

**Parish of St Mary's, Shalford
with St Michael's, Peasmarsh**

**Annual Meeting
of the Parochial Church Council**

Sunday 17th May 2026

Charity number: 1128468

www.stmarysshalford.com

f: @stmarysshalford

Contents

| | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Agenda for the Annual Meeting of Parishioners | 3 |
| Agenda for the Annual Parochial Church Meeting | 3 |
| Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners 2025 | 4 |
| Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2025 | 4 – 8 |
| Minutes of the Parochial Church Council Meeting | 9 |
| Churchwarden’s Report | 10 |
| Electoral Roll | 10 |
| Safeguarding | 11 |
| Worship and discipleship | 11 – 13 |
| Deanery Synod Report | 13 - 15 |
| Reports from Groups | |
| Pastoral Care and Fellowship | 15 |
| Choir | 16 |
| Bellringers | 16 |
| Parent and Toddler Group | 1 |
| 3Cs | 16 |

Parish of Shalford with Peasmarsh
St Mary's Shalford and St Michael's Peasmarsh
Annual Meeting

Sunday 17 May 2026
Following Sunday worship at c.11am
In St Mary's Church Shalford

AGENDA

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Opening Prayer & Welcome
2. Election of Churchwardens 2026-7

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of Minutes of APCM held on 25th May 2025
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Churchwardens' report
5. Report of Proceedings of PCC in 2025-26
6. Electoral Roll Report
7. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2026 Account
8. Election of PCC Members

Brief first meeting of the new Parochial Church Council (PCC)

1. Election of Officers 2026-27 – including PCC Treasurer
2. Parish Safeguarding Policy 2026 - approval

**Parish of Shalford with Peasmarsch
St Mary's, Shalford, and St Michael's, Peasmarsch**

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 25th May 2025
in St Mary's Church at 11 a.m.**

Present: Rev S Lloyd (Chair), Gina Cox (PCC Secretary), Chris Hughes (Treasurer) and approximately 36 other parishioners

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

- 1. Opening Prayer and Welcome by Rev Sarah Lloyd.**
- 2. Election of Churchwardens 2025-6**

Ann Hyde re-elected
Proposer: Carolynne Spooner
Seconder: Gina Cox
Harriet Morris re-elected
Proposer: Chris Hughes
Seconder: Sheila Pickering

Both Churchwardens were unanimously elected for the period 2025-26 and warmly welcomed.

Approved Vice-chair _____ 17 May 2026

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
Naomi Fraser

- 2. Approval of Minutes of the APCM held on 26th May 2024**
These minutes were unanimously approved. There were no amendments.

- 3. Vicar's Report**
Rev Sarah spoke about her move to St Michael's, Yeovil and also drew attention to the "Can You Help" letter.
[N.B. On 8 March 2026 Rev Sarah sent Gina her Vicar's Report for use in these Minutes. It is as follows.]

(Rev Sarah had announced in St Mary's the Sunday before the APCM her move to the post of Vicar of Yeovil St Michael's in September)

"I just want to point everybody to the extra full annual report this year, and thank everybody for all their generous work in writing and gathering contributions which make up a wonderful summary of the year and church life and mission and ministry of St Mary's together - as a church very much at the heart of the parish of Shalford.

The church of course is never about the vicar but about the whole community of faith, the church as the body of Christ together, and I said enough last Sunday as to why I feel called now to serve in a deprived parish, but I just want to say again how deeply sad I am to leave you all. But one of the reasons I feel called elsewhere is because I am certain that it's great timing for you as a church here too. It's so clear even from the annual report that you are a flourishing, faithful, loving church reaching out widely to all and serving God together with teams and posts and gifts and generosity of you all forming a strong humbler, bolder, simpler church now and for the future. , I slip away with you all in a great place I pray, ready to welcome your next parish priest for the exciting new chapter for the parish of Shalford to begin.

Just a very quick mention of likely timetable and the basic process for the interregnum ahead (Sarah outlined the rough timetable thought to be likely at the time, which changed since).

