michael's, several partnership nature walks, a lecture series, PEG open meetings, pulpit swaps, Coffee Cafés on Saturdays in Summer, a Harvest Supper at St Michael's, a joint Advent Carol Service, and the publication of a Quarterly magazine. Partnership representative Sue Smith travelled to St Michael's linked parish in South Africa in September 2024. Her visit to St Chad's, Taung, in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman, included visits to the Chapelries, a local school, meetings with the Mothers Union and other groups. The main focus of the visit was to discern how communications between St Chad's and the Summertown-Wolvercote-Wytham Church Partnership might be developed.

Emma Wilkinson
PCC Secretary

5. Finance Report 2024

Financial Review

Unrestricted income in 2024 was £192,955 (2023: £174,635), expenditure £169,671 (2023: £174,983), leaving a surplus of £23,284 (2023: deficit of £348). There was a gain in the value of the investment assets of £3,358 (2023: £12,356), but as with all investment gains/losses, this would only be crystallized if and when the investments are sold – the value of investments can rise as well as fall depending on many economic factors beyond our control.

In FY 2024 our income was boosted by a £1,000 unrestricted legacy from the estate of the late Margaret Clarke. Our other unrestricted income has risen well compared to previous years, showing that the increases in the hourly rates for Church and Hall hire are taking effect. The lease of the old office space at the rear of the hall continued into 2024, but will be terminated early in FY 2025. New hirers will be sought. We did not raise the rent for Aldrich Road premises in deference to the hirers being Ukrainian families. However, this will be increased in FY 2025 in line with inflation and based on local commercial rates, as required by the Diocese.

We had no major maintenance or repair costs to meet in FY 2024, but it remains the desire of the PCC to invest in more ECO-friendly heating and lighting provisions. Studies continue with some grant assistance, but a full plan would require more than £100k to implement fully.

The surplus in FY 2024 of £23,284 was possible only due to the PCC's strong resistance of the Deanery's "suggested" Parish Share payment of £77,959 and its decision to pay £63,000. Discussions continue into FY 2025 at the Oxford

Deanery Synod level as to what should constitute fair Parish Shares among its constituent churches whose regular attendances vary between a few 10s and several 100s. No agreement has been reached for FY 2025 other than continuing to index the payments from previous years by 5%. This surplus has allowed us to build up sufficient liquid funds to cover the £10,143 held in restricted funds should immediate expenditure be called for.

Our “baseline” income and expenditure is not giving the sustained surplus that would allow us to spend more on vital outreach within the local parish, for which the PCC has designated the sum of £100,000.

The balance sheet at 31 December 2024 stands at £754,230 (2023: £729,587). The bulk of the balance sheet continues to be tied up in the larger restricted funds, the Aldrich Road house (£559,277) and long-term investments (£148,714), leaving “working” capital of around £42k. This falls short of the PCC’s target of having some £150k to cover 12 month’s running costs – see Reserves Policy below.

Mission Giving

The Christmas 2024 Services raised between them £984 which was split between Macmillan Cancer (£295), The Gatehouse (£420) and Christian Aid’s Gaza appeal (£269). After a talk given by MP Layla Moran, a collection of £830 was disbursed equally to “Save the Children Gaza” and “Medical Aid for Palestine”.

Funds

Unrestricted funds may be spent on anything that is within the charitable objects of St Michael and All Angels Church. Our continued practice is to hold some of the reserves in a designated Outreach Fund.

In addition to the short-term Mission Giving funds noted above, we continue to maintain a long-standing restricted Organ fund which is held for its refurbishment and development (£390).

The CIL Gardening fund – established from a grant received from Oxford City Council’s Community Impact Fund and other smaller donations in FY 2023 – continued to make disbursements in FY 2024. A donation of £1,000 was added to the fund in memory of the late Margaret Clarke. The fund now stands at £1,023.

The Ukraine fund created in FY 2022 to support the Ukrainian Friendship Centre at St Michael’s, continued to receive donations: £3,213 (FY 2023: £10,609) and disbursed £4,461 (FY 2023: £5,627) during the year. The fund continues into FY 2025 with a balance of £6,281.

In FY 2023 we offered to hold the cash reserves of the Taung Link fund. The Summertown Wolvercote Wytham Church Partnership (PEG) maintain a link with a sister church St Chad's in Taung, South Africa. It has collected funds to support this link. The fund stands at £2,180, the committee advising on the fund having approved disbursements in FY 2024 of £500 for travel.

A few temporary restricted funds were established to collect and distribute for our Mission Giving – see above and also Note 12 to the accounts.

Reserves policy

It is the PCC’s policy to hold unrestricted reserves sufficient to meet its commitments and planned activities for a twelve month period. This figure is estimated to be about £150,000 in a normal year. The net current assets now stand at £46,239 (2023: £24,954) are still below this sum and the trustees intend to re-build this reserve gradually on an annual basis.

Willie Black
PCC Treasurer

6. Safeguarding

After the 2024 APCM Ali McIntosh stepped down as deputy Safeguarding Officer and the position was taken by Sue Smith, who was already in charge of DBS checks. The noticeboards were updated accordingly.

