

# Annual Parochial Church Meeting

## The Parochial Church Council of The Parish of Stratton St Margaret And South Marston

### Reports and Accounts For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

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## St Margaret's Church Warden's Report for January to December 2025

Once again in 2025, St Margaret's continued to attract strong attendances at regular morning church services. Thanks to a very committed core congregation numbers averaged around 60 per week and up to 75 for communion services. Attendances at our special Advent and Christmas services were again around the 400 mark despite issues with our heating system.

As church wardens, we felt that 2025 was another wonderful year for our church and ministry team. In June, we were joined by Bishop Neil and dignitaries including the Mayor of Swindon, the North Swindon MP Will Stone, the Chair of Stratton Parish Council and local parish councilors in our service of commemoration of VE day. Eliana Pretorian, who had spent some of her ministry training time in our church, and is an accomplished opera singer, gave us a wonderful rendition of 'I know that my redeemer liveth' from Handel's Messiah.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July, members from St. Margaret's and our team churches travelled by coach to Bristol Cathedral for Charlotte's priesting. It was a very moving service and a real privilege to share it with Charlotte, her husband Anthony, other members of her family and friends, Elveen and others from across the Bristol Diocese.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July, the team shared Charlotte's first communion service in St. Margaret's Church. We were joined by members of Charlotte's family and friends and afterwards, we had a wonderful reception in St. Margaret's Centre. It was a real joy to meet Charlotte's 3 children and her mother who at 97, stood at the front and gave a heartwarming speech!

As things stand, we are blessed with an incredible clergy team, with Elveen and Charlotte, backed up by lay ministers Alison and Lisa. Dan Read continues to be a lay minister emeritus. Alongside their normal daily schedules, Elveen and Charlotte make hospital and home visiting, very often taking communion to those who request it. This is in addition to the Pastoral team.

In addition to our normal service schedule below are some of the special services in 2025:

March 16<sup>th</sup> a team communion and healing service.

April 17<sup>th</sup> Taize service following the Maundy Thursday service

May 18<sup>th</sup> a 'living team service' in which our choir led a Pascal Procession to St. Margaret's

June 22<sup>nd</sup> the wardens led a 'Songs of Praise' service.

July 20<sup>th</sup> 6pm BCP communion service with the choir.

August 10<sup>th</sup> A special ECO service with Deborah Tompkins from the organisation Green Christian.

August 10<sup>th</sup> 6pm Praise and Prosecco, led by Lisa Lodwick & the Grange Drive house group

September 21<sup>st</sup> 6pm Beer and Hymns.

October 5<sup>th</sup> 8.30pm Compline service led by Alison Burston and Robert South.

November 9<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day. We were joined by the Stratton Brownies, 1<sup>st</sup> Stratton St. Margaret Scouts, Beavers, Cubs and Squirrels and the Boys Brigade, together with their leaders, parents and family members. Thank you to Graham Spackman who played the Last Post and the Reveille, to Andrew Martin who read the Exhortation and to Adam Jenkins who recited the Kohima Epitaph. Some Junior Boys Brigade members BB read out the names of those who we remember from this parish.

It was lovely to see a very full church sharing together in our act of remembrance.

December 14<sup>th</sup> Christingle at 4pm.

Inevitably with 4 churches in the benefice there were times when we were reliant on help from guest clergy and our thanks go out to Rev. Michael Johnson and Rev. Mark Tubey.

We would always welcome other groups or home groups to lead services, bringing their own skills to 'morning worship'.

On behalf of the PCC we would like to record our appreciation for Chris Lyne's service on the St Margaret's and South Marston PCC over many years. She stepped down in 2025 and was presented with a bouquet of flowers during one of our services to thank her for all her contributions to the team.

We were again blessed with the talents and commitment of our Community Choir led by Angela and Rob Breakspear. They did a fantastic job singing at many services across the benefice as well as the special service on 18<sup>th</sup> May. They also sang at weddings and funerals upon request. A huge thank you to all the choir for their dedication and to June and Ros for washing and ironing all the church choir robes.

We are further blessed with our wonderful organists Geoff Walters, Rob South and Roger Smith. Together, their contribution added incredible energy and joy to our services throughout the year.

