

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

The Parochial Church Council of
The Parish of St Leonard's
Stanton Fitzwarren

Reports and Accounts
For the Year Ended 31st December
2025

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Churchwardens Annual Report

Fabric Report

Improvements

During this year we have continued the work on improving the heating within the church by installing under pew heaters to those pews that did not have it. The whole church plus the choir now has the benefit of under pew heating. Our eco audit suggested that this would provide us with the comfort that we needed. To manage the increased demand there was the need to upgrade supply of the power and this required the installation of a new submain and additional increased capacity fuses.

The conservation work has been completed on the armorial, and it now is proudly on view for all to see. The siting of the armorial was carefully planned to ensure that it was not in full sunlight so as not to damage the restoration work that has been done. We would like to thank The Freke Norton Trust, The Archbishops Council and the Leche trust for their grants to enable us to carry out this work

During the year we were contacted by the Swift Trust asking us to install Swift Boxes in the church tower. The boxes have now been made by Rob Breakspear and placed in the tower. There is also a recording of swift call to attract the birds. We did notice birds flying around the tower and hope that they will return next year and take up residence.

The Turret Clock is wound regularly by volunteers and keeps good time. The PCC proposes to install an automatic clock winder.

Churchyard and grounds

A contribution has been made towards the resurfacing of Church Lane. Zoe King has continued to cut the grass for us on a regular basis. Our thanks go to Darylin and John for their ongoing work to keep the churchyard looking great.

The repair to the high wall to the south of the Graveyard is nearly completed. The Hotel manager assures us that once the coping stones have been replaced the electric cables will be re-sited safely

General Maintenance

The annual maintenance for 2024 was carried out by PG Hawkins this includes a visual check of all roof slopes for slipped or missing slates, ensuring that all gutters and rainwater pipes are cleared. A floor plaque in front of the vestry door had become loose this has been lifted and reset in place.

During the annual organ tuning necessary remedial work was identified and this has been carried out.

LIFE of the CHURCH

Services are in our beautiful, accessible church building. We enjoy being a parish in the Stratton Team and support monthly team services and other events.

The Rector is Rev Elveen Mead supported by Rev Charlotte Stansfield, curate and lay ministers.

Worship Services of Holy Communion, Morning Worship and a Family Service take place at St Leonard every month. Team Services are held every month in one of the team churches.

The PCC secretary is Mike Curtis. We are grateful for all he does.

The website www.stantonchurch.info continues to be updated by Robert Breakspear.

Child and vulnerable person protection ensures that all PCC members hold up to date DBS certificates and attend Diocesan training.

Safety Officer is Mike Curtis who works with his colleagues in the other parishes, and the PCC has implemented all recommendations.

Special services are held. Family Services are provided by an enthusiastic group every month except November when we mark Remembrance Sunday. At Harvest Festival people give nonperishable food to go to the Swindon Food Collective. In December the Family service Christingle raised money for the Children's Society, as did the Christmas Eve afternoon walking Nativity and evening Carols by Candlelight services which were very well attended and enjoyed.

Wedding Ministry- No weddings at St Leonard. We look forward to welcoming and getting to know couples who join our worship as they prepare for marriage.

Our good relationship with the Hotel next door continues, we are grateful for the use of their car park and toilets. It is great to welcome their guests when they join us for worship or explore the beautiful historic building.

Wiltshire Historic Churches Ride and Stride- the building was open and riders welcomed with drinks and snacks. Two riders raised sponsorship for St Leonard.

People work quietly behind the scenes. They keep the church building clean and tidy, provide flowers decorate, sew, prepare services, take part in services, and pray for the life of the church.

Supporting others- food is still collected; nonperishable contributions for the Swindon Food Collective can be left in the porch. Collections were made for the Children's Society, Farmers in Crisis, Crisis at Christmas. As a church we support Emmaus homeless Charity, Swindon Youth for Christ and Shine Pinehurst. Church members support many other Charities.

Joining in with our community- Church members visit and support fellow villagers; join in village events; serve on the village hall committee and support other activities as we try to be good neighbours.