Since the last APCM no Safeguarding breaches have occurred. One person reported a past concern, which was noted, with an undertaking to keep the concern in mind. The Wednesday Ukraine meeting had had one potential incident which was dealt with immediately and effectively by the leaders of the meeting.

Those who need to undertake Safeguarding training, or update it, are about to do so or have done so, and renewals are being monitored. We report regularly to the PCC on safeguarding matters, and the Safeguarding noticeboards are up to date.

The Diocese has kept us informed of progress on changes to their Safeguarding procedures, so we are keeping abreast of developments there.

Juliet Field
Safeguarding Lead

7. Vicar's Reflection

The Church of England could well review the past year as another *annus horribilis*. In the light of historic safeguarding abuses doctrinal conflicts, various factions have moved to the periphery of the church. The resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury was symbolic of the discord at the 'centre.' But locally the church has been resilient. The feedback from the recent Holy Week and Easter services demonstrates an upturn in attendance. More young people are crossing the threshold. It seems that the local church is being seen as more relevant than before. This past year we have asked the question to the local community: "how can we serve you better?" The question comes from the desire to engage issues which we share as a common humanity. We have called this process, the Gambit because we recognise that we may have to lose something of ourselves in order to gain a greater impact in community life.

This year we welcomed, three fantastic people to our family – Caitlin Beswick was appointed as Parish Manager; Ali Jones was appointed as the Space Manager, and Paul Sawyer as Caretaker. All of these appointments have taken off a heavy burden from our overworked volunteers and made the church more effective in its day-to-day operations. We are all anticipating another new recruit, our stipendiary curate, Anastasia Ryabchuk. Anastasia is from Kyiv in Ukraine and has recently trained for ministry at St Stephen's House here in Oxford. Please note that Anastasia will be ordained deacon at Christchurch Cathedral on Saturday 5 July and will start her ministry with us on Sunday 6 July.

We continue to live by our covenant with creation which concentrated thought towards decarbonisation of the church. Plans continue to evolve, but essentially we are looking towards picking off the low fruit, such as replacing the gas boiler in the Threshold with an air, source heat pump. We have also appointed a new church architect, Peter Preston, who has heritage accreditation and sits on the Diocesan Advisory Committee. We feel that we are better placed to make difficult but necessary decisions regarding the longer term future of our church fabric. Steve Hunter has done a great job leading his stoical Building and Fabric team in maintaining our church plant.

After seeking cooperation from the Banbury Road neighbours over many years (40?), we have finally been given permission to rebuild boundary wall to the west of the curtilage. The plan is to complete the wall by mid-summer and develop a long bed including herbs for communal sharing. Thanks to Suzanne Dalton who leads the garden team with such energy and enterprise.

Inside the church, the organ has been showing signs of age. The repairers have made a couple of visits to patch up or to replace. However, we are facing a longer hospital visit which will require a shared fundraising effort to raise at least £10,000. It is hoped that we might be able to match this total and share it with important outreach projects.

This was also the third year, in which we have supported the Ukraine community through Wednesday's Ukraine Friendship Centre. We have only missed one Wednesday session – Christmas Day 2024! It was calculated that we have offered over 460 English-language TEFL sessions, over 2,000 pizzas served, more than 9,300 Ukrainian visits to 155 sessions staff by a minimum of 15 volunteers per session. We salute our volunteers exemplified by Mary Perryman who has worked nearly all of those sessions. This expression of commitment to the dispossessed demonstrates a greater love. Thank you to all those who help live out this gospel story.

Sunday by Sunday, our choir continues to stretch itself to reach greater heights. Under the tutelage of Duncan Saunderson, StM&AA's is becoming a community which fosters beauty in its worship, singing, playing and artistic endeavour. We are so blessed to have such a pool of talent, and we very much hope that in the coming years we will be able to foster younger peoples giftings with regard to music and the arts – but perhaps that is for next year's report!

There is a saying that for small to medium-sized churches like StM&AA's, if you are going to do anything do a few things well. We might be over-reaching that piece of wisdom! What we do achieve is as a result of a small band of dedicated volunteers and enthusiasts. All of the following groups are volunteer-based: the Building & Fabric team, the food bank collection team, the Thursday book group, the Men's Breakfast, the Garden Team, the Christian Aid collectors, the Taung Link and many, many more.

We have been royally served by our churchwardens, Graham, Kerr, and Jonathan Scheele, as well as our PCC secretary, Emma Wilkinson, and treasurer, Willie Black, not to mention our PCC – the trustees of the church. Jonathan is retiring this year, and I would like to personally thank him for all his many contributions to parish life. It has been a pleasure working with Jonathan who I am delighted to report is staying on as PCC member. We welcome Patrick O'Meara as our new churchwarden at this APCM. All I can say is that God is a generous God!

As we continue to involve ourselves in the liturgical cycle of life, death and resurrection. We also remember those in our family who have died. We give thanks for those we have loved but also remember that we are an Easter people and we hold the promise of a future vision full of surprise and wonder.

Gavin
The Revd Gavin Knight, Vicar, St Michael & All Angels, Summertown

To make a financial offering to the ongoing work of St Michael & All Angels (registered charity no. 1129388), please scan this code with your phone camera, choose the amount you wish to give, and follow the onscreen instructions.
Thank you.