We are blessed with a beautiful grade one thirteenth century church and we continue to work hard to preserve our heritage. This year two major projects were completed. The south chapel roof including the porch was repaired and retiled and now looks wonderful with many of our congregation and visitors to the church making positive comments. And we completed the repair of the bell tower roof which had been leaking quite badly for some time. These were expensive pieces of work, over £200k in total and funded in large part by the John Cornwell legacy and a Heritage Lottery grant secured thanks to the efforts of Roger Smith

Several fundraising and mission events were held in church during the year, benefiting from the new toilet and kitchen facilities. Activities included quiz night, wine tasting, Summer Garden Party, Bulb Planting and Murder Mystery evening. A major social outreach event was our inaugural Beer Festival held in September which attracted over 175 visitors. With live music, food and over 20 guest beers and ciders we enjoyed a vibrant festival, serving around 500 pints of beer. Thank you to the Events Team, Elveen, Charlotte, Roger, Anna-Marie Jenkins, Adam Jenkins and Ian for organizing all the 2025 events and to everyone who played a part in fundraising in 2025. In addition, Kate Mitchell, David Horne and Mary Carter ran our ongoing Rags2Riches and Richard Pflieger ran his Warden Garden Shed. Thank you to everyone who played a part in fundraising in 2025.

As part of community mission, the work of the Food Collective continued in support of those struggling in the face of a challenging financial environment, a big thank you to all who give up their time to support the process. Also, to Anne-Marie Domm who continued her regular Jigsaw sales in support of the Children's Society.

To make sure that St Margaret's continues to be a vibrant living church we are blessed to have a team of people regularly working behind the scenes and as well as those mentioned above our grateful thanks go to:

Church Administrator – Georgina Martin who keeps communications flowing by email, website and Facebook.

Deputy Wardens – David Horne and Richard Pflieger; Health & Safety Officer – Karl Glover; Treasurers – Mark & Tracey Whitfield; Safeguarding Officers – Mike & Mary Boshier.

Welcoming teams – Pat & Ray England.

Additionally, we are fortunate to have a wide range of people who give up their time to run other activities in St Margaret's church, in the centre and across the Stratton Team Ministry. See below for some of the activities currently offered (in alphabetical order). A list of contact names will be available should you wish to find out more.

Altar Frontals (changing in line with the liturgical calendar); Baptism Verger and supporters; Bell ringers; Boys Brigade; Brass Cleaning; Bumps & Babes; Care Home Services; Choir; Church Building / re-ordering; Church cleaning; Church refreshments; Coffee morning; Electoral Roll; Events Team; Flower arrangers; Food collective; Funeral Vergers; House Groups; Knit & Natter; Magazine; Ministry Team; Morning prayer meetings; Mothers Union; Music Group; Operation Christmas Child (shoe box appeal); Organists; Pastoral Visiting; PCC Meetings; PCC Secretary; Readers and leaders of intercessions; Recycling; Sound and Loop system; Standing Committee; Wardens meetings; Wedding vergers / Sound coordinator.

All the teams above would welcome new members even if it is not on a regular basis. Please contact the wardens or the church office if you would like to help in any way. In line with the Diocesan Safeguarding guidance, we include all 'official' roles and 'activities' under the 'safer recruitment' process. This benefits all of us while we are involved in the life of our church.

We would love to include as many of you as possible in our activities and draw on all the talents across our congregation. We welcome suggestions from you all for future fund-raising events, forms of worship or any other ideas you may have.

St Margaret's is committed to ensuring that its church, buildings, worship, congregations and activities are as welcoming and inclusive as possible for all in our local community and further afield.

**With many blessings,  
June Lewis and Ian Jones  
Church Wardens.**

## Churchwarden's Report for St Mary Magdalene Church, South Marston, 2025

I am approaching five years as Churchwarden of St Mary Magdalene's Church and would like to say thank you to everyone in our church who has supported me through another busy year.

We have had many lovely services at St Mary Magdalene during 2025 and have hosted several team services, when all four churches have gathered in South Marston. We have also joined with the Methodist church for several services.

We celebrated two delightful weddings in August and September, which were very happy occasions.

Sadly, we had four funerals, two of which included burials in the churchyard. Our long-time church members, Mary Cooper died in the Spring and our dear Pat Sansum in July.

We had a Taize service in February which is always a calming experience.

At our APCM in April, we were pleased to welcome Michelle Giles on to the PCC, making three members from South Marston.

I have continued to attend and enjoy the Hymn choosing at Angela and Rob Breakspear's during the year. I would like to thank Rob S, Geoff, Alison M and Angela and Rob B and the music group for providing music at various times throughout the year. We have had a little help from the internet when plans have changed at the last minute.

I am still receiving requests to reserve burial plots in the churchyard and in 2025 processed two cremation plots. The process of obtaining a faculty takes about three months and the time the faculty lasts is getting shorter as space is taken up.

Our Coffee Morning, every third Saturday in the month between 1000 and 1200, in the village hall has been very successful this year. Thanks to Richard and Will and Tina for their hard work providing delicious cakes and cooking bacon butties. Bill and Michelle Giles have helped with cooking and front of house when needed.

We continued our visits and Home Communion with Elveen and Charlotte at the beginning of the year but sadly our parishioner was admitted to hospital and died in the Spring.

