

St. Mary the Virgin, Dedham

Annual Report

Year Ending December 2025



Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025

26th April 2026

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St. Mary's, Dedham

2025 TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, DEDHAM

Registered Charity number 1130860

The draft accounts within this report were formally approved by the PCC at a meeting on the
17th March 2026.

1) Aim and purposes

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has responsibility for promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St Mary's Church and the Duchy Barn (*through oversight of its Management Committee*)

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 St Mary's. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St Mary's and the Duchy Barn.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly 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:

- a. Regular public worship, open to all**
- b. The provision of sacred space for worship, personal prayer and contemplation**
- c. Pastoral work, including visiting the sick and the bereaved**
- d. The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups**
- e. The taking of religious assemblies in schools**

3) Achievements and performance

3a - Regular public worship for all Sunday Services

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the month and throughout the seasons of the church year that enable us to connect with and speak to both regular parishioners and visitors to St. Mary's. We constantly monitor our service patterns to ensure they have both audiences in mind. Our services to mark special holidays and festivals are particularly appreciated and important to the life of the village and the Christmas Crib service last year attracted a congregation of 514 people attended, split over 2 services.

Thanks to the brilliant work of our AV Team, we have been able to continue to use technology to reach people both locally and abroad through live streaming of services on our YouTube channel. We are looking to expand the team so that we can continue to offer this service.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of their journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world. We have celebrated 3 baptisms, but no services of thanksgiving, and 2 people were confirmed. We had 8 weddings and held 10 funeral services and had 7 interments of ashes in our church this year.

We are grateful to all those who help to keep our church services running smoothly each month. It is a blessing that we remain able to offer the different styles of services that we do. Our thanks go to our Rural Missioner's, Revd Phillip and Revd John who have worked hard to bring the good news of Jesus to an increasing number in our parishes. Canon Merv McKinney has continued to support us all leading and preaching at services and in many other ways, including sharing with us the benefit of his wisdom, and for this we thank him. Our thanks go to our lay preacher, Anne-Marie Price-Partrick and to our Lecturer Richard Hopkins, as well as to Antony Watson our Director of Music and to Gabbie Watson our verger, the choir members and our service wardens, Be Burleigh, Sarah Oakley and David Druitt.

Sianne Mann

3b - The teaching of Christianity through sermons, courses and small groups

Revds. John Saxon and Phillip Young, our Rural Missioner's, Revd. Canon Merv McKinney, our Assistant Minister, Richard Hopkins, our Lecturer, and Anne-Marie Price-Partrick, our Authorised Lay Preacher, and other ministers and speakers from outside our parish have enabled us to grow in our faith through regular preaching and teaching from the Bible, which has largely followed the Common Worship Lectionary. There have been many home groups (including one new one launched late 2025) that meet during the week in term time for fellowship, encouragement from the Bible and prayerful support. We continue to offer seeker-friendly courses such as *Hope Explored* and *Alpha* to enable those less familiar with the Christian faith to explore and discuss it in an open and supportive environment. We run a Marriage Preparation Day for all couples getting married across the Tendring and Dedham Parishes in the coming year and more bespoke instruction for those preparing for Confirmation and families preparing for their children's baptism. During the year there have been opportunities to follow short courses in the Tendring and Dedham Parishes, as well as joining together for worship and fellowship.

Revd. Phillip Young

3c - The taking of religious assemblies in schools and work with children and families

Rise 'n Shine

Rise 'n Shine, our all-age service on the first Sunday of the month, continues to draw many people of all ages and stages of life. Services tend to be shorter (no more than 45 minutes), much more interactive (often with an 'Activity' slot, a drama sketch, etc.) and songs that resonate with young and old. Revd. Phillip has used a variety of materials from Bob Hartman, Faith in Kids and All Age Worship Resources. Attendance fluctuates month by month, but we continue to see a steady stream of families and those of all ages coming. This year we supported one family bringing their child for baptism in these services. We always welcome new ideas and voices to the team as we seek to create an atmosphere of 'worshipful fun' that is faithful to our Anglican identity.

Revd. Phillip Young

3d - Involvement at Dedham Primary School

Throughout 2025, three of us from St. Mary's went into Dedham Primary School regularly: Richard Hopkins, Claire Arculus and Revd. Phillip Young. Sometimes these acts of 'Collective Worship' relate to school values and sometimes they relate to a liturgical season (Lent, Easter, Harvest, etc.), but in every case they seek to bring some relevant teaching from the scriptures to the subject at hand. We have also led a number of sessions of Open the Book, initially led by Claire and subsequently taken on by Fiona Taylor. Claire led some training for school leavers known as Bounce (a course designed by Christian Youth Outreach), which aims to help leavers prepare for the transition to secondary school. Revd. Phillip leads End-of-Term Assemblies, which generally take place at St. Mary's, thus enabling parents and carers to be present. These are great opportunities to look back at what's been achieved and learned in the term, while hearing a message from the scriptures. Revd. Phillip is occasionally invited by teachers to address their classes on specific topics, e. g. the significance of the wise men's gifts in Epiphany. All the work in our schools is covered in prayer by our weekly Zoom-based prayer meeting, which is a vital support to the work done in the school. Many thanks to those involved in any way in this vital Christian witness to the school community!

Revd. Phillip Young

3e - Church Membership-Results of April '25 Electoral

The electoral Roll has been reviewed in 2025. We currently have 91 people on the electoral roll, 67 resident and 24 non-residents.

3f- Choir & Music

2025 was a busy year, as we got to know our new organ, got it through one or two teething troubles, and then in May, we celebrated its Dedication by Bishop Roger, followed by a hugely enjoyable and inspirational recital by the world-renowned Jonathan Scott. People are still talking about it to this day, and we hope to see Jonathan again soon.

We have hosted visits from organists from around the country, some of whom helped in our fundraising exploits, especially our Organathon in 2022. We have also had visits from the organist from Sydney Cathedral, as well as from organists from Germany, The Netherlands and from the recently appointed Colchester City Organist, all of whom were genuinely impressed by the instrument we worked so hard to secure. We hope to have them come and play recitals in the near future.

The Choir has continued to meet weekly, and we had an augmented choir for the Christmas Carols in December, with the award-winning Choir of Dedham C of E Primary School joining us as usual. Antony continues to teach music at Dedham Primary School, where he assists in Collective Worship on the piano.

Due to the changing circumstances of some of our regular choristers, we have started to trial rehearsals before the services, so that we can hopefully attract new members, without the need to commit to an evening in the week. We shall see how that works out for the time being. We are hoping to attract new members to sing at a particular style that favours them, with a rehearsal just before. As I always say in these reports, I am so grateful to have a loyal band of singers to take this valuable ministry forward, and we pray for new members to come forward.

Antony Watson

3g - Revive@5 Music

Revive@5's music is in the capable hands of Dawn Saxon, along with Revd John Saxon, Gabbie, Kate, and Chloe, forming a band, which is wonderful for the contemporary style of music.

