

2025 Report for the Parochial Church Council

All Saints' Parish Church, Hartford

Aims and Objectives

It is the shared responsibility of the incumbent, Rev Geoff Boucher, and the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of All Saints Parish Church Hartford to consult on all matters of general concern and importance to the Parish. Together, they co-operate to promote and provide leadership of the whole mission of the Church in Hartford through:

- **Prayer** – both personal and corporate.
- **Pastoral care** - looking after individuals.
- **Evangelism** - sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and inviting people to share in God's saving love for all.
- **Social concern** - helping those in need, especially those who are disadvantaged and persecuted.
- **Ecumenism** - encouraging fruitful relationships with other Christian denominations.

Our mission is to reach open hearts with the love of Christ, and to help all the people in the Community of Hartford to find Christ, to be found by Him, and to respond to His love through the life and worship of their Parish Church.

Worship and Prayer

As of December 2025 the total number on the Electoral Roll was 72 of which 48 were residents and 24 non-residents of the parish.

The average Sunday 11am service attendance was 46 adults and 1 child. The average bimonthly 8.30am service was 3, the average monthly 6pm service was 10 and the average monthly healing service was 10.

Various special services were held during the year, attendances were Ash Wednesday – 20, Maundy Thursday – 32, Good Friday – 31, Easter Day – 77 + 5 children; Sea Sunday 75+ 2 children; All Souls – 15; Blue Christmas 11, Christmas Carol service - 94 + 6 children, Christmas Eve Christingle 37 + 3 children, Midnight service - 30, Christmas Day - 49.

During the year there were 4 baptisms, 4 weddings, 6 funerals in church, 6 funerals at the crematorium and 4 interments of ashes.

Rector's Report

Another year is complete and we pause to reflect upon its blessings, its challenges, its changes and its continuities and to rejoice in the life that we have shared in the love of Christ.

Our life together begins in worship, in the expression of our love for God and it flows out to love of one another and love of our neighbour in community.

We are blessed in having a variety of worship and a variety of leaders, preachers, readers and intercessors. Thank you to Steph Pedlar, Elaine Levitt, Mary Adlam, Michael Diamond, Clifford Owen, Catherine Wright. Thank you to Tony Humes and to the choir. Thank you to every member of our congregation. We all make up the offering of worship to Our Lord.

2025 began with three levels of scaffolding erected in the building so that the entire interior could be limewashed. We continued to worship in church whilst the scaffolding was in the chancel and then moved to the church room when the nave was scaffolded. The congregation rose to the challenge and our worship was enhanced rather than diminished. It was a joy to return to the freshly decorated church for the celebration of Easter. The renovation of the interior of the building was completed with a deep cleaning and repointing of the flagstone and tile floor.

Reverend Steph Pedlar continued to grow through her curacy, leading a group of 30 from both Hartford and Houghton and Wyton through Pete Greig's 'The Prayer Course' during Lent. Much was learned and shared, and faith deepened. Prayer stations were set up around the church during Holy Week and appreciated by those who visited, both regular members and visitors. There was encouragement in the faithful observation of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Our Easter celebrations continued with a wonderful concert by 'Fourtissimo' on 26th April. They performed a moving and beautiful collection of songs and highlights from Musicals to a packed church and an enraptured audience.

Saturday 28th June was a great joy. Many of us travelled to Ely Cathedral to be with Steph as she was ordained priest. It was a beautiful service, an inspiration to be worshipping in a full cathedral and to know the presence of the Holy Spirit for Steph and for us. And it was joy and strength to be at Steph's first celebration of the Eucharist at Hartford in July.

Steph and I were delighted to be invited into Hartford infant and Junior Schools to lead assemblies to celebrate Harvest, the beginning of Advent and Christmas. We were also pleased to receive an invitation from Hunters Down Care Home to resume monthly visits to conduct a service of Communion with the residents and staff. The first visit in November was a joy with 11 members of our congregation present.

As always there was plenty of social activity spread through the year. Sunday tea and coffee; Crafty Saints and Chatty Saints; Lent lunches and Summer Cream Teas; Spring and Winter concerts and The Christmas Fayre. Thank you as ever to those who planned, organised and did, and to all who participated and enjoyed.