I ran our All-Age Worship service, once a month on the first Sunday, as previous years. As always, we started with refreshments and some social time. I was delighted to welcome Anthony, Rev Charlotte's husband along to enlighten and entertain us with his talks in March and he continued for the rest of the year in August, for the third year running, we had a service of Praise and Blessings.

South Marston CofE Academy came into church for their Easter service. The children had made Easter gardens, and I was privileged to be asked to judge them. It was a very difficult task as they were all so good. Harvest Festival was celebrated in church as were several celebration assemblies. They also performed their Christmas Nativity Plays in the church, which were excellent as always. They visited us for lesson time on two occasions and were very interested in learning about Baptism and Holy Communion, and the history of the church. Rev Charlotte set them a task to find various symbols around the church which they enjoyed. St Mary Magdalene Church presented each of the School Leavers with a copy of Bear Grylls book 'Soul Fuel for Young Explorers' at the School leaving service in July. I accompanied Charlotte at an Open Book Assembly on one occasion at School. It was such a pleasure to visit the school assembly again.

I would like to thank our School Governors who work very hard making sure the School and the Church have plenty of contact. Rev Charlotte has been Ex-officio governor as Rachel Jones is now a staff governor, but still with the church very much in mind. Karl Glover continues to support us as a Foundation Governor, for which we are very grateful.

Some of us attended a first aid course in the summer, which means we now have three first aiders in our congregation.

We commemorated VE Day with an afternoon tea in the Church Garden. As we did last year for D-Day we had a wonderful display of model aeroplanes and some music from that era. We were also very fortunate with the weather and had a delightfully sunny afternoon in which to enjoy excellent company and our cream teas and cakes. Thanks to everyone who helped and made the afternoon so successful.

We were approached by the Swindon Branch of the Association of Bell ringers in June asking if they could inspect our bells and get them ringing again. They were declared fit to ring and on a beautiful summer evening in July the bells rang out for the first time for quite a few years. Weekly Bell ringing lessons followed in the autumn which have proved very successful. A team of bell ringers were found to ring for the two weddings during the year and they rang for the Christmas services. Teams of bell ringers have run quarter peals on at least two occasions. The bells have proved very welcome in the village with many positive comments at hearing them again.

On 27<sup>th</sup> July we were asked to serve teas and cakes to the visitors to the South Marston Village Fete. Everyone made wonderful cakes and the village enjoyed them. Our congregation all came together, to serve tea, coffee, sell cakes and wash up. They worked very hard. It was such a successful afternoon that we have been asked to do it again in 2026.

We joined the other churches to travel, by coach, to Bristol for Rev Charlotte's Priesting in July, which was a very exciting occasion.

On behalf of the Church, I still attend the Community News Meetings and take as many opportunities as I can to get church news into it together with Church services and a letter from Elveen or Charlotte, are included in each issue. News of the bells is very welcome in the Community News and we launched an appeal for funding to upgrade them. I have written several articles about the bells, and we even made the front page with pictures and an article on the bells in one News magazine.

In the Autumn we invited the village to a Bulb planting morning in the Churchyard and planted lots of new daffodils. All very rewarding.

Once again Alison Burston led our Remembrance Sunday Service on 9<sup>th</sup> November. It was followed by a service at the War Memorial where the fallen were commemorated and a wreath laid by a former member of the Armed forces. Thank you to Alison and all who took part.

We are asked on many occasions if we have a toilet at the church and, unfortunately, we haven't. It is something that we very much need. The architect, who did the re-ordering for Stratton did some drawings for us and gave us ideas. Michelle and I attended a Road Show run by the Diocese at Pattern Church, where they were talking about fund raising and grants for such things as a toilet in the church. We made some useful contacts and then arranged for the DAC to visit us in the New Year.

Then suddenly Advent arrived and with it our Christingle Service on the 7<sup>th</sup> December which we ran ourselves with Anthony giving a talk. The school choir joined us again singing two Carols and they were wonderful. The church was full and every child had a Christingle to take home. Anthony gave a short talk, and the service was enjoyed by all.

We were booked up for the third year running to sing Carols at the Carpenters Arms and were joined by some of the choir making it a very joyful evening for everyone, customers and carol singers alike. The Carpenters Arms were very generous and shared the profits from the raffle with the church and the Prospect Hospice.

We ran our own Service of 9 lessons and carols, on Friday, 19 December. It does seem that Friday is a good night for us and as usual the church was full, but it is, of course, Elveen's and Charlotte's day off, which they very much need in the very busy season. Our Crib Service was held at 5.00 pm on Christmas Eve and was delightful. That was followed at 9.00 pm with Christmas Holy Communion. All our Christmas services were extremely well attended.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us keep our lovely church open each day and our services and congregations growing. I would like to thank Will and Tina, and Richard for opening and closing daily the church daily. Special thanks to Will and Richard for winding the church clock each week, the village would be lost without it.