Antony Watson

3h - Bell Ringing

The Dedham team of bell ringers is going well.

We have a team of 7 which enables us to provide Bells for most Sundays in the year & all the Weddings.

Lou Davison

3i - Flower Team

It has been another successful and enjoyable year for the flower team, and it is good to report that two new members have joined this year. Members continue to enjoy the creativity the group brings, and the opportunity it provides as a form of worship.

Operationally, the larger team is subdivided into smaller groups which are generally responsible for about 5 sessions of arranging each year as part of a rota, and there is a follow up week each time to 'top up'. This amounts to each group being responsible for keeping the flowers looking good for 10 weeks each year. In addition, there are the times when the whole team meet to arrange for the major services of Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

We are grateful to members, and often their spouses too, for their time and commitment to arranging flowers for the benefit of the church. Their work is often praised by congregation members and visitors to the church. New members are always welcome to join!

Helen Sims

3j - The Pastoral Group

Members of the team during the year were Liz Reed, John Reed, Lou Davison, Ruth Higginson, Ann Shaw, Revd Merv McKinney, Revd Phillip Young, Adrian Beckingsale, and Vee Druitt. Cathy Groslin joined the team during the year.

We offer friendship and fellowship in a variety of ways. There is a monthly parish lunch at the Essex Rose where Michelle and her team welcome around 15 people and also put on a Christmas lunch in December. We are extremely grateful to the Essex Rose team for all their support. There is a free monthly Film showing at the Duchy Barn during the months of October to March where we offer refreshments and John Groslin shows a film. We are grateful for the support of the Duchy Barn Committee led by Colin Biggins for this outreach, and special thanks to John who worked so hard on this project.

A walk and talk group meet once per month where all are welcome to walk and talk or meet the group after their walk for refreshments and chat. Members of the Pastoral group are welcomed at Blackbrook House monthly where we visit residents and enjoy conversation together.

We contact families after family events in church such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. There is a Bereavement visitors team within the group who also steward at the annual service to remember loved ones in November.

We try to respond to all requests for contact with those who may be going through a difficult time.

Vee Druitt

4) Stewards

During the past year we are grateful to the Stewards who have given their time to welcome people to church on the Sundays, receive the offertory and clear up after the service. The following are proposed as stewards for the forthcoming year:

Adrian Beckingsale Deirdre Beckingsale Be Burleigh Julia Campbell Danielle Dearsley David Druitt Vee Druitt Akshay John Maria Johnston Marion Livermore Andrew McLaughlin Leonie McLaughlin	Liz Nickerson Sarah Oakley John Reed Liz Reed Jill Strangward Gabbie Watson Suzanne Woods Please speak to Be Burleigh if you are interested in being a steward.
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Be Burleigh

5) Guided Church & Tower Tours-

We had multiple booked Church and Tower tours over the past year. We give thanks to the amazing volunteers, Elizabeth Hopkins and Peter Rowles, who gave up their free time to offer the guided Tower tours. We always receive great feedback from those who participate.

We also had many unguided visitors to the church from tour groups that come from European countries on Constable Country day trips and various societies. We already have 2 guided and 3 unguided tours booked in for summer 2026, so this remains a very welcomed service we offer at our church.

Sianne Mann

6) Church Wardens Report - Aims & Objects for '25 –

Our aims and objectives for 2025 have been

- To ensure we continue the smooth running of the church and support the ministry of the two Rural Missioner's, Revd Phillip Young and Revd John Saxon
- To maintain a service pattern that offers a wide variety of service styles
- To support our children and young people by providing a Junior Church on Sunday

mornings and leading school worship

- To be a warm and welcoming church for all who pass through our doors
- To be accessible to all our church family as well as the wider community
- To care for the financial wellbeing of the church
- To care for the maintenance and the fabric of the church
- To care for the maintenance of the churchyard
- To ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and familiar to all
- To support all those involved in the above aims and objectives

Sharon Sarson

6a – Fabric Report, Church Cleaning

- Windows and Masonry project:

Initially we had been quoted £165,000 to repair several of the Church windows, as well as the masonry as highlighted in the 2022 Quinquennial.

Following the retirement of the Architect, we were fortunate to obtain the services of Roger Barrell of Quinlan Terry & Partners, who had previous experience of our Church, and he rescoped the project to a more modest level, and a contract was agreed with Bakers of Danbury costing £44,186 excluding VAT of £8,837, which now may not be recoverable under the LPWG Scheme. There will be some additional costs, but the project is planned to be completed in the first half of 2026.

Thanks to the efforts of Peter Wilson, a Grant was obtained for £36,000 from Enover, and with generous donations received from the appeal, there should be sufficient funds to meet the costs of the project.

- Clock Repair. The face of the clock needed to be repaired. The Parish Council gave us a grant of £600 for the repair of this village wide benefit.
- Emergency Church Lighting. This has been enhanced following recommendations from the Fire Officer. This is checked yearly.
- Audio Visual. This was upgraded during the year which cost £9,200. We received a very generous grant from DELT which covered the cost.

5-year EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) showed that the cabling between the boiler room and the church needed to be replaced. The new cabling was laid in January 2026. An EICR test is a crucial safety measure for electrical systems in properties. An EICR assesses the safety and condition of existing electrical installations in a building. This comprehensive inspection helps identify potential hazards and ensures compliance with current electrical safety standards.

- Finally, a heartfelt thank you to our verger and caretaker Gabbie who maintains the cleanliness of the church to such a high standard, and our thanks also to the many volunteers who cover this work in her absence.

At the moment we do not have a Fabric Committee. We are looking for volunteers to be on this committee.

Ruth Higginson, Church Warden

6b - Churchyard

There are approximately 450 headstones of various shapes and sizes in the churchyard. In June 2025 a survey was carried out to see whether any of these posed a safety hazard. It was discovered that there were 6 headstones (3 of which were in the shape of a cross) which were unstable and likely to cause injury if they toppled.

By November 2025 all these had been professionally repaired to the latest standards.

It is recommended that a regular survey is carried out with the next one in early 2027.

Our routine survey of the 39 trees in the churchyard by our tree expert showed that the large horse chestnut tree at the front is in danger of outgrowing its strength. The recommendation is that the entire canopy is reduced by approximately 25% and the base de-compacted to enhance rooting conditions.

However, since this tree is owned by the Diocese, we must wait for them to proceed later in 2026.

Robert Smith

7) Resource Centre –

The centre continues to produce a steady income towards church funds, though it is difficult to assess how much is raised as a lot of people now pay by card and leave a note to that effect in the Resource Centre safe, which is cash only. This is all for the same cause, so it is not really a problem.

Stocks are renewed and updated twice a year, and we have recently increased the number of items available. The centre attracts both regulars and visitors and as summer approaches, after the quieter winter months, this should increase.