One thing I think important for this parish as it is assessed, as all parishes are now in these difficult times in diocese and parish finances and congregations, is to show we're a parish serious about having made a big start on solving the problem of the sizeable gap in parish giving and church running costs and financial sustainability. Parish giving here is still lower than the diocese average per person, and this diocese in wealthy Surrey is below the national average too. Year on year we've made big improvements, and the healthy life of the church is a real strength, but increasing planned giving, and continuing our ongoing planned giving campaign as a constant, is so important for St Mary's – particularly as major works project for spire & vestry now needs to use up a chunk of reserves in order to gain the rest via NHLF.

Needing to use much of those reserves now does however mean that our bank balance reserves will no longer give the false impression to others across the parish that the church is wealthy, and so the realistic picture that there's every vital reason for the wider village to financially give now to keep its parish church alive, will become clearer to all.

In answer to that important question people may ask of 'why give'? (see more 'answers' on Giving Campaign flyer you have)...

The ministry and mission of St Mary's is with and for the whole parish and beyond. You've enabled 2024 and first part of 2025, to be another year of encouragement, faithfulness, and flourishing in St Mary's. Offering to everybody a church of sanctuary, service, hospitality and community. And the summary of 'What St Mary's is doing/being for all' on back of sheet, (slide) give a summary of how all your care, discipleship, and faithfulness enable so much through this village church. Long may you and all continue, in God's grace.

Regular giving to the parish church is giving to the present, and also to the future – as all those in church here in the past have given to enable us to be here today.

Just to touch on the 'how to give' too – see our current Giving Campaign flyers – with financial situ and planned giving detail, and letter to explain why. Big stack in church by door, to give to all your friends/neighbours too!

(Ann T explain more re PGS etc...)

So, thank you once again. And I will give much thanks for you all and so much here, and shed tears mid Sept again when I leave for Yeovil, but there's plenty of time before then anyway through August and most of Sept.

But today, I want to give you particular thanks, on behalf of me and also on behalf of the whole of St Mary's church and the whole parish here in Shalford & Peasmarsh, for all you do and are.

You are such a great blessing, to me and many others, and I hope you feel God's blessing as you worship, serve and find comfort and joy and belonging here in St Mary's

Most importantly... keep praying. Individually, and together – in small groups, but also when you meet, and at MP in church.

Keep listening with God. God will guide and equip and fill you with love to keep growing together and for others, to the glory of God.

Thank you, and a flower of thanks and beauty and blessing for each of you now.... But prayer first ...”

4. Treasurer's Report

Chris Hughes summarised the Trustees Annual Report & Financial Statements of Shalford PCC, which had previously been distributed. He also emphasised the need for increased giving and the equivalent of a small amount extra per day (i.e. less than the price of a cup of coffee) would make a huge difference.

5. Churchwardens' Report

Ann Hyde and Harriet Morris gave The Churchwardens' Fabric Report and reported on the problems, repairs and new additions to the fabric of St Mary's Church and St Michael's Church and Hall during 2024. In particular, they reported on problems with the leaking spire and kitchen block subsidence at St Mary's. They were also pleased to report that St Mary's had a new bicycle stand and that both Churches had new noticeboards. Their full report is as follows:

“Churchwardens' Report - Fabric Year ended 31st December 2024

The usual maintenance checks on the boiler, lightning conductor, fire extinguisher and the electrics were carried out and relevant certificates obtained.

Fabric at St Mary's Church, Shalford:

January

- Quinquennial Report (2023) had identified water penetration into the church spire and Sally Strachey Historic Conservation Ltd (SSHC) re-visited to try to pinpoint the cause of the leaks.
- SSHC repaired open joint in Tower Stair Turret wall to stop water penetration. Also cleared gutters and downpipes and discovered dangerous brickwork/stones on the North Wall so the area was cordoned off.
- Cooper and Withycombe Ltd, structural engineers, visited to discuss next step for determining the cause of cracks and likely subsidence in the kitchen block which had been identified during the 2023 Quinquennial Inspection.
- Quiet area set up in the church with second-hand sofa and a chair and a mindfulness rug.

February

- Interim spire repairs by SSHC.

May

- Handbell replaced
- Further spire repairs by SSHC using cherry pickers, including patching holes in the copper covering to prevent further water penetration. Identified a problem with some of the fixings for the covering panels which had rotted causing the panels to come loose in places.
- Replaced lights in the belfry that had failed during spire repairs.