Thanks to Mary and Dot for keeping the church sparkling. Thanks to Hayley and her wonderful flower team for supplying flowers each month throughout the year to brighten our church. We are looking for more people to join the team, so please let me know if you are interested. Just a few flowers in a vase would be most welcome.

I would like to thank Georgina in the Church Office for her support and for all the posters and various service sheets she produces during the year and the many other things she does for us.

My thanks to Will for being such a great Treasurer and keeping us on the straight and narrow. As I have said before he does a wonderful job maintaining our church and keeping a check on our boiler, making sure it always has oil and that our electrics are in order.

Thanks to Elveen, Charlotte, Alison and Lisa for bringing services to us. Most of all thanks to our wonderful congregation for being there and being such a fantastic support.

If anyone feels they would like to join our PCC and perhaps become a Churchwarden sometime, it would be great to have two Churchwardens at South Marston.

**Diane Whitford**  
**St Mary Magdalene Churchwarden**

## Safeguarding Report for the APCM April 2025

As in previous years, Mary and Mike Bosher, 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 Bosher**  
**Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) April 2025**

## PCC Secretary's report for the year 2025 - 2026.

The six PCC Meetings were all held in the Pollard room this year. These took place on 13th May, 8th July, 30th September, 11th November, 13th January and 3rd March.

During this year Christine Lyne stepped down from the PCC, and we gained two more PCC members, namely Michelle Giles and Anna-Marie Jenkins.

During the past year Rev Elveen Mead has led our 3 churches and Coleview, with the Curate Rev. Charlotte Stansfield. We arranged a coach to attend Charlotte's priesting at Bristol Cathedral and celebrated after the Sunday service. Elveen has also been greatly assisted by our two lay readers, Alison Burston and Lisa Lodwick. New Orders of Service have been designed and used.

Our three churchwardens have worked hard behind the scenes keeping our churches running, and special mention goes to June Lewis, Ian Jones, Diane Whitford, not forgetting many others who assist such as our Vergers, service welcomers, flower arrangers, cleaners and many other important jobs both inside and outside.

Many thanks go to our Treasurers, Mark Whitfield and Will Hiscocks, who have not had an easy time in the last few years, balancing payment of the parish share, raising our donations to charities, and keeping our churches finances balancing correctly. Thanks also go to David Horne who has expertly put together the finance reports for this APCM and provided advice throughout the year. The parish share was paid by both churches. We are hopeful that the Archdeacon will visit our churches to explain how the Parish share is calculated. The charities we support were reviewed, and money given again this year. Wedding and funeral fees were discussed and to remain the same. However, the bell ringing fees are to go up.

Our Deanery Representatives June Lewis and Lisa Lodwick have attended the regular meetings and kept us up to date with what is going on in the larger church family.

The building work has been continuing this year at St Margaret's. Work on the tower and back of the church has now finally been signed off and the roof made water tight. There has also been work on some of the trees which were dangerous, bulbs have been planted, and the church gates cleaned. The Electrics have also been checked, and various problems sorted.

St. Margaret's bell ringers want to provide a defibrillator in the belfry which was approved by the PCC. This is for use in the church. The PCC also decided to purchase one themselves and it has been installed outside of St. Margaret's Centre and can be accessed by the local community, if needed.

St Mary Magdalene has had their bells serviced and they are now ringing again. There is a growing group of bell ringers. They have been looking at ways to provide a toilet in the church. They will also be looking at a new heating system as their present boiler is getting old and it continually keeps flooding in that area. They have a good link with

the village school and held nativity play and Christingle in the church at Christmas time.

The Events committee have held several events during the past year and raised sums of money towards the running of our churches. Just as important was the fact that it drew many people from our local communities into the church events.

The matter of safeguarding has been discussed at every meeting, and all proper procedures have been adhered to at the request of our Safeguarding Representatives Michael and Mary Boshier. The new Guide and Policy have been checked and passed by the PCC. All churches in our benefice are grateful to their leadership and advice, and we are all aware of any possible issues.

Many thanks go to our H&S representative Karl Glover, who has kept a close watch over the building projects, together with the safety of everyday life in our churches.

ECO church. Russ Riggs has been researching how we can comply both in the running of our churches and in our personal lives. St Margaret's obtained a Bronze Award status and are working towards a Silver.

Care homes are regularly being visited. June Lewis, Mary Carter and Lisa Lodwick co-ordinate the visits and the care home services are ably assisted by a team of volunteers.