Be Burleigh

8) Muniment Room Library

Access to the Muniment Room continues to be difficult not only due to the awkward spiral staircase but also with the requirement for two people to be present to oversee this due to fire regulations which are unlikely to be relaxed. The other major concern is the increasing difficulties with maintaining an environment in which the archival material will not deteriorate due to humidity and temperature fluctuations. We are currently exploring the possibility of digitising and / or making facsimiles of the archival material making them easier to access and moving the originals to a place where they can be safely preserved for posterity in a controlled environment.

Adrian Beckingsale

9) Walk & Talk

Walk & Talk is going extremely well. We have had 2 new ladies join us in the past few months which is brilliant, so including myself we are now 11.

Obviously, we are not always all present every month depending on other commitments but usually are quite busy. Out of the 11, I have 3 non-walkers who join us for coffee & chat for an hour. We had our Christmas meal in January at the Talbooth which we all enjoyed.

Lou Davison

10) Benefice Group Prayers

Each week on Monday evenings at 5 o'clock several of us gather (mainly online, but occasionally in person in the warmer months) to pray for our churches, our communities and the world. Although brief, this regular opportunity to commit our ministry and witness and the world around us to God in prayer is the backbone to all that we do in the Tendring and Dedham Parishes ("Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain", Psalm 127:1). Leadership is shared, beginning with a thought from God's Word, and includes sections focussing on particular prayer points during which space is given for all to lead us in prayer. We are grateful to God for all those who commit to this important aspect of our life and ministry together and serve in many ways through it.

Rev. Phillip Young

11) Mission

Members

Lynne Al Sad, Ruth Higginson, Liz Reed, Caro McShane, Linda Redlitch, Deirdre and Adrian Beckingsale, Carol Buckland

Activities

We officially start our sales in May, then once a month to the end of October. During the year we raised a total of £2,825 which was split equally between Beacon House, Korban and Feeding Faith.

Distribution

The amount we have raised during the year, £2,825 will be split between Korban, a homeless charity in Colchester dealing with young people aged between 16-25, and Beacon House also a homeless charity, and Feeding Faith in Guatemala. If you wish to know more about Korban their website is www.korban.org.uk and the website for Feeding Faith is www.feedingfaith.org. Marjorie Culham's nephew and his wife work for Feeding Faith in Guatemala. The PCC also agreed to donate £1,000 to Feeding Faith from church funds. We also raised £200 for Christian Aid at the May sale.

The website for Beacon House www.beaconhouseministries.org.uk gives an updated list of what they need. They continue to do a necessary job of finding accommodation and giving support and encouragement to those in need. If anyone is interested in volunteering or just visiting to see the work that is done, please contact Julie on 01206 761960.

Thank you to all who have supported and helped with raising money for Mission this year, especially the cake bakers and those who man the stall every month. We are always looking for volunteers to make cakes, jams, biscuits etc. or just help on the stall.

Ruth Higginson/Lynne Al Sad

12) Eco-Church

As I reported last year the Church of England has set a goal of becoming Carbon Net Zero and appointed A Rocha, a Christian “Eco Charity” to run a programme of encouragement and accreditation of Churches to move towards Carbon Net Zero. Last year we were awarded Silver Status and began work on trying to achieve Gold Status. In the light of extensive and challenging adaptations to the assessment system we are currently assessing what further changes and progress we will need to achieve to reach Gold Status. We have already made some progress and are developing policies and plans for implementation in the five designated areas of: Worship and Teaching; Buildings and Energy; Land and Nature; Community and Global Engagement; and Lifestyle. If anyone is interested in being involved in this project, please do get in touch with me.

Adrian Beckingsale

13) Junior Church –

Junior Church is our group focussed on providing fun, games and age-appropriate Bible teaching to children aged 3 to 10. It takes place in the Duchy Barn alongside the normal Sunday service every week (except the first Sunday of the month, when everyone stays together for our all-age service, *Rise 'n Shine*). This was the third full year of Junior Church, and it was marked by many blessings. We are wonderfully supported by a team of ten dedicated volunteers who are all fully trained and use their gifts and time to serve the children and the Lord in this way. Our principal resource is still the Biblically comprehensive, multimedia teaching programme called The Biggest Story (www.thebiggeststory.com), which is supplemented with seasonal material in Lent and Advent from Faith in Kids and elsewhere. We have three leaders serving anything from 5 to 15 children on any given week. We are grateful to God for this ministry that blesses the young families in our midst.

Louise Young

14) Revive@5 –

Revive@5 is a contemporary service aimed at all ages with modern worship songs and a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. It meets on the third Sunday of each month with refreshments from 4.45pm and the main service from 5pm until 6pm. We have teaching brought to us by a variety of speakers including both our local Missioner’s Phillip Young and John Saxon, as well as people from other churches. We often use creative ways to spend time in prayer, and our prayer ministry team is also available after the service to pray with individuals as needed.

Sharon and Tim Sarson

15) Youth Report –

Throughout the year, the youth group has continued to meet monthly after the Revive@5 services in the Duchy Barn.

Activities have included:

- Speakers joining monthly sessions including Sue Hunt and Peter Cook.
- Easter trip to Frinton beach.
- Trip to Dedham Therapy Farm.

- Summer social at Peter & Jo Wilson's pool.
- Annual Sorted! Event in London.
- Christmas social Church Tower Tour and chips at The Marlborough.

After a fantastic Alpha Youth course in January with 9 youth members attending, and nearly 20 volunteer leaders, cooks and prayer volunteers, the youth group will meet again on the 8th April to decide a new youth group name. With previous youth members invited to join, we will plan and discuss wish list socials and next steps, which will include two meetings a month going forward, one being a Bible study session - exciting stuff!

Claire Arculus

16) Dedham Primary School –



Dedham Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School January 2025 – December 2025

The school now has 201 pupils on roll and 36 members of staff, including 12 teachers ➤ Children from a Minority Ethnic Background: 10.9% (38.4% national)

➤ Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL): 2.0% (23.4% national) ➤ Children with Free School Meal entitlement (at any point in the last 6 years): 8.5% (24.7% national) ➤ Pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support: 7.0% (14.8% national) ➤ Pupils with an EHC (Education, Health & Care) Plan: 3.0% (3.5% national)

➤ Absence rate: 3.8% (5.2% national)

Mrs Gemma Chester has been headteacher of Dedham Church of England Primary School for three years now and as a school, we celebrated our 200th birthday in 2025. The school was founded by Edward Betts in 1825 who put down some money for a school to help 'educate the poor'. Now, as a Church of England primary school, we continue to keep this founding principle at the heart of what we do. 'Guide each of us

to be a light to the world' is our school vision, inspired by Matthew 5:14-16, and it encourages all at our school to be the best that they can be for the benefit of themselves and for the benefit of others.

As part of our 200th celebrations, we had a pond installed in the school grounds and a summer house was put on the school playground for Lego building and colouring during lunchtimes. Classes also communicated with children on the other side of the Atlantic in Dedham, Massachusetts. Children in all classes wrote and received letters and some children also managed to negotiate the five-hour time difference to be able to meet their pen pals online! In addition to this, during the summer, a project entitled 'Faces of Dedham' invited children to create portraits of one another. These artworks formed part of a public portrait trail through the village, exhibited alongside contributions from the Dedham Art Society, residents of Blackbrook care home and historical works from the Munnings Art Museum.