We continue to be very grateful for Pat and Haleema Hawkins who, amongst other things, record and stream our services, prepare the service sheets and maintain the website. Reverend Clifford Owen took the place of Paul Fearon as editor of the quarterly Newsletter working alongside Amanda Smith. We are grateful to both of them.

Thank you to Helen Dowzall who does so much for us, quietly and often unnoticed – singing in the choir, pastoral visiting, counting the collection, serving on the PCC and Deanery Synod and simply being aware of us all. Thank you Helen.

Pauline and David continued to clean and maintain the church each Friday morning and welcomed visitors; the flower arrangers produced beautiful arrangements every Sunday and even more beautiful displays on special occasions; the brass received regular polishing and was always gleaming. The roses planted in 2024 were lovingly nurtured, especially by Genene Triggs and had an excellent first year producing beautiful blooms. Clifford organised a churchyard working party to very good effect and Huntingdon Town Council maintained the grounds beautifully through the year.

The PCC met six times during the year. Thank you to all members of the PCC, for your contributions and for the variety of activities in which you engage. We are especially grateful to Neil Pedlar and his depth of commitment in taking on the considerable responsibility of PCC Treasurer. We are very grateful also to Bev McCallum who took on the role of PCC Secretary and has succeeded in making sense of our discussions and producing excellent minutes which serve to give us purpose and vision.

Sue Craven continued to serve as Churchwarden and guided us through another year of fellowship, faith and community. This year without a second Churchwarden. Thank you, Sue for your faithfulness and love.

Reverend Geoff Boucher

Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod

Deanery Synod met three times

Brampton Church in February – A Safeguarding presentation was given by a team from Ely. Noted Parish share for 2024 paid in full, using reserves for shortfall. 2025 would be a challenge to achieve. The four working groups continue to meet.

Godmanchester in June - Rev. Canon Fiona Brampton spoke about Little Gidding, celebrating 400 yrs of it as a place of worship and retreats. The pattern for Synod meetings discussed. Agreed they would be the second Wednesday of any given month to avoid clashes with PCCs. The questionnaire sent out following February's meeting re Safeguarding has had a slow response.

Hemingford Abbots in October - Rev. Canon Howson updated on the Governance and Administration of South and West Leightonstone. There was a speaker on 221 Divorce Support, the self-help group supporting people after the break-up of a marriage or long-term partnership. There is a shortfall of £28,000 at least for parish share, which we cannot cover in our reserves, so there will be no rebate.

Diocesan Synod met three times - March, June, and October

In June the concern raised that the deficit indicates a concern for the future. The increase in ministry share asked of benefices for the next year is towards balancing the increase in clergy stipend. Safeguarding is always on agenda. A new Safeguarding officer was appointed. The Three Priorities to Mission are Growing Younger, Multi Parish Benefices and New Communities. – Elaine Levitt

Churches Together in Huntingdon and Godmanchester

Churches Together in Huntingdon and Godmanchester (CTHG) as I knew it thirteen years ago, when I first came to live here, has all but gone from the landscape. Technically it still exists but is in limbo. Thanks to Father Philip Shryane who has remained as a watchkeeper secretary. Fr. Philip is about to retire and I doubt whether anyone will try to resurrect CTHG as we knew it. So the word 'evaporated' is probably an accurate description.

Gone are the days when 30 folk attended AGMs and the election hustings meetings were promoted. Gone are the Good Friday processions down the High Street; and Christmas meals for the lonely. Gone are the discussions about a homeless shelter etc.

But it hasn't happened overnight. I noticed the signs of declining enthusiasm a long while ago. When I went to Barclays Bank three years ago with Charlie Newcombe to close down the CTHG Account, I felt that action marked a real end to combined activities.