Our Choir has enjoyed regular choir practices most Sunday nights, enthusiastically led by Angela Breakspear. We have learnt many new anthems, particularly for Christmas and Easter, and have hopefully led the congregation in our joyful praise. Angela also hosted a summer BBQ for the choir and their families. Many thanks go to her and her family for all the time and encouragement they have given to the choir. It is much appreciated. Likewise, thanks go to the two main organists Geoff Walters and Rob South who give so much of their time, and from which we benefit so much.

The Christmas services went well, with numbers around the same if not more than last year. It was noted that more people attended who were not regular church attendees.

A new altar frontal and curtain in the lady chapel, together with a stole have been offered to St Margaret's by three kind parishioners. A service will be held to bless them once they are in place.

A special mention should be made to Georgina Martin, who is our Administrator for the Benefice. She has done an amazing job, for all the churches in our Benefice.

**Ros Mitchell**  
**PCC Secretary for St Margaret's and St Mary Magdalene**

## Coleview Community Centre Church Report - January to December 2025 - APCM on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026

The church service is held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month at 11 o'clock in the Towcester Suite at Coleview and is part of the Stratton Team Ministry churches.

It is a more relaxed atmosphere which suits our regular congregation. We are pleased that we held a service each month during 2025. Celtic communion services: 1 led by Rev. Michael Johnson and 5 led by Rev. Elveen Mead; 2 led by Rev. Charlotte Stansfield (after her priesting). Morning Worship: 1 team service led by Rev. Charlotte Stansfield; 2 morning worship services led by Lisa Lodwick: 1 team carol service in December led by Lisa Lodwick.

Before the team services at Coleview we share refreshments with members from the other churches, and we thank Anne-Marie Domm for organising this for us.

We have a regular faithful congregation of at least 16 worshippers who join the other churches, when they are able. We keep in contact with those who are unable to attend in person by telephone or visiting, often taking holy communion to them. Sadly, we lost one of our long-term worshippers in August and we give thanks for her faithful service at Coleview and knowing that she is now at peace with the Lord whom she loved.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July, some of the Coleview congregation joined other members from the team on the coach to Bristol Cathedral for Rev. Charlotte's priesting.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July, also joining with the rest of the team for Charlotte's first communion service, at St. Margaret's Church and afterwards, enjoying the wonderful reception.

It's a real blessing to have the support from our lay ministers Lisa Lodwick and Alison Burston. Dan Read (lay minister emeritus) has retired from the rota but comes to worship at Coleview when he is able. Also, for the support from the clergy mentioned in the second paragraph and others on our rota.

Our grateful thanks go to our organists Rob South and Geoff Walters who, like Elveen and Charlotte, come straight after playing at an earlier service at another church. Also, to our Music Group who play on a rota basis and to Angela Breakspear, who puts together the hymn list each month and also leads the choir who come to sing at Coleview at some of the team services.

Our huge thanks go to Georgina Martin, our church office administrator, for being the cog at the centre of all our communications, keeping our Facebook page and Website up to date; printing out the monthly magazine; updating and printing the orders of service needed at Coleview.

A special thank you to our Coleview church team, Marion Wighan who sets up the altar table each month; Doreen Jackson and José Skittrall who welcome the people in; Sheila White for putting up the hymn numbers; those who read the lessons and lead the intercessions and to José Skittrall for cleaning the brass.

During 2025, the Coleview congregation supported the Swindon Food Collective, Operation Christmas Child, recycling at St. Margaret's Centre and financially by their regular giving, to help meet our quota.

The Coleview team is committed to ensuring that the church service held at Coleview Community Centre is a spiritual place of worship on the Sunday morning and all activities are as inclusive as possible.

Our Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies are adhered to where possible. We have no control over the building itself but we all aim to be as welcoming as we can at each service.

**Yours in Christ  
June Lewis and Ian Jones  
Church Wardens**

### Care Homes Report- January to December 2025 for the APCM on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 7pm.

We have continued to visit 3 places on a regular monthly basis during 2025: Church View Nursing Home, Herbert Harvey Court and Midwinter Gardens Retirement Housing Complex.

We keep in regular contact by telephoning a couple of days before our visit just in case they need to reschedule and can also keep in contact by cards or by social media.

It was very exciting to be asked to go into Wemyss Lodge for a Christmas carol service.

We have a great team of people who come to as many services as they can and our grateful thanks go to Ken Kirkman, who provides the music on his MP3 player, at all of the services.

He leads at several times and chooses the hymns based on the previous Sunday's

theme. This is usually in line with the liturgical calendar, and he explains the history behind the hymns. It is so interesting to hear why the author has written their particular hymn! Some of the reasons are sad but amazing!

We have all learnt so much – thank you Ken!

### Wemyss Lodge Nursing Home

We were very pleased to be welcomed back into Wemyss Lodge, having not been there since before the start of Covid19. We did a Christmas carol service on 11/12/25 and an Epiphany carol service on 27/1/26.