Chris Pope and Liz Hillman

Coffee Morning Report 2025

Another year has passed since the Coffee Morning started in 1985. Nowadays we meet at Stanton House Hotel and have enjoyed being together and listening to some amazing stories including: - My early years in Medicine; Desert Island Discs; Life as a Bishop; Working in the Funeral service; Life in the Police Force; Journey into the Unknown.

In June we celebrated 40 years of the Coffee Morning and Liz Gardner, one of our members, took us on a trip down memory lane reminding us of the amazing people who shared their stories with us. She tested our memories with a quiz. The morning finished with a buffet lunch with the kind cooperation of Stanton House Hotel.

The year finished in December with singing carols and eating mince pies.

It is lovely to see more people coming to join us. It is hoped that, with the kind cooperation of Stanton House Hotel, we can continue to look forward to our monthly Wednesday meetings listening to inspiring speakers who share something of their work, life and Christian journey.

Take care keep safe and God bless,

Liz Hillman

Safeguarding Report for the APCM April 2026

As in previous years, Mary and Mike Boshier, Joint Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs), have been keeping a close eye on all aspects of safeguarding for the Parishes of St Margaret's Stratton, St Leonards Stanton, St Mary Magdalene South Marston and Coleview. We are ably assisted by the 'eyes and ears' in the parishes, Chris and Anne Pope for Stanton, Diane Whitford at South Marston. Liz Hillman and Dave Thomas continue to be the reserve Eyes and Ears for Stanton. The 'eyes and ears' are the close personal local contact in the churches who can pass safeguarding concerns onto us. Their contact details can be found in the porchway of each Church. We thank them as always for their support and vigilance.

The thrust of our work continues to ensure that all members of all the Churches are safe to worship and go about their Church business without fear or risk. To that end, Mike and Mary would ask every member of every Church, both leaders and congregation, to recognise their personal responsibility in making Safeguarding their concern. There is no option to leave a concern to someone else. If there is an identified issue, it must be passed on to the PSOs to be investigated and acted upon as a matter of urgency. "If you see something, say something" should be a point of action for everybody.

Mary and I would ask all of you to observe and exercise an attitude of informed vigilance. In that way, everyone will be as safe as possible. If you have a cause for concern no matter how trivial you think it might be, please talk to the 'eyes and ears' in your church or contact the PSOs Mike or Mary via the parish web site email address or call on 07799835437.

We are all aware that society is changing. There are many more demands on all of us and for those who are already finding life difficult, the demands are even greater. We ask you all as Parish Safeguarding Officers to keep an eye on each other. Support where you can and talk to us if you have concerns about an individual or a family within our Church communities.

We can report that all required DBS certificates were successfully renewed for the last year, and this year's renewals are in process.

A Safeguarding Report continues to be presented to every PCC meeting for both the Stratton and South Marston PCC and the Stanton Fitzwarren PCC to keep all members up to date with safeguarding developments and information. Safeguarding management is also monitored by the Diocese via the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which is maintained by the PSOs

The Parish Safeguarding Officers have continued to meet every 3 months with the Rector. This enables both the PSOs and the Church leadership team to keep up to date with the most recent developments in safeguarding in the Diocese. Safeguarding training continues for all relevant members of our church community.

Most importantly of all, we ask you all to continue to keep yourselves safe.

**Mike and Mary Boshier
Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs)**

St Leonard's APCM 2026 – Environment Report for 2025

Through 2025 we continued to work through A Rocha's UK Eco-Church scheme towards net zero. In March we agreed an environmental policy to be reviewed on an annual basis. The policy focuses on:

- incorporating creation care further into our worship and teaching;
- maximising energy efficiency and our use of sustainable products to reduce our carbon footprint throughout the year;
- implementing a sustainable land management plan;
- informing the community of opportunities to get engaged in climate action, both within their own environments and more broadly.

The policy will be reviewed at the next PCC.

We continued our work to make the church heating more efficient and effective, using the Diocese net zero grant to complete the under-pew heating in January 2025. In November 2025, we also replaced the ageing overhead heaters (necessary during the winter months to supplement the under-pew heaters) with more efficient models and now plan a new overhead heater in the chancel to provide warmth for the choir and the organist through the winter. We have checked our carbon footprint through the annual energy audit; the 2025 total was lower than the previous year. St Leonard's achieved an Eco-Church Silver Award in July 2025.