The school pond is used as part of the Forest School curriculum and the science curriculum. We are very grateful to Dedham Parish Council for their generous donation.

Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) sets out the priorities for each year and can be found on the school website. In the academic year 2024-25, the action points were:

- Middle leaders to lead their subjects through curriculum change, ensuring sequencing, progression and improved standards
 - Middle leaders to raise the profile of foundation subjects
 - Develop the role of the SENDCo and Inclusion Lead
 - To further develop children's and staff's understanding of spirituality
 - To further develop children's understanding and respect for difference and diversity
 - Raise standards in Reading and Writing in KS1 and KS2
 - To re-develop the foundation subject curriculum
 - To raise standards of handwriting and presentation across all subjects
 - To ensure implementation of retrieval practice
 - To re-develop the EYFS curriculum
 - To enable children with SEMH needs to demonstrate positive behaviours throughout the day
 - To reduce low-level disruption and negative learning behaviours in lessons

We were especially pleased with our Key Stage Two data in 2025 which demonstrates the positive impact that teaching and learning has on our children during their time at Dedham.

Assessment	Statistic	Cohort	School Result	National Comparison	National Result	School Percentile Rank
KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths combined	% of pupils achieving the expected standard	29	83%	🔵 Above (significant)	62%	93rd
KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths combined	% of pupils achieving the higher standard	29	17%	🟢 At or above	8%	90th

In November 2025, the school received its SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. The full report can be found here

https://www.dedham.essex.sch.uk/_resources/9da401fd-4811-4cb6-9d2b-c5162f7b51a1

however the key points from the inspection can be found below.

Notable Strengths

- *Leaders, including the governing body, and the staff, are deeply invested in Dedham as a Church school. Central to their work is a well-understood Christian vision that is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. This creates a loving culture where pupils and adults are known and valued as being unique people. As a result, the school community feels a deep sense of belonging and wellbeing.*
- *The vision guides and drives decisions by school leaders, including governors. It empowers clear strategic planning, reflecting the needs of the school.*
- *Partnerships, including with the local church and Chelmsford diocese, are strong and support the school to live out the vision effectively. As a result, the school is a vibrant community that continues to grow.*
- *The creative curriculum inspires and motivates pupils and ignites their love of learning, giving opportunities to 'shine their light'. Carefully selected extra-curricular activities and trips enrich the breadth of learning that pupils encounter.*
- *Collective worship is a valued part of each day, providing meaningful moments to gather together. The spiritual development of adults and pupils is enhanced. This is through music, stillness, as well as times to reflect on teachings, including Bible stories.*

Development Points

- *Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum and continue to ensure it is broad and balanced, with creative approaches for pupils to learn.*
- *Strengthen the ways in which the whole curriculum enables deeper thinking about challenging injustice. This is to help pupils identify opportunities to make their school and the wider world a better place.*

In 2025, the Dedham Ecclesiastical Lectureship Trust once again kindly funded a visit to St Pauls for our year five children and our partnership with Elizabeth Selby Infant School in Tower Hamlets continues to grow with children visiting each other during the year. During 2025, plans were put in place to enable the children to support each other with their work in RE, with opportunities planned in the RE curriculum for the children from Elizabeth Selby to share their experiences of Islam, and the children from Dedham to share their experiences of Christianity. It is hoped that this will help all children to better understand these two faiths and how faith impacts upon daily life.

Over the past year, Rev Phillip and Richard Hopkins have continued to lead collective worship in school. We have also welcomed the Open the Book Team (led by Fiona Taylor) back into school once or twice a term. We are really grateful to the whole team for giving up their time to deliver these assemblies because the children really enjoy them. Other worship during the week is led by Mrs Chester, Miss Valentine, class teachers and our Worship Team. Our Worship Team is made up of volunteers from Class 6 who, supported by Miss Valentine, plan and lead worship in classes each week. Each week links to a bible story and Old Testament stories formed a large part of the planning for this in 2025.

We continue to attend the church for a whole school assembly at the end of each term which is well attended by families. Our Key Stage Two Carol Service also continues to be held in the church, and the Key Stage Two Choir enjoys participating in the annual village carol service. Antony and Gabbie Watson continue to be very valued members of the staff team, and Antony's support and guidance with whole school music-making and worship is greatly appreciated.

We continue to work closely with Lawford CE (VA) Primary School and Highfields Community Primary School. This partnership is entitled the Constable Collaborative Partnership (CCP). Over the past year, the schools have once again supported each other with peer reviews, moderation of assessments and

staff and governor training, in addition to members of the SLT being a 'listening ear' for each other. During 2025, we have worked particularly closely as a group of schools looking at the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

*Laura Valentine
Deputy Headteacher
March 2026*

17) Ecumenical Partners -

Deanery Synod Joint Report

The full Deanery Synod met three times in 2025, and in addition, the Standing Committee met three times. John Reed and David Druitt are both members of the full Synod having been appointed in 2023, and David is also Lay Chair of the Synod and a member of the Standing Committee. Missioner the Rev'd Phillip Young attends the Deanery meetings, and regularly presents topics of interest, and Missioner the Rev'd John Saxon was formally licensed at the May Synod meeting as Area Dean, and takes the Chair at Deanery Synod meetings, alongside David Druitt.

The meetings cover a wide range of topics of interest to the Deanery members and allow discussion and reflection.

Issues of interest include:

- The Deanery Plan Review for 2025 and beyond.
- Update on the Strategic Mission & Ministry (SMMIB)
- The Tendring Show participation
- Lay Ministry and Discipleship
- Diocesan Parish Share Shortfalls
- ECO Church and Environmental actions

Deanery Synod members are in post for three years to April 2026, and the Dedham PCC will be looking to appoint one replacement, as John Reed has indicated that despite the pleasure of serving on the Deanery Synod, he does not wish to stand for a further three years.

John Reed/David Druitt

18) Financial Review- Report –

DEDHAM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL-FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Management: The PCC Finance Committee met on 4 occasions in 2025 and is composed of John Reed (Chairman and Treasurer), Peter Wilson, Adrian Beckingsale (PCC), Tim Sarson (appointed June 9"), and Sara Marshall (Financial Administrator). David Jewell stepped down from the Committee in April and was thanked for his valued contribution. The Dedham PCC holds Charity Commission registration No. 1130860, and the Annual Accounts can be reviewed on both the Dedham Church and Charity Commission websites.

