

Forthcoming Events

Harvest Festival 27th September

There will be a Bring and Share Lunch after the Harvest Festival Service (10.30am) at St Matthew's.

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

Remembrance Sunday 8th November

There will be a 9.30 Remembrance Service at All Saints Church.

10.45 The Act of Remembrance will take place at the War Memorial in Harwell High Street followed by

11.15 Remembrance Service at St Matthew's

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 a we will hold a Church Family Away Day in the New Year.

Registered Charity 1158861

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

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.

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.

Games of Chance

Last year PCC discussed whether to allow Games of Chance to be played in the Church. This could either be to raise funds for St Matthew's, or for the benefit of a non-church organisation. The PPC agreed the following which can be found on the website:

"After very careful consideration the PCC of St Matthew's Harwell has decided that it will not allow games of chance to be used for fundraising purposes in the church, or the churchyard, whether by the PCC itself, by an organisation or group supported by the PCC, or by an organisation or group using the church or churchyard for an event.

An organisation or group using the church or churchyard for an event will not be allowed to hold the outcome of a game of chance at the event even if entries have been made elsewhere.

In line with this policy, the PCC will not seek or accept grants or donations from sources whose funds clearly come from games of chance such as the National Lottery.

There is no prohibition on the use of games by non-church organisations or groups hiring the church hall, provided that, by so doing, they are not directly raising funds for the church itself, and provided that they do not conduct any promotion or fundraising in the church or churchyard"

PCC also undertook to review this decision in Autumn 2026, and this process is underway.

If you have any views on this policy please speak to Tony Hughes, Stephen Manning or any other member of St Matthew's PCC.

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.

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 so far 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.

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.

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.

Homing the old clock mechanism

Until 2017, the old clock mechanism was on display in the St. Matthew's vestry and had to be removed when the new carpet was put down. It has recently been stored behind the organ. This arrangement was only intended to be temporary until a new permanent location could be found.

For two and a half centuries the mechanism drove the single-handed clock whose face is still to be seen on the west wall of the tower. The mechanism was dismantled in 1987 and restored to working order by AERE Harwell apprentices, under the guidance of Harry Wells.

The Buildings Committee has examined options for where the mechanism could now find a suitable location for display in the church. The mechanism is of genuine historical significance, and we have a responsibility to make it accessible to those with an interest, within reasonable bounds of complexity and cost.

After careful discussion, the Building Committee recommended to PCC that the clock mechanism be moved to be on display by the west wall of the vestry, without the old case but with appropriate safety protection.

The PCC has accepted this proposal, but comments would be welcomed before we go ahead with the move. Please make any comments to Tony Hughes or Adrian Rance-McGregor.