Together with St Margaret's, St Leonard's plays its part in the Swindon Deanery Eco-champions' Group which meets several times a year to exchange ideas and support each other's efforts. Through 2025 the group has attracted new members from churches in the Deanery and is now working towards a Swindon Churches Green Festival in June 2026. St Leonard's will play its part by running a nature trail through Stanton Park.

Due to the collapse of the wall by the nature area in the autumn of 2024, there has been less new activity to bring nature into the churchyard through 2025. However, provision has still been made to feed the birds, nature-friendly habitats remain in place, and the wall has been largely repaired. We will consider how best to take forward work in the churchyard once the repair has been completed.

More generally throughout the churchyard the Eco work is starting to make a difference. As spring begins, we see friendly robins as we walk towards the church, crocuses line the path and the primroses are coming into their own. These provide crucial early nectar for the pollinators when little other food is available, and warmth for bees who use the cup-shaped flowers as shelter.

Jules Nolan & Darylin Francis

Swindon Deanery Synod Report

Our Deanery Synod meetings took a slightly different form for much of 2025 as we were able to combine two of our meetings with Pioneering Parishes training provided by the Diocese of Bristol and delivered by Church Mission Society. This allowed Synod members to meet with others from across the Deanery to discuss ways of taking church more deliberately into our communities.

In February and October, we met at Pattern Church and were led by Tina Hodgett and Greg Bakker from Church Mission Society as part of the Pioneering Parishes initiative. In February, we engaged with the need for a culture shift, lamenting our losses to allow newness to emerge, emphasising our values and how to discern them through honest conversations and developing an abundant mindset, through seeing our contexts differently. The presentations and discussions were fuelled by an excellent buffet from Trenchers in Kembrey Park. In October, Tina and Greg led us in open conversations which encouraged us to discuss the questions we are grappling with around mission in our contexts and modelled ways of encouraging self-reflection through the help of perceptive questioning by others.

Each of these meetings was preceded by a short business meeting. In February we appointed Gill Leighburn and Tracy Mason as lay members of the Deanery Leadership Team and in October we elected Nick Orman from Wroughton and Wichelstowe as Lay Chair. In October we also heard from Stephen Sheridan, the Finance Director for the Diocese who is the member of senior staff in Diocesan Support Services (DSS) linked to our deanery.

The date set for the May meeting clashed with the end of the Pioneering Parishes course following on from the February meeting, so synod members were invited to come to Holy Trinity, Shaw and engage in prayer stations, focussing on Swindon, local schools, and peace among other topics.

July was our annual synod barbeque and as well as networking with other synod members, those attending this synod at The Well in Abbey Meads also had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation about the appointment of the new Bishop of Bristol by answering questions on flip charts.

Jules Nolan has been the lay Deanery Synod rep from St Leonard's over the past year, please ask her or the clergy if you would like more information.

Sally Robertson
Swindon Area Dean

PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC is the executive committee of the parish and consists of clergy, churchwardens and elected representatives of the laity. Members of the PCC are: Rev. Elveen Mead, Rev. Charlotte Stansfield, Liz Hillman, Roger Hillman, Darylin Francis, John Francis, Sue Mackenzie, Julia Nolan, Chris Pope, David Thomas and Mike Curtis. Five full PCC meetings were held over the course of the year. These follow a standard agenda and typically cover apologies, approval of previous minutes, matters arising, clergy matters, finance, fabric, correspondence, environment, health & safety, safeguarding, deanery report and any other business.

We also hold an annual meeting of parishioners (APCM) to elect churchwardens and other officers. This was held on 27th April 2025.

Our next annual meeting will take place on 19th April 2026. Details will be published and posted giving a minimum of two weeks' notice.

During 2025 there was one baptism at St. Leonard's; there were no weddings or funerals.

Mike Curtis

Health & Safety Officer's Report

There were no reported accidents or incidents at church over the past 12 months. In order to maintain this record, we ask all church users to act safely and report any concerns or observations to a member of the PCC.

Our annual Health and Safety inspection took place on 14th May. A few minor corrective actions were identified and actioned, however there were no major issues.

Looking ahead, we have elected to follow a risk reminder schedule published by Ecclesiastical, to provide a different focus each month for our safety efforts. By considering topics such as working alone, fire risk, working at height, tree management etc. we aim to proactively look after the church and all who use it.