General Fund Performance: (Unrestricted Fund-Page 7 and 8)

The total amount of income the fund received in the year, was £135,715 and the total expenditure £136,831. This represented additional income compared with 2024 of £4,381 (3.3%), whilst total spending increased by £4,039 (3.0%). The net deficit for 2025 was therefore £1,116, against a fall in

the fund for 2024 of £1,459. Two consecutive years of expenditure exceeding income is slightly disappointing and demonstrates the need to continuously encourage more income from both new and regular donors, as well as holding fund raising events. The fund still holds a balance of £24,837 at the 31st December, which is considered by the Committee as being at an appropriate level.

Looking at Income, the total from all Voluntary income sources including Gift Aid showed an increase of 9.5% year on year, at £97,563. This was a very strong rise from 2024 and came from regular and other donations. The rest of the income of £38,152 was £4,078 (9.7%) down on 2024, entirely due to the £4,417 reduction in Fund Raising compared to 2024, when we held 3 events. Everything like Magazine advertising and Fees earned were all higher than last year.

The £4,039 increase in spending shown above, contains the 5.2% increase on 2024 in the Parish Ask, which gave us an extra £2,552 to find, but the PCC was willing to stretch our funds to meet 100% of the Diocesan allocation of £51,693.

The other costs of Church running expenses came to £85,138 for the year, as we contained the increase on 2024 to 1.8% overall. There were some marked increases in areas of maintenance and services, but we managed to hold a range of costs down or below last year.

Church Reserves: (Designated, Restricted and Endowment Funds)

The General fund only represents 5% of the total funds held by the PCC, the other 95% are funds held for specific purposes, explained on Pages 10 to 12. The total of all funds stands at £488,535, an increase of £47,948 (10.9%) in the year, of which £59,075 including the awarded Enovert Grant was added to the Windows & Masonry fund. This rise was offset by other movements, including a £10,840 reduction in the value of Investment units held by the CCLA.

In conclusion, we continue to manage the finances on the basis that we have sufficient funds to meet the continued demands on resources brought about by inflation, extra activities, and an ancient church that needs continuous care and attention.

Finally, my grateful thanks go to Sara Marshall and Katrina Ablett who give their all to ensure the finances are continuously managed through the year at an incredible professional level.

John Reed - Treasurer

19) Financial Statement -

Dedham Parochial Church Council

Statement of Financial Activities For the year ended 31 December 2025

Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2025 Total Funds	2024 Funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2(a) 105,885	75,618	0	181,503	165,840
Activities for generating funds	2(b) 26,492	2,825	0	29,317	32,754
Investment income	2(c) 2,392	11,392	1,212	14,995	21,296
Charitable activities	2(d) 10,626	3,954	0	14,580	12,590
Other incoming resources	2(e) 50	0	0	50	0
Total Incoming Resources	145,445	93,789	1,212	240,445	232,480
Resources used					
Cost of generating funds					
Fundraising/ Trading cost	3(a) 896	0	0	896	2,031
Charitable activities	3(b) 144,670	34,736	400	179,806	397,606
Governance costs	3(c) 700	0	0	700	700
Other outgoing resources	3(d) 254	0	0	254	180
Total Resources used	146,520	34,736	400	181,657	400,517
Net Incoming/Outgoing Resources Before transfers	(1,076)	59,053	812	58,789	(168,037)
Transfers					
Transfers between funds	0	0	0	0	0
Other recognised gains/(losses)					
Gains/(losses) on investment assets	11/12 0	(6,781)	(4,059)	(10,841)	5,899
Net movement in funds	(1,076)	52,272	(3,248)	47,948	(162,138)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total Funds brought forward	44,779	298,684	97,124	440,587	602,724
Total Funds carried forward	43,703	350,956	93,876	488,535	440,587

A copy of the full financial report will be available on our website or by contacting the parish office once the accounts have been adopted by the PCC.

20) Balance Sheet -

Balance Sheet As at: 31 December 2025

	Notes	Total	
		2025	2024
		£	£
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	4	6,877	0
Investments	5	254,336	264,606
		<u>261,213</u>	<u>264,606</u>
Current Assets			
Debtors	6	45,282	29,034
Cash at bank and in hand		198,016	185,948
	8	<u>243,298</u>	<u>214,982</u>
Liabilities			
Creditors	7	15,975	39,001
Amounts falling due in one year			
Net current assets less current liabilities		227,323	175,981
Total net assets less current liabilities		<u>488,535</u>	<u>440,587</u>
Represented by			
Unrestricted Funds			
General Reserves	9	24,837	25,954
Designated Funds	10	18,866	18,825
Total Unrestricted Funds		<u>43,703</u>	<u>44,779</u>
Restricted Funds	11	350,956	298,684
Endowment Funds	12	93,876	97,124
		<u>488,535</u>	<u>440,587</u>

21) Independent Examiners Report –

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT **for the financial year ended 31st December 2025**

Report to Dedham Parish Church - Parochial Church Council [PCC]
Charity Number: 1130860

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025, which are set on pages 3 to 12 of the Full Annual Accounts.

Respective responsibilities of PCC and Examiner:

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that only an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5) (b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act, have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Name of Independent Financial Examiner: Philip Strangward Date: 9 April 2026

22) Fundraising Events –

We had one Fund Raising event in 2025, which was The Big Breakfast in November, it turned out to be one of the best, with approximately 175 people attending, and we raised £1708 net of costs.

Jill Strangward

23) Risk Management

23a - Health and Safety

All safety checks are up to date and risk assessments have been carried out for all church activities. Despite carrying out risk assessments, accidents can still happen, therefore, we all have a duty to consider possible risk of harm and to make associated choices to reduce the risk of harm to ourselves and others.

We continue to meet annually to discuss any health and safety issues that may have arisen and to mitigate any future issues.

DBS checks are carried out where required and all volunteers are required to complete the Church of England Safeguarding training. We encourage members of the congregation to also complete this free training, so that as a congregation we can all work together to keep each other safe.

Sianne Mann

23b - Safeguarding –

No reported incidents this year. Ongoing training with Chelmsford taking place

Roger Berry

24) Structure, governance & management-

24a - PCC Report –

- The PCC consisted of the two church wardens, 6 elected members (Gabbie Watson, Roger Berry, Robert Smith, Adrian Beckingsale, Lynne Al Sad, and our treasurer and secretary John Reed) plus two co-opted members (Antony Watson and Margaret Kitson who are both standing for election this year). Our two Rural Missioner's were invited to attend, and each meeting began with a Bible thought and prayer. The PCC met 7 times in 2025 with any urgent business conducted via email between meetings or by standing committee consisting of the church wardens and treasurer and ratified at the next PCC meeting