July

- New Lisbon Bicycle Stands installed for cycle parking, in churchyard behind kitchen block.

October

- Cooper and Withycombe, structural engineers, arranged preliminary investigations into the cause of the kitchen block subsidence. Freeman & Welsh dug three trial holes to investigate.
- SSHC removed dangerously balanced crumbling stone crosses atop nave and chancel roof line and re-mortared cross atop the porch.

November

- The Church Notice Board Company designed and replaced St Mary's outside signs and notice boards. Work funded by Thames Water's contractor MWH Treatment. One new outside sign for St Michael's Church.

Fabric at St Michael's Peasmarsh, Church and Hall

January

- Bradley Environmental Consultants reported St Michael's Hall roof tile was asbestos cement.

March

- KBO Fire & Security Ltd replaced fire extinguisher.

October

- Southern Asbestos Services Ltd and Paul Bonner Roofing Ltd repaired leaking Hall roof which involved removal of asbestos cemented tiles and replacement slates.

Ann Hyde, and Harriet Morris, Churchwardens'

6. Report of Proceedings of PCC in 2024-5

Gina Cox (PCC Secretary) reported that the PCC met six times in the past year.

7. Deanery Report

Sue Odell reported.

As members of the Guildford Deanery, Deanery Synod Rep, Sue Odell, attended deanery synods including at St Mary's Shalford when we were delighted to host deanery synod. Rev Sarah attended deanery chapter meetings throughout the year and deanery synod meetings where possible. We have a vacancy for second deanery synod rep.

8. Electoral Roll Report

Ann Thomas reported that there are currently 69* people on the Electoral Roll compared with 95 last year.

* Ann Thomas reported by email on 27 May that the number on the Electoral Roll increased to 70 later on 25 May.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2025 Accounts

It was proposed that AJ Bennewith FCA, FCPA, FFTA, FIPA, DChA, FRSA be re-appointed independent examiner for 2025.

Proposer: Chris Hughes

Secunder: Ann Thomas

10. Election PCC Members – 2 standing for re-election

There are now no vacancies on the PCC.

Re-election of two PCC members:

Ann Thomas

Proposer: Gina Cox

Seconder: Nigel Tyler

All in favour

Sheila Pickering

Proposer: Harriet Morris

Seconder: Sue Odell

All in favour

Election of new PCC member:

Caroline Boor

Proposer: Douglas Reid

Seconder: Rev Sarah Lloyd

All in favour

Election of Deanery Synod Rep:

Sheila Pickering

Proposer: Harriet Morris

Seconder: Tom Collingwood

All in favour

11. Questions, thoughts, discussion – from anybody present

David Davies brought up the subject of solar panels on the south-facing roof of the church. He asked if they can now be considered.

The meeting closed with the Grace.

Warm thanks were expressed to Rev Sarah for all her leadership, inspiration and initiatives over the past year. The meeting closed at about 12.15 and was followed by the first meeting of the new PCC which voted in various officers for the coming year.

Rev Sarah handed everyone a rose with love and thanks.

Approved

Vice-chair

_____ 17 May 2026

Parish of Shalford: St Mary's, Shalford and St Michael's, Peasmarsh
MINUTES OF THE NEW PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
Sunday 25 May 2025, St Mary's Church
Following the ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Election of Officers – including Parish Safeguarding Officer, PCC Secretary, PCC Treasurer

Safeguarding Officer:

John Sinclair

Proposer: Jan Barklem

Seconder: Ann Thomas

All in favour

PCC Secretary:

Gina Cox

Proposer: Harriet Morris

Seconder: Jan Barklem

All in favour

Treasurer:

Chris

Proposer: Ann Thomas

Seconder: John Simpson

All in favour

Assistant Churchwardens:

Ann Thomas and Caroline Boor

Proposer: Ann Hyde

Seconder: Sue Odell

All in favour

Electoral Roll Officer:

Ann Thomas

Proposer: Chris

Seconder: Ian Farr

All in favour

2. Parish Safeguarding Policy 2025 – approval

Adopt the updated 2025 Safeguarding Policy

Proposer: John Simpson

All in favour of approving.