Any suggestions for improving Health and Safety are always welcomed.

Mike Curtis

Conservation of Queen Elizabeth I Armorial Panel

Around the time of the millennium, a carved and painted wooden panel in dilapidated state, was found hidden in a cupboard in the vestry. No one knew what it was; no one knew it was there.

Some time later, by chance, we were visited by someone with an amateur hobby interest in coats of arms, and he suggested it could be a Royal Armorial from the time of Elizabeth I (1533 –1603).

Surviving Arms of Elizabeth I are rare. Only twelve are known to exist in other English parish churches - and our panel is unusual in at least two respects. Firstly, only two of the twelve are three-dimensional, like ours. And secondly, our dragon is green, with most other surviving examples being either red or gold.

We found from old records that the armorial panel was given to the church by Canon Masters, who was appointed rector in 1885. We can't trace its history any further back.

The panel was very dirty, warped and had split down the middle, some wooden elements had become detached and others were missing, ferrous fixings had corroded, paintwork was chipped and flaking, and there were signs of severe infestation.

A detailed examination was carried out by Wiltshire's' Conservation and Museums Advisory Service (CMAS), and their detailed report spelt-out how the panel should be restored and conserved. All the evidence, including results of paint analysis, reinforces our belief that the panel does date from Elizabethan times.

We then arranged for Bainbridge Conservation to take on the project. Firstly, they arranged for the panel to undergo insect eradication using a warm air heat treatment. Then they carried very thorough and careful cleaning. The two warped sections were placed under light pressure for three weeks, allowing them to be flattened then glued back together. A skilled wood carver made replacement parts. There was localised filling of damaged areas, and consolidation and touching-up of decorative surfaces. The panel was then supported in a bespoke aluminium frame, designed to ensure its long-term stability.

We are very grateful for the support of our sponsors: The Church Buildings Council, The Leche Trust, and another organisation who asked not to be named. Without their generosity, none of this work would have been possible.

A celebratory event was held to mark the panel's conservation and display in the church. This included a splendid performance of Elizabethan music, and to add to the atmosphere, several ladies donned Elizabethan costume. We are very grateful to all who took part.

Mike Curtis

Family Service

Stanton's Family Service takes place on the second Sunday of each month, and is planned and led by a team of lay people from Stanton Church. Whilst the activities and formats that we use are always child-centred, the services are regularly attended and enjoyed by all ages, from babies to over-90s.

As in previous years, we began 2025 with a series of themed services. This time it was *Encounters with Jesus*, which included the gospel stories of *The boy Jesus in the Temple*, *Zaccheus* and *Martha and Mary*. The series was interrupted in April for Palm Sunday, when we ventured outside for our Palm Procession (despite the slightly iffy weather), and concluded after Easter with *The Road to Emmaus*.

We celebrated Pentecost in June and thought about how the Christian message had spread from its beginnings in Jerusalem. We marked on a map of the world all the places where the members of the congregation had been to church – as residents or tourists. We had dots in all continents, indeed to the uttermost parts of the earth! For Godparents' Sunday in July, we returned to the story of *Moses in the Bullrushes* and then we moved outdoors on a beautiful Sunday morning in August for a service on the theme of Creation. Our September theme was Noah, and in October we gave thanks for *All good gifts around us* at Harvest Festival.

The family service takes a break in November for Remembrance Sunday, and then as usual the year concluded with the ever-lovely Christingle service in December, complete with Karen's "Good News, Bad News" pantomime-stye retelling of the Christmas story. A new addition this year was Rob (South) dressed as angel for the "It's behind you" joke. Oh yes, he did! The Walking Nativity on Christmas Eve has now become a firm tradition for church and village and was again well supported and greatly enjoyed – thanks to all who took part.

Looking forward to 2026, our themes each month will be linked in some way to animals in the Bible. Camels, pigeons and a donkey will feature, along with many others. If you're intrigued – come and see. We meet on the second Sunday of every month, starting with refreshments, and the service begins at 11:15am and lasts for about half an hour.

Our continued thanks go to Elveen for giving us the scope and trust to be engaged in this special ministry.