- The churches AV system was upgraded this year to a digital system, including the purchase of new microphones and feedback speakers for use by a worship group or band. We are very grateful to the DELT who met the cost of this.
- The PCC approved a grant of £1000 to Feeding Faith in Guatemala who work to provide clean water for the local population. Kristen and Julian Crisp visited us during their last visit to the UK and have expressed their gratitude for our support
- Some essential remedial work has been carried out on unsafe/loose gravestones in the churchyard, meaning that the churchyard now complies with current regulations. We thank Robert Smith for all his hard work in achieving this.
- The church was awarded the silver eco church award following a lot of hard work by Adrian Beckingsale and the PCC continue to support efforts to work towards the gold award
- The church now has a parish safeguarding officer. We are delighted that Roger Berry has taken on this role
- The work on the stained-glass windows and masonry was scaled back following the appointment of Quinlan Terry & Partners as our new architect. This resulted in a significantly reduced cost. Fundraising already undertaken together with a generous grant from Enover is going to meet the majority and possibly all the cost. The work had not begun by the close of 2025 but was contractually agreed for the beginning of 2026.
- After 4 years as our parish administrator Deb Turner left for pastures new and we wish her all the best with her move to Felixstowe. We are delighted to have welcomed Sianne Mann as our new administrator. She took up the role in September and has quickly slotted into the team. She is a warm welcome to anyone visiting the office and we thank her for her efficiency and positivity

Sharon Sarson

24b - PCC Membership –

PCC Membership

PCC members who have served at any time from the last APCM on 13th April 2025 until the date this report was approved are:

Sharon Sarson and Ruth Higginson, Churchwardens

John Reed, Treasurer

Gabbie Watson

Helen Sims (resigned 23rd September 2025)

Lynne Al Sad

Adrian Beckingsale

Roger Berry

Robert Smith

Co-opted members: Margaret Kitson, Antony Watson

24c - Ex Officio & Elected members/dates –

Ex Officio members:

Missioner-Reverend Phillip Young

Missioner-Reverend John Saxon

Churchwardens:

Sharon Sarson (elected April 2024)

Ruth Higginson (elected April 2025)

Elected PCC members and date of election:

Gabbie Watson 2018

Lynne Al Sad 2018

John Reed 2018

Sharon Sarson 2020

Ruth Higginson 2025

Adrian Beckingsale 2025

Roger Berry 2025

Robert Smith 2025

John Reed: PCC Secretary

25) Duchy Barn –

The Duchy Barn continues to be a thriving community resource which is managed by a committee accountable to the PCC. The committee has met on 4 occasions during 2025, with me as chairman, Anne Rowledge treasurer, Helen Sims the PCC representative until September, and Avril Biggins coffee mornings organiser. After many years on the committee Kevin Taylor decided to step down at the April AGM – we have been most grateful to Kevin for his support and invaluable advice and guidance. Karla Bohn has continued as a community representative alongside Lesley Sant. Helen Main has carried the dual role of Dedham Youth Club and Dedham Parish Council representative. We were pleased also to welcome back Steve Mole who having stepped down from Dedham PC, agreed to return as an additional community representative.

Maintenance and repairs. In addition to the routine servicing and minor repairs it became necessary to replace the main entrance door which was beginning to rot in places. The new door had to be custom made by a local carpentry firm and fitted with new hinges and locks - this was a costly but essential item of expenditure of over £3000 which necessitated drawing on some of our investment reserve funds, and thanks to John Reed and Sara Marshall for their help with major items of expenditure. In addition, the Barn committee agreed to provide some support to the daytime cinema initiative paying for the cost of a sound bar and a couple of other small items needed to enable the showing of films in daylight hours to function effectively.

Activities and hiring. In addition to occasional private function hires, the Barn continued to be well used throughout the year with regular twice weekly coffee mornings and regular hiring by local organisations including the Phoenix Homes Colchester Charity, the Allotment Association, Dedham Parish Council and the Monday morning watercolour painting group. The committee has held two further book and bric-a-brac sales during the year to raise funds for the Barn and local charities. The youth club has continued to meet on a Friday evening, and the church youth group continues to meet monthly. The Barn continues to be hired on a weekly basis by a local well- attended AA group which provides us with a regular and much appreciated income stream.

Income. As always, our coffee mornings generates a steady stream of income which covers the costs of not only the necessary supplies but of other incidental expenditure such as hand wash soaps, cleaning materials, toilet rolls, paper towels etc. Thanks to Avril Biggins for organising the rotas and to our volunteers without whose help the coffee mornings would not go ahead – new volunteers are always welcome! We continue to be grateful to the Nicole Young Trust for its generous annual grant of £1000, which makes a very valuable contribution to our running and cleaning costs. The recent matinee cinema club initiated by the PCC is free of charge to those attending and no charge is made by the Barn. However, any voluntary donations from audience members go to Barn funds for which we are grateful. We continue to hold around £28k - £30k in longer term investments and we endeavour to keep around £1k - £1.5k in our current account. Thanks to Anne Rowledge for her work as treasurer and booking clerk and for the support from Sara Marshall finance officer at the Parishes Office.

As ever my thanks to all committee members for their continued interest and support.

Colin Biggins, Chairman, Duchy Barn Management Committee

26) Communications - Parishes Office

Debs Turner left the role of administrator in August 2025, and we thank her for her valued contribution whilst she was in the role.

Sianne Mann has taken over the role of administrator and has now been with us for 6 months.

We have recently switched from using ChurchSuite software for our church communications to iKnow Church, and although we encountered some teething problems, the software, which includes a church App, has been well received by the congregation.

The parish office receives multiple enquires a month for life events, church visits/tours and general enquiries and are responding to all initial emails within 1 working day, Monday to Friday.

Sianne Mann

27) Parish Magazine –

The magazine continues to be produced and distributed to houses throughout Dedham, as well as copies in local businesses and Dedham and Ardleigh churches. A total of 1,100 copies is produced. The magazine is funded by the advertising pages and a contribution from Dedham Parish Council. The magazine contains regular input from the Church, Dedham Primary School, Dedham Parish Council and local clubs and groups.

This was the Third full year with John Goldsbrough as editor. The Flip-Book magazine (Web version) on the Church website and the Dedham Parish Council website continues to be a useful addition to the printed version. The viewing statistics show that (as at 31/03/2026) on average, there were around 334 monthly views for each copy of the 2025 magazines. This was an increase when compared to the average of 289 for the 2024 issues. It is also interesting to note that the magazine continues to be viewed online in subsequent years. For example, the average for 2024 magazines is now 469 (up by 180).

Thank you to all our contributors, the Advertisers and Dedham Parish Council who help to keep the magazine afloat, also a big thank you to Sara Marshall (Advertising). Sara decided to leave her magazine Advertising role after around five years of sterling work keeping the Advertising section fully subscribed. Finally, I would like to thank all our volunteers who distribute the magazine throughout the village.

John Goldsbrough

28) Newsletters, Internet Presence and Social Media –

Both the Dedham and Ardleigh website and the TaDP website are kept up to date with current events and news.

We are currently using Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to reach people online. Our YouTube channel receives an average of 56 views per video. We also launched a WhatsApp community to share upcoming service, event details, prayer requests and for socialising with other congregants, and although very few people have joined the community so far, we hope more people will sign up by scanning the QR code at the rear of the church. As the world becomes more internet orientated, we will continue to look at ways we can reach a wider audience online to promote church events and spread the Gospel.

