



Harwell and Chilton PCC Newsletter SEPTEMBER 2026

Church Services at St. Matthews' and All Saints'

The six months' trial period of using service booklets supported by hymns on the overhead screens will begin in September. Deborah, our church administrator estimates that not having to spend time creating weekly service sheets will give her about 1 ½ days extra time each week to spend on other Church Office tasks.

A new programme for displaying services on our screens will also be trialled in September.

Research has been done into the best fonts and font colours for display on our screens and these have been narrowed down to three variations. In September the service will be displayed using each of the three and the congregation will be asked as to which font and colour is easiest to read.

Safeguarding

The protection of children, young people, and adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of St. Matthew's Harwell and All Saints' Chilton.

The Churchwardens, along with Parish Safeguarding Officers, have recently undertaken a review of our Safeguarding system, processes and status. We have written to all individuals performing specific roles within our churches, asking them to ensure that their safeguarding training is up to date and to undertake the relevant training as soon as possible.

The response to undertaking safeguarding training has to date been very good. The safeguarding officers (Sue Greatbanks and Judy Gold) will be following up with individuals who have yet to complete the necessary training in September. They are also working to ensure that we have a robust recording system in place and as part of that urge participants to give their Safeguarding Officer access to their training record on the Diocesan portal.

We will be holding a Safeguarding Sunday in both churches on Sunday 15 November 2026.

Monthly Prayer Meeting

We will be introducing a monthly prayer meeting from September, and it will meet at St. Matthew's on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm to 9.00pm. Ideally, Home Groups will not meet during this week so that the members can attend the prayer meeting. Each Home Group will be asked to lead the prayer meeting in turn. Rob and Marilyn Thomas's Home Group has very kindly agreed to lead the first prayer meeting on Monday 21 September 2026.

Prayer Chain

We have decided to launch an email-based prayer chain. The prayer chain will be a joint benefice initiative. Requests for prayers may be made via any appropriate All Saints' or St. Matthew's route. The recipient will pass the request to Marilyn Thomas or Deborah Evans. Progress will be reviewed as appropriate by the St. Matthew's and All Saints' Pastoral teams. Deborah, as administrator, will hold the email address list of prayers and will issue a prayer request email after consultation with Marilyn. As the pray-ers might be in receipt of confidential information, volunteers to join the prayer chain will be on the Electoral roll or equivalent signal of membership. Notifications of prayer requests will also include a reminder about confidentiality.

Sasha Reeves

Sasha has submitted her documentation for the completion of her curacy. She has begun the process of discerning and applying for her next role while continuing to serve in our parishes.

New Website Project

Phil Corbishley and Sarah Barrett have very kindly agreed to lead a project on developing a new website for St. Matthew's and All Saints'. Our current website is no longer fit for purpose, and we have a real problem keeping it up to date. It is proposed that we outsource our website to a specialised third-party provider who specialises in Church websites. The objective of the project is for St Matthew's and All Saints' to have an up-to-date, professional-looking website aimed at non-church people or people that have recently moved into the area. The site needs to look good on a mobile phone as well as a computer.

Work currently being undertaken by the Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee is responsible to the PCC for the upkeep of the structure and fabric of the Church.

The final painting of the new plaster in the South Aisle and Chancel has been completed.

The church architect, Philip Waddy has been commissioned to draw up precise specifications for improving access via the front door of the church which will be used to apply for permission from the Diocese to carry out the work and to obtain tenders from contractors.

The Fabric Committee are looking for more people willing to join them.

Church Policies

The Diocese has been encouraging parishes to agree a range of policies in addition to ones covering Safeguarding.

At the September PCC Meeting, several policy papers were tabled, some were applicable to the Benefice, and were agreed by both PCCs, others only applied and were agreed by St Matthew's (as a registered Charity).

The policies covered General Recruitment, Recruitment of ex- offenders, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, Privacy, Financial Policies and Procedures, and Conflicts of Interest.

Members of the PCC are now working on papers covering Health and Safety, which includes fire risk assessment, data protection, and eventually Social Media Policies. These will come to PCC Meetings over the next six months.

Copies of all the agreed Policies will be stored on the Benefice website and can be obtained from the Church Office.

Forthcoming Events

Cream Teas - afternoon 27th September

Following the Harvest Festival service on Sunday 27th September cream teas will be on offer in All Saints' church from 3pm.

Remembrance Sunday 8th November

There will be a 9.30 Remembrance Service at All Saints Church followed by an Act of Remembrance in the churchyard at 11 am.

Safeguarding Sunday 15th November

There will be a special Safeguarding Service at All Saints Chilton at 9.30am and at St Matthew's Harwell at 10.30am.

Church Family Away Day

Instead of a PCC Away Day it has been decided that we will hold a Church Family Away Day some time in the new year.

Treasurer's Report

Thanks to the generous support from church members and villagers, the finances for All Saints' are stable and provided there are no dramatic changes we are on target to at least break even this year.

Once again, the support is very much appreciated.