**Robert Breakspear,
on behalf of The Family Service Leadership Team**

Team Choir

The choir membership has remained stable over the last year and the commitment, enthusiasm and musical progress of those who sing with us continues to inspire me – we have a lot of fun whilst tackling a broad range of church music.

Easter was, as always, a busy time, with two services on Good Friday and three on Easter Sunday. To the choir members – whether you sing at one or all of these services, your voice always makes a difference to people's worship, lifting and inspiring our relationship with God – and I'd like to thank all of you for your contribution.

After Easter we spent much of our time rehearsing for a special *Paschal Procession* service, celebrating the post-Easter themes: the Easter garden, where we sang an anthem "Christ whose Glory fills the skies" composed by our own Rev Charlotte; the Upper Room; the Emmaus Road – with a beautiful solo verse of Easter Evening by Margaret; and Breakfast on the beach – which included a glorious rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus. Thank you to all who took part, both singers and speakers, it was a very moving and joyous experience. We then celebrated together at the Choir Summer BBQ before taking an extended break over the summer.

We started back in September, rehearsing Tudor pieces for a well-received concert at St Leonard's on 26th October to unveil the Elizabethan Armorial. We were then quickly into Advent and Christmas. In November the choir sang a lovely service in St Leonard's Church on the morning of Advent Sunday - including three beautifully sung anthems - and followed this up with Christmas Carol Services in all three churches, including an uplifting original composition by Karen and Robert South to a calypso tune. My thanks, particularly to Robert South and Geoff Walters at this time for keeping the choir going, since I was ill for much of Christmas.

I would like to thank the choir for their continued commitment and enthusiasm, to Geoff Walters for his support and amazing flexibility, whatever music I throw at him, to the two Roberts – South and Breakspear for their inspiration and assistance in running the choir and to Roz in her new role as Choir librarian. Team effort, everybody makes a difference. Thank you.

We are always looking for new members – no musical knowledge is necessary, and no auditions. If you like to sing and would like to join in – just come along.

Angela Breakspear
Director of Music

Financial Statement for the year ending 31 December 2025

Note this financial statement is the unsigned unaudited version

Parochial Church Council of St. Leonards, Stanton Fitzwarren

Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2025

General Receipts and Payments Account

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>2025</u> <u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Total</u>
<u>Voluntary Receipts</u>				
Planned Giving	12,357		12,357	12,031
Collections and other giving	921	364	1,285	716
Income tax recovered	2,744		2,744	4,469
VAT Recovered	0	1,878	1,878	776
Donations	1,429		1,429	2,573
	17,451	2,242	19,693	20,565
<u>Receipts from activities for generating funds</u>				
Other Fund Raising	130		130	0
	130	0	130	0
<u>Receipts from Church Activities</u>				
Fees	0		0	274
Wedding & Baptism Collections		20	20	260
	0	20	20	534

Other income

Fabric Fund (Restricted Funds)		17,472	17,472	0
Bank Interest Received	1,345	260	1,605	2,546
	1,345	17,732	19,077	2,546

Total Receipts

18,926	19,994	38,920	23,645
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Payments

Grants

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>2025</u> <u>Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>2024</u>
Mission & Charities	1,190	364	1,554	1,614

Church Activities

Diocesan Parish Share	11,400		11,400	11,175
Team Expenses	1,200		1,200	1,200
Church Running Expenses	4,128		4,128	2,601
Church Maintenance	1,814	20,321	22,135	520
Churchyard Maintenance	2,716		2,716	1,376
Cost of Services	192		192	200
Administration	72		72	221

Total Payments

22,712	20,685	43,397	18,907
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<u>Total Net Receipts</u>	-3,786	-691	-4,477	4,738
<u>Balance Brought Forward</u>	47,514	7,149	54,663	49,925
<u>Balance Carried Forward</u>	43,728	6,458	50,186	54,663
<u>Monetary Assets</u>				
Current Account			14,577	2,659
CCLA Deposit Account			35,609	52,004
<u>Total</u>			50,186	54,663
<u>Debtors</u>				
Income Tax Claim			1,455	1,510
VAT Claim			1,400	0
<u>Creditors</u>				
Electricity			100	100
Team Expenses			300	300

The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 16 March 2026.

Rev Elveen Mead

**David Thomas -
Treasurer**