We relaunched the Church Chimes this year, which had previously only covered the Dedham and Ardleigh parishes, to now cover the whole benefice. This is issued fortnightly and has been welcomed across the benefice as it allows the congregations to support each other's events and services. This is sent out via email, is available on our websites and WhatsApp community, with paper copies available in church.

Sianne Mann

The church website, dedham-and-ardleigh-parishes.org.uk, continued to provide a useful focal point for the church community during 2025 with highest number of page requests since the pandemic year of 2020 when it reached almost a million.

In 2024 the total number of page requests from users on the website was 310,575 an increase of 34,519 (12.5%) compared to the previous year's figure of 276,056. Page Requests are the number of web pages requested by visitors to the web site. The average monthly figure was 25,880 (23,004 in 2024). The month with the highest number of requests was April 2025 with 63,121 (43,688 in 2024) requests.

The breakdown of the Page requests by website area shows that Articles on the site received 101,174 requests (2024 – 137,664), Pages (Groups) – 104,553 (2024 – 98,060, Media – 52,272 (2024 – 59,457) and Calendar – 9,467 (2024 – 11,633).

John Goldsbrough

29) Rural Missioner's Report –

2025 has seen another busy year in our Tendring and Dedham Parishes. We are continuing to build on our network of relationships between the parishes and between the church family members. It is pleasing to hear feedback on how good it is that we are working together with increasing mutual flourishing. For many events and joint services, we see an increasing range of parishes represented. Our 'Nine Together' services and events like 'Praise in the Garden' at Little Bentley Hall are good examples of this.

Schools' ministry continues in our Church and Local Authority Schools with Deanery initiatives of Open the Book and Prayer Spaces being launched. Seeker courses have been offered across the parishes as have Lent and Advent courses/resources. We are pleased to report several Discipleship Groups meet regularly, based in Gt Oakley, Wix, Dedham and Ardleigh. These provide opportunities for deepening faith, biblical understanding and pastoral care for one another and we would encourage those who can join a group. (More details from Phillip or John).

As well as the local parish ministry reflected in Sunday services and festival celebrations, several baptisms and weddings have been conducted in our churches across the nine parishes as well as many funerals. The minister taking these services encourages the families to explore personal faith as

they are supported through the preparation for their service in church. A successful Marriage Preparation Day is held for all couples getting married in our churches during the year. We enjoyed a Vision Day in March with a visiting speaker, Revd. George Fisher, who helped us to consider how we might make the most of the current curiosity in our culture to Christian things. This ended with the first of two Tendring and Dedham Parishes Nine Together' services in St. Mary the Virgin, Dedham - the other one was held in December and was graciously hosted by the team at St. Edmund King & Martyr, Tendring.

PCC Governance and Safeguarding are of course priorities and a joint PCC of all nine parishes gathered in September 2025 with these important topics as a focus. Prayer is an important foundation and an area where we hope we can continue to grow based on the small beginnings around Thy Kingdom Come initiative (Ascension to Pentecost) and a few regular prayer meetings in various parishes.

Communication is key not just to keep people informed of the services and events happening in our parishes but to support our mutual ministry together. In the second half of the year, we said goodbye to our group administrator, Deb Turner, and welcomed Sianne Mann who arrived in her stead and has made a very positive start in serving us all. We now have two group-wide communications a month that helps us co-ordinate all that is going on across our parishes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all who support us in this ministry for the Tendring and Dedham Parishes, not least the leadership of Wardens and PCC members in each church but also the small but valuable team of licensed lay ministers and retired clergy who work alongside us. As we continue, open to God's guiding and leading, we believe 'The one who calls us is faithful, and he will do it.' So, we 'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for us in Christ Jesus.'

1 Thessalonians 5, v16-18 & 24.

Revd John Saxon & Revd Phillip Young

Rural Missioner's

30) Minutes of 2024 APCM

30a - St Mary's Church, Dedham Annual Meeting of Parishioners

13th April 2025

1. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th April 2024 were agreed.
2. Peter Wilson confirmed that he would be stepping down from the role of Church Warden and Chairman of the PCC at the end of this APCM, and thanked everyone who had given so much support over the last few years. He announced that Sharon Sarson was willing to continue as Church Warden. In addition, Ruth Higginson had offered to serve as Church Warden, and this had been accepted and proposed to the meeting by Lynne Al Sad and seconded by John Reed. The attendees at the meeting agreed to elect Sharon Sarson and Ruth Higginson as Church Wardens for the coming year.
3. There was no other business, and the meeting was closed.

St Mary's Church Dedham
Sunday, 26th April 2024

30b - Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Held on Sunday 13th April 2025

1. The Reverend Phillip Young, Missioner for the Tendring and Dedham Group of nine churches, opened the meeting with a prayer. Peter Wilson took over as Chairman of the Annual Meeting
2. Apologies for absence were received from David & Vee Druitt, Adrian & Deirdre Beckingsale, Antony & Gabbie Watson, Roger Berry and Ann Shaw. The Rev. John Saxon, the joint Tendring & Dedham Missioner also sent apologies.
3. Clifford Sims was appointed as Teller to count any votes, if required.
4. Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 28th April 2024 were proposed by Jill Strangward and seconded by Tim Sarson as being a true record of the meeting, and they were approved unanimously.
5. There were no Amendments.
6. There were no Matters Arising.
7. Be Burleigh reported that prior to the new Electoral (April 2025), There were 75 people registered on the Church Electoral Roll, of whom 67 were residents and 8 non-residents.
8. PCC Annual Report:
Peter Wilson confirmed that the Dedham PCC in 2024 was composed of the two Churchwardens, and six PCC members, two of whom were co-opted at the previous APCM. The two Rural Missioner's, Phillip and John were invited to attend PCC meetings. Six PCC meetings were held during the year, and

the Standing Committee comprised of the Churchwardens and Treasurer. One of the stand-out events in 2024 was the recruitment of Claire Arculus, who was appointed Children & Families worker in June 2024. Her contribution in creating a varied programme across the age groups, was warmly welcomed across the Church. Food voucher gifts were provided to 20 needy families at Christmas, as well as the PCC agreeing to donate £1,000 to the Feeding Faith Missions project run by Julian & Kristen Crisp in Guatemala.

Following a regulation changes, much extra work was carried out to help improve the state of the Churchyard, and this was in conjunction with the successful attempt to obtain the Church Eco Silver Award, for which Adrian Beckingsale and Sara Marshall take special credit. The PCC fully supports the ecological ethos and will support the team in its aim to obtain the Gold Award at some time in the future.

The Church was fortunate to have such strong commitment from its Authorised Lay Preachers, including the recently appointed Anne-Marie Price-Partrick.

The need for a Safeguarding Officer was seen as of paramount importance, and we are pleased to announce that Roger Berry has offered his services to volunteer for the position, commencing mid-2025. Considerable thanks are also due to Deb Turner for keeping up with Church members Safeguarding Certification. Peter also gave thanks to Paul Brebner for updating our security cameras, ensuring greater safety for all.