But what I have picked up in my recent attempts to keep things moving is that Godmanchester do seem to be doing their own activities around the two poles of the Baptist Church and St. Mary's Parish church and that's probably right for them. In Huntingdon centre there are signs of a fresh regrouping of the more conservative evangelical churches and I have heard of plans for an outreach later in the year. It still leaves the Ouse Valley Radio 'Thought for the Day' talks and the bi-monthly Men's Breakfast, as nominally still under a Churches Together umbrella.

So basically I think we are looking at some kind of reset or simply a Sabbath rest from traditional ecumenical town activities to take stock.

But perhaps one encouraging sign is what we have 'right under our noses' at Hartford church already. I have often remarked that Hartford church is one where none of the traditional labels seem to stick. We are a congregation of many traditions, many stories, where the ingredients put together make an integrated witness to the Body of Christ. Is this what I have sometimes called 'creeping ecumenism'? Others have used different terms to describe how Christian Unity may come upon us unsuspectingly from several directions.

One idea is that perhaps it may be appropriate for Hartford church to identify two other more local congregations with whom we could build some meaningful links. I have been reminded that some

years ago ASH had several shared activities, including bible studies, with Trinity Church Oxmoor. Maybe we could revisit this? Then there is St. Barnabas, and the old 'Medway Fellowship'.

On a personal note I continue to take two services per quarter on the Methodist Circuit. I am keen to explore how we can take forward locally the Church of England - Methodist Covenant of 2003.

There is a future! - Clifford Owen

Achievements and Activities

During the year social and fund raising events have taken place and been enjoyed by members of the congregation and the wider community.

These have included 2 Lent lunches, The Fourtissimo Concert, 2 cream tea afternoons, Harvest lunch, Christmas Fayre, Enchanting Concert.

The numbers attending and the atmosphere at these events have been very encouraging. This has been positively enhanced by the circulation of Hartford Connects which sends out news about All Saints Church Events and the Quarterly e-Newsletter by email. There are currently 169 people who have signed up for Hartford Connects.

Details of our fundraising and charitable giving are listed in the Treasurers Report in the Annual Accounts.

Newsletter – Hartford Connects

I took over from Paul Fearon as editor of Hartford Connects last year when Paul migrated to Cornwall. I have had many years of writing for various church magazines and editing various things; so it seemed a natural thing to do. Nevertheless, despite my own experience I knew that I was stepping into a big pair of 'Paul sized shoes'. He had at heart the outreach of ASH to the surrounding community.

So the first thing to say is that after four quarterly newsletters and several event announcements I have, and still am, enjoying the job!

I said that I would run off a year of following Paul's guidelines and then take a look at what might need to be 'tweaked.' I am still slightly confused about where the grey line is about what needs to go into the weekly newsheet and what can go out via Hartford Connects.

Subscribers: we have 169 folk on the Hartford Connects email address list. During the last ten months we have had two people unsubscribe and three join it. One important question we need to discuss is: where are we pitching? I have always aimed to go 'just outside the church walls, but not too far'. We are not trying to be a community magazine like some churches try to be. But it would be nice to think that perhaps the Barley Mow and the King of the Belgians would look forward to a copy to put on the bar! (Do we need some hard copies?) So there is a conversation to be had and may I encourage PCC members to think about it.

Finally I would like to thank Pat Hawkins, Amanda Smith, Helen Dowzall and Avis for their essential production contributions to Hartford Connects. I have got a good team! - Clifford Owen

Crafty Saints and Chatty Saints

Crafty Saints

Meets weekly, including bank holidays on Mondays 10a.m.-12 noon. Apart from our own crafts we have made Easter bunnies (or chicks), items for the Christmas Fayre, new linen cloths for the Chancel window ledge and we also supported St Mary the Virgin, Houghton by knitting angels for their Nativity sets Display. We talk a lot, as well as make things, so feel free to drop in for a chat and a coffee to see what we are doing.

Chatty Saints

Meets on the first and third Monday from 2pm to 4pm. Numbers are slowly increasing and we enjoy a cup of tea whilst playing Rumikub. We are looking forward to learning new games such as Canasta. We are not afraid of Scrabble or other games! Do come and join us for a nice afternoon. – Mary Adlam and Elaine Levitt

Financial Review

Please see the Annual Accounts.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At All Saints the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent, associated clergy, elected and co-opted members drawn from members of the congregation who are on the Electoral Roll.