Meeting closed.

Approved

Vice-chair

_____17 May 2026

Churchwardens' Report

Our vicar Rev Sarah Lloyd took an eight-week sabbatical during June and July 2025. Rev Sarah moved to St Michael and All Angels in September 2025. We miss her greatly and we are very grateful for her six years with us. We are continuing in vacancy and we are actively recruiting a new vicar. We have had splendid support from local clergy especially from Rev Michael and Rev Canon Angela.

During 2025, the Fabric & Finance committee continued working with our architect to prepare a detailed specification of the repairs required to prevent the spire from leaking and to replace and stabilise the crumbling masonry on the North side of the church. This was accompanied by work on planning how to fund the work. Work to be carried out in 2026 includes obtaining relevant permissions, putting the work out to tender and applications for grant funding.

Fabric at St Mary's Church, Shalford:

The usual maintenance checks on the boiler, lightning conductor, fire extinguishers and the electrical wiring were carried out and relevant certificates obtained.

January

- New inscribed baptism bowl made by Andrew Hazelden was received. Parents of children recently baptised donated the cost of the bowl and the names of their children were inscribed on it.

March

- R A Robertson supplied a replacement fridge.
- KBO Fire & Security Ltd replaced three fire extinguishers.

April

- MG Heating and Plumbing unblocked an external drain

December

- D & R Walker filled potholes in the car park

Fabric at St Michael's Peasmarsch, Church and Hall

March

- KBO Fire & Security Ltd replaced a fire extinguisher.

Ann Hyde and Ann Thomas, Churchwardens

Electoral Roll Report

At our APCM in 2025 there were 69 members on the Electoral Roll. There are currently 76 members on the electoral roll.

Ann Thomas, Electoral Roll Officer

Safeguarding

As the Safeguarding Officer for Shalford Parish, it is my pleasure to present my report for 2025.

I am pleased to report that there were no new safeguarding issues year ending 2025.

Since my last report, progress continues to be made with updates to our Parish Dashboard. The dashboard provides an overview of our safeguarding commitments and policies. We also had a favourable report of our procedures, practices and security following a health check carried out by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

I am also pleased to report that all PCC members are fully certified at Basic Awareness and Foundation training. This has been met with great enthusiasm from new members and all concerned. The various roles within the Church have been identified by the Diocesan Safeguarding team who have issued guidance on the training and certification required for these roles. The roles and training required is constantly under review. This is to ensure that the appropriate roles within the church have the correct level of safeguarding training.

Regarding the data breach of sensitive information at APCS, I suspended DBS checks and await clear guidance from the Diocese on how to proceed. At the time of the data breach, we only had one new application affected. This has been resolved.

The safeguarding team have been very active with safeguarding courses throughout the year. I have attended all of these, much to my advantage. The commitment and enthusiasm shown by them is inspiring.

I am committed to my mission to ensure that parishioners and the wider Shalford community are aware that our Church is a safe place, where they will be listened to and helped under what could be very upsetting circumstances for them. To then direct them to professionals within the church and Social Services who can help going forward.

John Simpson
Safeguarding Officer

Worship, Discipleship and Life Events

Worship

Worship and Prayer are at the heart of the life of St Mary's and when our spiritually inspiring Vicar, Revd Sarah Lloyd, left us in September 2025 to take up a post in Yeovil, her departure was felt very deeply by our church family. This event, preceded by Revd Sarah's pre-planned sabbatical in June and July, has brought challenges and temporary changes to the worshipping community at St Mary's.

For the first 5 months of 2025, under Revd Sarah's leadership, we continued using the very successful worship pattern that she had established which offered a range of styles for a variety of ages. This included a 1st Sunday High Altar Sung Eucharist with sung anthems; 2nd Sunday 9 O'clock Holy Communion and 10am contemporary, intergenerational Café Church (with pastries!) with worship band; 3rd Sunday Parish Holy Communion; 4th Sunday 9 O'clock Holy Communion and 10am Creative Service often with Taizé and a reflection on a work of Art. 5th Sundays were led by one of St Mary's 3 Lay Worship Teams. Diocese Trained Occasional Preachers, Emily Nash and Ann Hyde, were also given the opportunity to preach.