These were both led by Ken Kirkman, playing recorded music to accompany us. There was a group of about 7 singers from St Margaret's Church for the 1st service, and about 5 at the 2nd one.

It was wonderful to see the residents (and staff) joining in well, especially several who have severe dementia and normally say very little, but who clearly remembered the words of their favourite carols. They are keen for us to go back on a regular basis; we're trying to work out the logistics of this at the moment.

**Further volunteers would be very welcome!**

I've been back to visit a couple of residents on a one-to-one basis. We discussed a Bible reading, sang some hymns together, and said some prayers. So far this has only happened once, but I hope to go back again soon.

**Lisa Lodwick**

### Midwinter Gardens

*Services on 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2.30pm*

Mary Carter co-ordinates the visits and Ken Kirkman selects the hymns and brings them on his MP3 player.

The additional team members are Pearl Jell, Pat Kennedy and Chris Marchant. June Lewis and Lisa Lodwick attend when they can.

The services are held in the library upstairs and at a normal monthly service, Mary opens the service with communion using pre-consecrated wafers and wine and by intincting the wafer into the wine.

Ken then takes over with a selection of relevant hymns and bible readings. Members of the team bring poems and share prayers. There are a regular few residents, who come when they can and always enjoy the service. We all enjoy a chat afterwards.

**Mary Carter**

### Herbert Harvey:

*Services on 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm*

June Lewis co-ordinates the visits and Ken Kirkman selects the hymns and brings them on his MP3 player. The other team members are Mary Carter, Doreen Jackson, Pearl Jell, Lisa Lodwick (when available), Ann Marsh, and Josè Skittrall.

Lisa Lodwick visits several residents at Herbert Harvey on a regular basis and we keep in touch regularly.

June or Lisa opens with communion as many times as possible, using pre-consecrated wafers and wine and by intincting the wafer into the wine. Ken then takes over with a selection of relative hymns and bible readings. One of the residents always brings a poem to read as do other members of the team.

During the year we have ended the service with the 'upbeat' version of 'What a friend we have in Jesus'. Those who can, stand and move to the music and it's so uplifting to end on such a lively note!

Our grateful thanks go to Greta, who provides lovely refreshments afterwards. Sometimes we go and knock on the doors of those who could not attend the service.

**June Lewis**

Church View Nursing Home:

*Services on 3rd Thursday of each month at 2.30pm*

June Lewis co-ordinates the visits and Ken Kirkman selects the hymns and brings them on his MP3 player. The additional team members are Mary Carter, Pearl Jell, Ann Marsh, Jeanne Read and Jeanette Spackman. (Jeanette's Mum is a resident). Rev. Elveen Mead joined us for the Christmas carol service

Some of the hymns we sing, have been chosen by the residents at the last month's service.

One resident in particular, likes to read a couple of prayers and they are taken from a very old prayer book that we inherited from a member of St. Margaret's church. It is so special for her.

A couple of the residents are from the Salvation Army and have lovely singing voices. Their special hymn being 'the Hallelujah Chorus' and they sing it with gusto! We've all been really encouraged to see one of the younger residents, who has limited speech, join in with comments about prayers or hymns.

A few of the carers join in the service and they encourage the residents to shake their tambourines etc. 2 of the male carers have lovely singing voices and join in very enthusiastically!

Again, we end the service with the 'upbeat' version of 'What a friend we have in Jesus'. The carers move to the music holding the hands of some of the residents.

After the services, sometimes the carers have asked us to visit some of the residents in their rooms and we have prayed with them and sang a hymn of their choice. It is such a special moment!

**June Lewis**

It's a great privilege to belong to the Care Homes Pastoral Team and share the love of the Lord with the residents and nursing staff. We always feel very welcome and appreciated.

**In the words of our Salvation ladies – Come and join us! You will always leave with a smile on your face!**

## 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**

## 5th Swindon Boy's Brigade Company.

The Company has been busy since our last annual report.

We have a dedicated team who deliver a varied programme each week for each section.

The programme covers six elements - Get Active, Get into the Bible, Get involved, Get Learning, Get Creative, Get Adventurous. Each section uses these elements in a way which are suitable for their age group, and Boys can also suggest activities they would like to do.

The Anchor Boys, the youngest section, have been busy and enjoyed playing sports and games. Making models, the Harvest poster in St. Margaret's Church, cards, decorating biscuits. Learning about Noah, Jonah and the true meaning of Easter.

The older sections have done drill, band, quizzes, map reading, sports and games.

We have joined the Gloucestershire Battalion for competitions and events, with Magnus winning the highest individual score at the recent 10-pin-bowling afternoon.

We helped with the tree planting and the bulb planting at St. Margaret's Churchyard last autumn.