The PCC meets six times a year to discuss and make decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including how church funds are spent. A smaller Standing Committee meets prior to the PCC meeting to prepare the agenda and collate information for PCC consideration but it has no powers to make decisions, unless specifically instructed by the PCC at a prior meeting or in an emergency.

To facilitate the worship and outreach activities that take place at All Saints it is important that we maintain the fabric of our church and church room. We are very grateful to the small army of unsung heroes, who regularly carry out cleaning and maintenance tasks in and around our church and those who look after the church contents and consumable supplies.

Churchwardens' Fabric Report for 2025

January – valuation of silver in Fitzwilliam Museum; lime washing / repairs to fabric of building

February –

March – pew cushions and chairs cleaned

April – Fire Alarms checked and 4 batteries replaced; church floor cleaned; RIBA stage 5 completed on renovation work

May –

June – inspection of problem with South Door curtains

July – inspection of state of grouting in church floor; South Door curtain rail replaced; 5 yearly Electrical Inspection carried out; boiler serviced

August – Churchyard Monuments checked for safety

September –

October – new lock put on door between vestry and chancel; Fire Alarms, Emergency Lights and Fire Extinguishers serviced

November – pointing of church floor

December – Insurance Review Inspection

The Log Book and the Church Property Register are up to date and held electronically on a memory stick in the safe. – Sue Craven

Church Flowers

First of all, can I say thank you very much to all our faithful flower arrangers for their help and support this year. As many of you know it hasn't been an easy year for me and I very much appreciate all the work and additional flowers and foliage they have given throughout the year.

We haven't had any major festivals from the usual three big decorating events of Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We get lots of positive feedback from the regular congregation and visitors so feel we do a good job and this all makes it worthwhile.

The silver and white Christmas theme in particular was thought to be beautiful although white flowers are quite hard to find a few days before Christmas.

As ever we welcome any new people so please contact me if you would like to be included on the rota, or want to know how much of a commitment it would be. I think everyone gets pleasure from the role and there is no pressure to be a professional standard.

Many thanks again and I'm sure next year will be as successful. Pam Clark

Choir and Organ Report

We have a choir consisting of 8 ladies; it was a pleasure to welcome Jane as a new member who joined us on Advent Sunday. It is always good to have Clifford add his voice to the choir when he is available.

As always choir practice takes place at 10.00am each Sunday before the 11.00am service so that the choir are there to lead the singing during the service. With all the work going on at the beginning of the year we were unable to worship in church and moved to the church room for our services. I used my portable keyboard at this time so that we were still able to sing hymns during the service. Since Steph has introduced a more relaxed style of worship on most second Sundays I continue to use the keyboard for those services.

Clifford arranged for two Carol singing events around the village in December, we had a good number

of singers including some from other churches and there was great sense of enjoyment. The second evening ended with very welcome mince pies and mulled wine kindly hosted by Mary Adlam. Since November we have rekindled our relationship with Hunters Down Care Home and are providing a short monthly communion service. I am usually able to play for this and some of the choir and others from church lead the singing.

David Brown continues to play the organ at Evening Prayer as well as providing background music for the various social events.

I am so grateful that we still have a choir to lead the singing; it really does make my job as organist much easier.

Thanks must also go to Helen Dowzall who is always willing to step in and play the organ in my absence. - Tony Humes

Health and Safety

Circumstances on several fronts did not permit me to carry out a formal H&S inspection of the Church during 2025, but I did visit on several occasions, casting my best H&S eye over the fabric and general proceedings. As a result, I have the following comments:

I was pleased to note the quinquennial electrical inspection carried out during July 2025, with a resulting clean bill of health. PAT testing of all electrical items was carried out in November 2024.

Cables around the organ loft and lectern continue to be well-managed, and I was pleased to note the additional attention paid to cables around the Christmas tree.

I note the fire alarms and extinguishers were checked and passed by Cromwell Fire, and the heating system checked and serviced by Smartheat.