Morning Prayer was led by Revd Sarah and at 12 noon on Wednesdays there was a Communion Service often joined by residents of our local Care Homes.

Of special note during this time, was the Service held on March 9th to bless the beautiful new font bowl mentioned in the Fabric Report which features the Holy Spirit inside and the names of baptized babies around the bowl. St Mary's baptism families were invited to this happy occasion. Our Easter Services were poignant and focused our minds on spiritual renewal. We had a Vigil for Peace during Easter week and a Breakfast Dawn Communion Service to celebrate Easter Sunday.

Through June and July worship was condensed into one 10am Communion Service every Sunday and there were only two 9 O'clock Services. We were blessed with visiting local priests to lead and preach for us. A special Service took place on Trinity Sunday when we celebrated the anniversary of Revd Stanley Hemming-Clark's 70 years in the ministry. Stanley himself preached on "The Trinity".

On Revd Sarah's return in August and through most of September, we reverted to our usual worship pattern. Then on Sunday, September 21st, St Mary's pulled out all the stops with full participation in a very special Farewell Service attended by over 150 adults and children who came to give thanks to God for Revd Sarah's wonderful ministry in Shalford and Peasmarsh. We had beautiful prayers, hymns and readings. Music was provided by handbells, the worship band, full choir, organ and pop-up percussion. A Messages Book with over 100 messages was presented to Revd Sarah, together with other gifts.

Following Revd Sarah's departure, we had to revert to just one 10am Communion Service each Sunday because of the difficulty in finding clergy to do more. We are hugely grateful to Canon Angela and Revd Michael, local retired priests with PTO who have led and preached at many of our 10am Services and continue to do so. Canon Angela has also kept the Midweek Holy Communion Service going at 11.30am and she has "head-hunted" a wonderful selection of visiting clergy for us. In fact, visiting priests have added a new dimension to our worship. The variety of preaching styles and interesting sermon topics which have included "Who was Joseph?" and "What does Christ look like?" have inspired many discussions during coffee after the Service. One of the Curates, Revd Alistair Milne (Father Ali), who came to us to lead and preach deserves a special mention because he carried us through Harvest Festival, All Souls, Remembrance Day, the Nativity play and Christmas Day.

Archdeacon Catharine came to lead and preach at the beginning of December and her Service was followed by a Congregational Meeting where the Vacancy Timeline was discussed. Our Christmas Services were beautiful and very well supported and the Candlelit Carol Service with mulled wine was truly memorable with readings that were updated with an extra sentence at the end to give relevance to today's world (thank you, Angela). The Nativity Play organized by Anneli Lowe was a great success and attracted a large number of families. Bishop Paul, who lives in our Parish, led and preached at the Midnight Eucharist.

After Revd Sarah had left, Canon Angela led Services in the local Care Homes, Guildford House and Mill Court and still continues to do so. At St Michael's in Peasmarsh, a church community met fortnightly on Saturdays and now continues to meet in the Church Hall.

Our attendance numbers have remained fairly constant but with really encouraging spikes from time to time and the major Festivals have attracted up to 150 people.

We look forward to re-establishing our moth-balled Services when we have a new incumbent.

My thanks to all of you on the rota who offer to participate in our worship whether as readers, intercessors, welcomers, coffee makers or helpers to set up the church. Thanks too to our Sacristan Sheila Pickering and to Communion Assistants Ann Thomas and Carolynne Spooner, newly commissioned in 2025. Many thanks also to Liz Van Eykenhof for the wonderful music.

Discipleship

Revd Sarah's initiatives in growing Discipleship and Fellowship through people forming small groups and getting together in people's homes to discuss books or Biblical texts or issues of concern have flourished during 2025 and are ongoing. Over tea and cakes or a glass of wine, members learn more about Christianity and also about themselves in the group context. In 2025 there were 2 self-led groups which have expanded and still meet regularly. Revd Sarah ran a group for new church members. From time to time, Canon Angela and Revd Michael organized another group.