Can YOU help us? - Please can you hold the 5th Swindon Boy's Brigade Company (Swindon's only BB Company!) in your prayers as we attempt to advance Christ's Kingdom in Stratton St. Margarets. We have a low number of Boys at the moment and have spaces to fill. The more Boys we have the more activities we can do. Do YOU know of any Boys aged 5 - 11 years who would like to see what the Boy's Brigade can offer them?

Contact us at [5swindonbb@gmail.com](mailto:5swindonbb@gmail.com) or speak to me after Church to find out more. Thank you.

**Teresa DGLISH.**  
**Company Captain.**

## 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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**

### Thursday Coffee Morning

Another successful year. Numbers have gradually grown. The money raised towards Church running costs is not the main driving force. Rather it's the social gathering and the continuous sound of chatter. But none of this would be possible without the small band of happy volunteers who normally do one shift per month arriving with a lovingly prepared cake. A big thank you to them because without them the gathering could not continue.

**David Horne**

### St Margaret's Pre-School Annual Report

St Margaret's Pre-School continues to offer affordable childcare within the heart of the Stratton community. We are based within the St Margaret's Centre and open Monday to Friday. We have spaces for children aged 3-4 years old and limited spaces for 2-year-olds. We encourage the children to enjoy a range of activities following the Birth to Five Curriculum.

**From All the staff at St Margaret's Pre-School.**

## Annual Report from Stratton St Margaret's Baby & Toddler Group

Stratton St Margaret's Baby and Toddler Group meet in the St Margaret's Centre, on Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10.00am until 11.30am. Providing a small meeting place for local parents and carers to socialise and bring their little ones to play, the group caters for children aged from Birth up to school age. A home corner, cars, tent and tunnel, dolls, books, puzzles and a baby corner are regularly on offer and the children have enjoyed a variety of crafts each week with activities such as play dough, painting, colouring and making cards and models.

The group has been in some form of existence for over 30 years with new parents taking over the running of the group when children start school. The children have the opportunity to socialise, learn to share and make new friendships. The parent/carers benefit too. The group can be a good way to integrate into your community.

Approximately 15 - 20 children attend each session, at the group parents/carers stay with their children and are responsible for them at all times. We charge just £2 per family for the session; this money goes towards the cost of renting the hall, providing refreshments for the adults and, healthy snacks, crafts, and toys for the children.

**Georgina Martin,  
Volunteer Mum**

## ECO-CHURCH REPORT

We continue to work through the Arocha UK Eco-church programme having achieved Bronze Award status in January '25. We will work towards net zero over time and have made significant strides, we are now on totally green energy tariffs.

Best practise on the likes of using? Fair Trade and ecologically friendly cleaning products are maintained.

We held a successful Eco Service on 17 August. Thanks to our guest speaker, Deborah Tomkins of Green Christian.

An interesting and informative coffee morning was also held in the Autumn, run by Belinda Martin of the Diocese and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust focusing on how to be environmentally engaged at a local level as well as tips and freebies on energy saving in our homes. Folks were asked to take part in brainstorming on various related topics and Belinda took away some great feedback that will inform efforts going forward. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Stratton Team is well represented in the local Swindon Deanery Eco-church support group. Churches help and encourage each other with the sharing of best practises as well as practical help with the Eco-church award journey.

The group is holding a festival of events 6 - 14 June to coincide with Big Green Week and the Churches Count for Nature, demonstrating our commitment right across the Deanery to caring for God's creation.

Planning is well advanced and Stratton Team will have three contributions. St Margaret's are organising a churchyard tidy and path reconstruction, and St Leonard's

will run a nature walk through Stanton Woods followed by a family centred Service. St Mary Magdelene will also organise a church ground tidy, all three events designed as community outreach efforts.

There will also be a Deanery wide Quarter Peal bell ringing to announce the festival.

Links with local secular groups and contacts such as Swindon Climate Action Network and Swindon Borough Council are good, ongoing as we seek to connect with anyone involved with environmental matters. This is raising awareness of the growing Eco-church movement with its intentions and impacts, something like 10,000 churches now involved. Such connections will be important as we move towards Silver Award.

We are exploring the installation of EV Charging Points at the Centre. A sidenote I found interesting, apparently there is support for and some funding towards Swindon having a full fleet of electric public buses but the stumbling block is the energy supply capacity in Swindon. Adding the charging of the bus fleet would not be possible, amazing! This would change when Swindon's supply is upgraded as part of the National Grid's programme of national renewal and upgrades when it rolls around to us.

I am not sure how this will work when I understand applications for some 14 new AI data centres across the country have been made to Government which will apparently require more energy each year than the existing annual entire GB network usage, the mind boggles but it does give some context as governments wrestle with the sometimes conflicting demands for economic growth and environmental concerns.