It is good to see that appropriate risk assessments continue to be produced for large and special events.

I know that you have inspected the Churchyard Monuments: I will also look at these shortly during my 2026 inspection.

I have only one comment – and it is a perennial one – and it concerns the steps leading to the altar. I know that elderly and infirm worshipers are assisted when approaching the altar, but I continue to believe that clearer marking to the edge of the steps would assist in their negotiation.

It is clear that a great deal of work has been put in by the Church Wardens in managing risk throughout the year. - Vaughan Clark

Safeguarding

1. All Saints Church PCC has strived throughout the year to create and maintain an environment that is safe for all, including children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication and learning processes

2. Recently the following procedures have been produced to control Safeguarding matters. These are:-

a. Control Of Safeguarding Documents especially during Clergy or PSO vacancy

- b. Support of Victims and Survivors of safeguarding issues
- c. Safeguarding for Church Room Users

3. All members of the PCC have received Safeguarding training as required by the Diocese Safeguarding department.

4. There have been no reported Safeguarding issues during the past 12 months.

5. Throughout 2026 new and existing members of the PCC will receive Safeguarding training as required by the Safeguarding Action plan.

6. The Action Plan for 2026 has been reviewed by the PCC.

DBS REPORT

1. The Church Leaders [PCC] continue to use **Disclosure and Barring Service** (DBS) to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children and adults.

2. During last summer a serious data breach was experienced by the then DBS checking company APCS. This affected only two of our Church members and they have since been supported by the data processing company Experion. After this incident, uCheck was contracted by Ely Diocese to do the DBS checking. After a few issues Church's DBS Administrator has successfully completed 2 DBS checks.

3. Currently all the members of the PCC and other volunteers have been checked and received their certificates.

4. Anyone joining the PCC or volunteering in the Church will be reviewed.

Mr Colin Jones is the Parish Safeguarding Officer [PSO] and DBS Administrator. He can be contacted on safeguarding@allsaintshartford.org.uk.

Administrative information

All Saints Parish Church is situated at The Hollow, Hartford, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 1YF. It is part of the Diocese of Ely within the Church of England.

The Rector, the Reverend Geoffrey Boucher, who is responsible for the benefice of All Saints Hartford and St Mary the Virgin Houghton with Wyton, resides at The Rectory, 3 Rectory Lane, Wyton PE28 2AQ.

PCC members who have served at any time during 2025 are listed below.

Ex-Officio Members:-

The Rector - Reverend Geoffrey Boucher

Curate –Reverend Steph Pedlar

Associate Ministers – Reverend Clifford Owen, Reverend Catherine Wright

Licensed Lay Minister – Canon Elaine Levitt

Churchwardens - Paul Fearon (until January 2025), Sue Craven

Deanery Synod Representatives – Canon Elaine Levitt, Helen Dowzall

Elected Members:-

Mary Adlam (from 28/04/2025)

Pam Fearon (until 20/01/2025)

Lesley Grant

Mary Hill (from 28/04/2025)

Tony Humes

Colin Jones

Peter King (until 28/04/2025)

Bev McCallum

Neil Pedlar (from 28/04/2025)

Genevieve Triggs (until 23/06/2025)

Appointed Positions:-

Treasurer – Paul Fearon (until 28/04/2025), Neil Pedlar (from 28/04/2025)

PCC Secretary – Pam Fearon (until 20/01/2025), Bev McCallum (from 20/01/2025)

Fabric Officer – Victor Phillips

Organist – Tony Humes

Authorised Worship Leader – Mary Adlam

Health and Safety Officer – Vaughan Clark

Gift Aid Coordinator – Helen Dowzall

Electoral Roll Officer – Helen Dowzall

Churches Together Representatives – Reverend Clifford Owen

Safeguarding Officer – Colin Jones

DBS Administrator – Colin Jones

Data Protection Officer – Patrick Hawkins

Website Administrator – Haleema Hawkins

Flower Arranging Coordinator – Pam Clark

Independent Examiner - David Ebdale

Newsletter Editor – Amanda Smith