The Lent Course in 2025, that was led by Revd Sarah, was based on Ken Loach's film "I Daniel Blake" and this thought-provoking film led us to discuss issues of social injustice and oppression and compassion and Faith. It attracted around 20 people.

Life Events in St Mary's in 2025

There were 7 baptisms, 1 wedding and 11 funerals during the year and after Revd Sarah left, Canon Angela and Revd Michael ministered to these events.

Ann Hyde

Deanery Synod

We serve as your elected representatives on the Guildford Deanery Synod, ensuring that the voice of St Mary's Shalford is heard within the wider church and that we report back on matters affecting parish life and mission.

Meetings and Engagement

The Deanery Synod has met regularly over the past year, with meetings including worship, teaching, and updates from across the Diocese of Guildford. These gatherings remain a valuable opportunity to share experiences and to learn from neighbouring parishes.

This Year of Vacancy

A significant context for us at St Mary's has been the current vacancy. This has been reflected in Synod discussions more broadly, as a number of parishes across the deanery are also experiencing transition.

The Synod has:

- Recognised the challenges that vacancies bring, including continuity of leadership and pastoral care
- Encouraged parishes to see vacancy as a time of reflection and opportunity, as well as challenge
- Highlighted the importance of support from Area Deans, Lay Chairs, and neighbouring clergy

We are grateful for the support received during this period, and for the commitment of clergy, lay leaders, and volunteers who have sustained the life and worship of St Mary's.

Parish Life and Ministry

There has been ongoing discussion about:

- Supporting clergy and lay leaders, particularly during vacancies
- The increasing importance of lay ministry and shared leadership
- Opportunities for collaboration between parishes

These themes are especially relevant to our current situation and have provided helpful perspective and encouragement.

Finance and Parish Share

The Synod has reviewed the financial position of the deanery and diocese, including parish share. The emphasis continues to be on:

- Sustainable giving
- Supporting ministry across the wider church
- Mutual responsibility between parishes

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a standing priority, with continued emphasis on training and best practice to ensure that all our churches are safe and welcoming places.

Mission and Outreach

Synod has shared a range of encouraging examples of mission, including work with schools, families, and the wider community, as well as new forms of church. These have provided useful ideas as we continue to engage with our own community during this period of transition.

Working Together as a Deanery

There has been a growing emphasis on collaboration between parishes—particularly important during vacancies. Sharing resources, clergy support, and ideas has been strongly encouraged.

Representation and Communication

We have sought to represent the experiences and concerns of St Mary's Shalford during this time of vacancy and are always happy to bring forward any matters from the congregation.

Conclusion

This has been a year of both challenge and opportunity. Deanery Synod has provided support, perspective, and encouragement as we navigate this period of vacancy. We trust that this time is helping to prepare the way for the next phase of ministry at St Mary's Shalford.

Susan Odell

Deanery Synod Representatives

Pastoral Care and Fellowship

During 2025 we continued to build a good and firm relationship with both care homes in the parish. Sue Odell and Carolynne Spooner - Locally Authorised and Diocese Trained Pastoral Visitors, continued to visit 'Mill Court' in Shalford and 'Guildford House' in Peasmarsch. Both Sue (Mill Court) and Carolynne (Guildford House) coordinate a Lay Led Service once a month in the care homes with the support of the St Mary's Pastoral Care Team, which the Residents very much appreciate and enjoy. Also, occasional Communion Services are held by Canon Angela Townsend and Reverend Michael Dunk which both care homes are grateful for during this time of vacancy. The St Mary's Pastoral Care team comprised Naomi Fraser, Mary Bowman, Fiona Tyler, Sheila Pickering, Jean Deeks, Patricia Todd and Gus Martin. We were and are very grateful for their support.

Residents visit St Mary's from both care homes for Wednesday Coffee and Holy Communion Service, when they can and are always most welcome.

Sue (Odell) and Carolynne (Spooners) visit others within the parish or in St Mary's Church for pastoral care and can always be contacted via Kate Waldoock our Parish Administrator on the main office number.

Pastoral care remains at the heart of St Mary's life and ministry, with home visits by one of the pastoral care team to those struggling, isolated, sick, or bereaved or in hospital. The Pastoral Care Team are committed to those in need.