The topic of Living in Love and Faith (LLF) was discussed several times by the PCC, and it was acknowledged that there were very many views. The over-riding conclusion was that the PCC agreed to keep unity, and avoid any internal conflict, whilst welcoming all who attend St Mary's. The Churchwardens welcomed the support of both Phillip and John on this important issue, particularly as the C of E continues to debate the subject, whilst we await the election of a new Archbishop.

9. Financial Report:

(a) John Reed gave the Treasurer's report for 2024 and highlighted the key points from the Financial Overview on Page 12/13 of the Annual Report. This overview details the Church General Fund income for the year of £131,334, and the combined Church expenses and Parish Share cost of £132,792. The successful installation of the Organ project had to be recognised as a major team effort and was completed on time and within budget. Now we move on to the challenge of restoring the windows and masonry. Finally, thanks were given to all those who gave funding to the Church throughout the year, both by personal donations, but also from our patrons in the form of Grants.

(b) The Examined Accounts were formally presented to the Meeting.

(c) There being no questions, a proposal for the formal adoption of the 2024 Accounts was made by Helen Sims and seconded by Brian Moore. The proposal was carried unanimously by the meeting.

(d) John Reed thanked Philip Strangward for acting as Examiner in 2024, and he was duly appointed to continue in the role for 2025.

10. Churchwardens Report:

Peter Wilson gave a report on the church fabric, and the installation of the new Binns Organ by November was the highlight of the year. The raising of over £300,000 in such a short period of time was remarkable, and on behalf of the PCC, Peter thanked everyone who had contributed to the fund, as well as the professional installation work carried out by Nicholson & Co. He also gave fulsome thanks to David Druitt, Chairman of the Organ Committee, and to Margaret Kitson, and of course Antony Watson, and all who have worked tirelessly to make this Organ project such a success. A special Dedication Service and concert was scheduled for the 10th May. As this was Peter's retiring address, he reflected on the £500,000 spent on fabric in recent years, when as well as the organ, major projects were carried out on installing a new gas fired boiler, a new hospitality and toilets area and upgraded guttering. The need for major repair of the Stained Glass Windows has been in the last two Quinquennial surveys, and we have now obtained a Faculty, and are

in dialogue with a glazing contractor. This work, together with a significant level of masonry work is likely to be very costly and may well have to be done in Phases from the Autumn of 2025 to the end of 2026. Meantime, more fund raising will be urgently needed. Assurance was given that the organ would be protected during the window repairs.

The Bell Ropes had been replaced in 2024, with a Grant from the Friends of Dedham, for which the PCC was very grateful.

Action has been taken on the Fire Officers report which had recommended an upgrade of emergency lighting, and the Church capacity. The recommendation was to limit attendance to a maximum of 400, which means that we will have to hold the Crib Service in two separate services this coming year.

The Churchyard was now in much better order thanks to the efforts of Richard Dean and Joe Preston, this improvement has been recognised by parishioners and visitors alike.

Peter commended, the housekeeping carried out by Gabbie Watson and the many volunteers, who keep the condition of the internal aspects of the Church in such splendid condition.

Finally, Peter thanked everyone who serves the Church in so many capacities throughout the year, to provide us all with such a wonderful place of worship.

11. There were no other verbal reports.

12. The Deanery Synod Report had been compiled by John Reed (PCC Deanery Synod representative) and David Druitt (Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod). The Rev. John Saxon had succeeded Rev. Phil Ritchie as Area Dean, and the Synod Report is detailed in on Page 12 of the Annual report.

13. Elections:

(a) No Deanery Synod representative election required this year

(b) PCC representatives:

Three people had been proposed to stand as PCC members for the forthcoming year:

(i) Adrian Beckingsale proposed by Peter Wilson and seconded by Vee Druitt

(ii) Roger Berry proposed by Peter Wilson, seconded by John Reed

(iii) Robert Smith proposed by Peter Wilson, seconded by John Reed

All the above were elected to stand by the meeting, and Peter gave grateful thanks to Liz Reed who was stepping down after four years of valued service to the PCC.

14. Missioner Phillip endorsed all the remarks presented at the meeting regarding the successful progress in 2024. The establishment of the Children & Families worker was particularly important in bringing more people to worship and serve.

15. There was not Any Other Business to be held. Sharon Sarson closed the meeting, and on behalf of everybody at St Mary's, thanked Peter Wilson for his incredible time and commitment to the Church as Chairman of the PCC, and the driving force behind so much we have achieved over recent years. This was followed by the presentation of a gift for him to treasure.

John Reed (PCC Secretary)

AGENDA FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING *The Annual General Meeting consists of two meetings.*

1. The Annual Meeting of Parishioners is open to all person's resident in the ecclesiastical parish of the church and is for the purpose of electing the Churchwardens of the parish. All residents of the parish whose names are entered on the civil Electoral Roll are entitled to vote.
2. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) is open to all person's resident in the ecclesiastical parish and those on its electoral roll. Only those whose names are entered on the Electoral Roll of the parish church may speak or vote. This meeting hears reports on the church's maintenance and work over the past year, receives the examined or audited accounts, and elects an Electoral Roll member to serve as the parish representative on the Deanery Synod, and other members to the Parochial Church Council.

The meetings may be chaired by the Rector or in absentia by the Lay chair of the PCC.

(1) ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AGENDA

1. Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting of Parishioners.
2. Elections of Churchwardens for the ecclesiastical parish.

Note: The Representation Rules state that nominations for this election must have been received by the Rector before the start of the meeting

3. Any other business of general parish concern, or items those attending may wish to be referred to the PCC.

(2) ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING AGENDA

1. Opening prayer.
2. Apologies for absence received. (Not assumed apologies for those noticed to be absent)
3. Appointment of Tellers to count the votes of any elections during the meeting if so required.
4. Minutes of last year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting.
5. Amendments and Adoption of those Minutes as an accurate record.
6. Matters Arising.
7. Electoral Roll report on numbers, additions, deletions.
8. PCC Annual report. Number of meetings, main items of business etc.
9. Financial report including: a) report on the financial affairs of the parish church/PCC.
b) the presentation of the examined or audited accounts.
c) proposal for the formal adoption of the accounts, including vote from all eligible
d) appointment of auditor for the coming year.
10. Churchwardens report to include review of the church fabric, goods and ornaments.
11. Other verbal reports
12. Deanery Synod report on the past year.
13. Elections from those entered on the Electoral Roll of the ecclesiastical parish

a) Deanery Synod representative

b) PCC representatives

14. Missioner's report

15. Any other business of general parish concern, or items those attending may wish to be referred to the PCC. (please notify Chairman before the meeting)

PCC MEETING The AGM is followed by a short meeting of the P.C.C. to elect:

a) Lay-chair.

b) Secretary.

c) Treasurer.

d) Electoral Roll Officer.

e) Standing Committee

e) Any co-opted appointments.

The meeting may also consider any urgent business that cannot wait until the next full PCC meeting.