



Harwell and Chilton

PCC Newsletter

JANUARY 2026

What is the purpose of this Newsletter?

The Benefice Governance Review was completed towards the end of 2025. One of its recommendations was that PCC needed to improve communications between the two Parochial Church Councils and the congregation. It suggested that this could be achieved through a quarterly newsletter highlighting matters discussed at PCC meetings and decisions that were subsequently agreed. It would also include information on forthcoming Benefice events such as the Harwell Feast.

The Newsletter is divided into two sections, one concerning general Benefice topics, the other, matters specific to each Parish. It will be available on the Benefice website, and there will be some hard copies at the back of the Churches for those who prefer to obtain information in this format.

This is a trial format but if the Newsletter is thought to be of value, it is planned to produce a second edition after the Annual Meetings in May and another two editions in late summer and before Christmas.

Any comments via the Church Office would be welcome

Our Mission Partners

The Mission Sub-Committee members are Helen Brook, Peter Barclay-Watt and Yvonne Sanderson. The budget for the PCCs Mission Funds is decided in December each year based on 10% of the giving received by the Benefice during the year. In 2025, their total Budget amounted to £7071, and they submitted the names of the organisations and individuals which they suggested should benefit. This list was agreed by St Matthew's PCC at their December Budget Meeting.

The Organisations chosen are:

Mission Aviation Fellowship

CPAS

Scripture Union

The Leprosy Mission

Arocha

The Individuals are: Chris and Suzy Wilson and Endri and Dyshi Tabacu

The Committee are looking for more people interested in Mission and willing to join their small group. This is an important part of the Benefice's Vision of "**Growing God's Church, wider, deeper and closer'**

Benefice Information Technology Sub-Group

The Joint PCCs have set up a new sub-committee chaired by Stuart Gibson to review the current hardware and software used by the Benefice and to make their recommendations on improvements. The remit of this sub- group is:

- a) Identify and assess current IT hardware and software.
- b) Review and recommend new software bearing in mind legal requirements.
- c) Keep the hardware and software updated as needs and legislation change.
- d) The Committee's remit does not include the organisation or content of the Churches website.

The Committee had its first meeting in November and once some initial work has been done, further meetings are planned for early 2026.

St Matthew's Finance

The Treasurer, Nick Clarke, reported to the January PCC Meeting that the outturn for 2025 was much better than budgeted. After some accounting adjustments, we broke even against a budgeted deficit of over £29k, largely due to the increase in giving resulting from the fundraising campaign and savings on the church buildings and church hall budgets.

At the December PCC Meeting, Nick presented his Draft Budget for 2026. The anticipated expenditure for the year is £124,636.00 and the anticipated income is £117,567 which means an anticipated shortfall of some £7,000. These figures include the Parish share which is set by the Diocese and is just under £55,000 for 2026. The 2026 Budget was approved by the PCC.

The PCC receives a financial update from the Treasurer at each meeting, and bases their financial decisions on this.

This year St Matthew's is due a Quinquennial Inspection by the Church Architect, Phillip Waddy. This involves our church building being fully inspected, and the work takes about one day. The inspection identifies any areas needing attention and assists in planning for anticipated future building expenses.

Another Fundraising day is planned for the Spring

Work Currently being undertaken by the Buildings Sub-Committee

The Building Committee's members are Tony Hughes (Chairman), David Pyke, Phil Roberts, Adrian Rance-McGregor, Eliza Wheaton, and Adrian Bollon. They are responsible to the PCC for the upkeep of the structure and fabric of the Church. Adrian is also the PCC representative on the Church Hall Committee.

The Committee submitted a request, and received the Archdeacon's Written Notice of approval on 23rd September, for a defibrillator. A donor has provided the necessary funds and the defibrillator has now been placed outside the Church close to the wooden bench. There are three other defibrillators in the Village.

Re-rendering of the north transept took place during the period 11th to 25th November and is now completed.

Last year the Buildings Committee reviewed options for a permanent location of the old clock mechanism. The best option would be the northeast corner of the north transept, where two short pews are at present. The matter is still under discussion.

Church Hall

The Church Hall Management Committee*, chaired by Debbie Greenfield, reported that it is lovely to see our Church Hall well used by the Nursery, and their rent is helping our financial position.

As their numbers grow, the Nursery need a bit more outside space, and the Church Hall Committee have taken this opportunity to review the Hall boundaries. PCC have agreed to their proposal to remove the tree stumps & ivy along Wellshead, and replace them with a 4ft picket fence, and to remove the hedge along The Park (which is overgrown with ivy and bramble) revealing the existing fence. Low maintenance shrubs/trees will be planted on the road side of both fences to soften the boundaries and increase greenery. This work would also allow better access to the back and side of the Hall for nursery use. It is anticipated this work will be started early in 2026.

*Dafydd Charles, Adrian Bollon, David Pryor and Deborah Evans also serve on this Committee

Stackable Tables

As the Nursery uses the Hall every weekday and it is now also sometimes rented for birthday parties etc at weekends, it has become less easy for the Church to have access to the go-pack tables stored and used there. It has also always been difficult to move them from the Hall to the Church and back due to their size and weight.

The PCC have therefore purchased 10 large stackable tables with a trolley which are currently stored behind the organ. These will be useful for church events such as Bring and Share lunches, and for when we just need an extra surface

Forthcoming Events

Sunday Morning Sermon Series

A new series of sermons started on 4th January in both Churches. The first three Sundays are entitled "Keeping in touch with God" and these are followed by a series of sermons on "Our Church" which will continue up till Lent. A subsequent Lent series of sermons have also been planned.

Harwell Feast 2026

This will be taking place on the 25th May on the Recreation Ground and the Benefice has accepted the Committee's kind offer of the use of the Marquee for a Service the previous day (Sunday 24th). Planning for this is underway, and Rebecca Lewis and Alex Reich are leading this. They would welcome help both in advance of the Service and on the day.