Choir

2025 has been a positive year for the choir with numbers increasing slightly.

We are particularly pleased to have a bass voice join us to complete our four-part harmony. Numbers remain slim, so we don't always have all voice parts represented, but the group remains committed and content.

We are also particularly pleased to welcome back some retired members to join us when they can.

We have a good repertoire of music that we use to support the services at St Mary's and we receive much appreciative, positive feedback from our audience.

We have just completed our 2025 calendar with a belated Christmas pot-luck supper in the church.

Bell-ringing

The most significant event of the year took place on 27 August, when a peal of Sarah Delight Major was rung on our bells - which took 2 hours 55 minutes with each ringer pulling their rope 5,088 times - as a farewell compliment to our vicar, Rev Sarah Lloyd. So complicated is the method that only two of the ringers were from our band – Sally Schupke and Julian Morgan - the others being from local churches and the Cathedral, but it was too good an opportunity to ring a method with Sarah in its title although not actually named after our Sarah.

To return from that heady height to the normality of our own band, we have been pleased to welcome four new ringers, as a result of the 'Learn the Ropes' banner being hung outside St Mary's, who have quickly settled in. Tower Captain Sally Schupke, somehow or other, manages to improve everyone's level of competence however how long or short their experience.

A ringer's confidence is improved by the experience of ringing bells at other churches where the feel of the ropes and the weight of the bells are different to what you are used to in your home tower.

Early in the year we had a day tour to the Windsor area, ringing in the local churches at Dorney (the bells having been cast in 1582), Clewer, Old Windsor and Wrybury. It was interesting seeing parts of Eton College as we passed by.

Towards the end of the year our outing was to central London. As it turned out that was the day when the first ever lady to become the Lord Mayor of London was installed, so the City was very busy with the celebrations, oblivious to the bells being rung by the Shalford band. First off was St George the Martyr on Borough High Street, then over Southwark Bridge to St James Garlickhythe in the City followed by lunch. Next was St Olave's Hart Street, near the Tower of London, and finally travelling by a no 35 bus to St Peter's Walworth. It turned out to be a very full and enjoyable day, in ringing rooms full of character.

And finally, for almost the whole of the year we remain out of the gaze of the congregation at St Mary's. So, we do rather enjoy on Easter Day and Christmas Day being invited to begin the service by ringing our handbells on the chancel steps, finishing with an almighty clashing of all the bells which raises a cheer from the congregation, and we hope sets the right tone for these services of celebration.

Ian Farr

Parent and toddler group

The Parent and Toddler group meet in the Church on Monday mornings between 9.30 and 11.00am during term time.

Generally, we have between 10 and 18 adults attending - parents, grandparents and carers and similar numbers of babies and toddlers. Mats and toys are set up over the church and refreshments, biscuits and bowls of fruit provided. Most days we have a wonderful craft table which is beautifully run by Carolynne, who brings all the materials required.

We have singing time for the last 10 minutes and the group is supported by volunteers, Sue, Val, Jan and Mum Pari, who help set it up and tidy away. Other volunteers help to clean the Children's corner and toys on several occasions during the year.

Jan Barklem

3Cs

The 3Cs coffee morning – Coffee, Cake and Conversation – continued to meet in St Mary's on each Wednesday morning in term time from 10.00 – 11.30 a.m. throughout 2025. We welcomed many friends, old and new, with regular visits from some of the residents of Guildford House care home and in the later months from the new Mill Court care home. Occasionally, a passing rambling group joined us. All come to enjoy home-made cakes and biscuits, with coffee or tea, in a convivial and relaxed atmosphere. A short Holy Communion service was held at midday when Rev Sarah was still with us, and at 11.30 a.m. since she left in September, kindly taken by Canon Angela Townshend. This is optional for anyone who wishes to stay.

Sheila Pickering retired from the organising team at the end of 2025, after many years of commitment and we are all grateful to her for her hard work. She continues to join us each week as a guest.

Mary and Naomi will be joined in 2026 by Carolynne and Gina and the whole team is grateful for all the help and contributions from many people who attend regularly. All ages are welcome, from the village or further afield.

Carolynne Spooner