#### ECO-CHURCH SILVER AWARD.

Silver will be challenging for a number of reasons but as St Leonard's has shown, with congregational support and engagement along with more practical steps, it is achievable.

Elveen has already built in enhancements to our existing high standards in teaching and preaching, we met Gold standard on review. Our prayer teams regularly focus on local and global concerns in our intercessions, and our worship ensures matters eco are kept in the forefront.

Christ Church has achieved Gold status, a similar style church with a not too dissimilar congregation on a Sunday so why not us, I say.

The development of a small number of likeminded folks at St Margaret's is key .. There would not need to be an inordinate number of meetings for this group, more a case of pooling ideas and sharing a few key objectives so it would be great if those interested could have a chat with Russ Riggs.

The £10k Diocesan grant for eco improvements has been withdrawn against a background of significant financial pressures at the Diocese. No notice was given but we understand every effort is being made to source other grants, in the meantime it is up to us at a local level.

Roger Smith's bulb planting event was a great community involvement event and further demonstrates our green credentials, over 30 in attendance. Big thanks to Roger for securing the grant for the bulbs and for organising the event. The results are beautiful to behold as we move into Spring and the flowers are vital for pollinators as a source of early nectar and cup shaped heads provide warm shelter to our under-pressure bees.

St Leonard's has adopted an Environmental Policy, and a similar model is under consideration at St Margaret's.

Finally, we have added six new bird boxes with others specifically for certain types of birds e.g. robins, planned soon. These have been installed to complement our hedgehog and bug hotels. A big thank you to Richard Pflieger for his efforts there and the planned wild area within church grounds, more details to follow.

**Russell Riggs  
ECO Champion**

### [Report 2025 for St Margaret's Church Grange Home group](#)

The Grange home group was formed quite a few years ago, there is a regular evening meeting at 7pm to approximately 9.15pm every other Wednesday night with 8 to 10 of the congregation attending the Group. The Group have been looking and studying books of the Bible recently Isaiah, 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, John's Gospel and a series on Grace which centres on Gideon from the Old Testament. We often sing a hymn, pray for the church and needs of the parish and eat homemade cake which is baked by one of the Group. The Home group also organise the Prosecco and Praise evening in the St Margaret's Centre on a Sunday evening in August and we arrange a Home Group Christmas meal at a local pub.

It is a great way to have fellowship, talk freely about our faith and study the Bible with emphasis on how our faith relates to life today in our every changing world.

**Richard Pflieger**

### [St Margaret's Events Committee, 2025 in Review](#)

Generally, churches are facing the twin challenge of maintaining relevance, and spiralling costs and St Margaret's is no exception. The purpose of the events committee is to identify and enable delivery of events which can extend outreach and develop a fundraising capability which grows over time.

For the first time in 2025 we had catering and toilet facilities in the church enabling us to host more activities in the church building. During the year we held our first Wine tasting evening, Beer Festival and Murder Mystery evening. We also held a Summer Garden Party in the Rectory Garden, Bulb planting in the churchyard and Russ ran a Quiz night in the centre.

All the events held were profitable and in total raised £1844, plus we also invested in assets for the church, including festoon lights and banners, with a value of £567. Importantly, looking at revenue alone, before deductions, we took in £6321.

From an outreach perspective we attracted many guests from outside the church, and of those a good number have become regular event supporters. In support of this our payments system (iKnow and card terminals) functionality have worked very well.

In summary 2025 was an excellent year for establishing new events and sources of income and attracting a new and sustainable audience.

For 2026, our goals / challenges are to reduce costs, leverage sponsorship and augment income opportunities. A good example of this was our beer festival. Our objective in 2025 was to hold an event and break even, to establish the event. In this we were successful attracting over 180 visitors, serving 470 pints of beer (approaching 1000 half pint servings) and realising ~£500 profit. With the success of the first festival, we now have a platform to attract sponsorship and donations and our plan for the 2026 event is to attract at least £2000 beer and event sponsorship. Augmented income opportunities include items like raffles. If we organise raffles at all events based on 2025 attendances, we could conservatively expect to realise an additional £1500 income.

Increased attendance is another lever to grow income. Based on positive feedback we can expect returning guests and new faces to attend our 2026 events.

A big thank you to the whole team who contributed this year, Elveen, Charlotte, Georgina, Anna-Marie, Adam, Roger plus all the volunteers from around the church who made and served cakes and scones, served beer and cider and prepared and cleaned the church and centre.

**Ian Jones, Chair,  
St Margaret's Events Committee.**

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston  
Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

# The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

## Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

### General Funds Receipts & Payments Account

	Notes	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Voluntary receipts	1	89,739		73,427	
Receipts from activities for generating funds	2	2,517		9,577	
Receipts from Church activities - fees		5,670		4,719	
Contributions from team Churches		<u>1,200</u>		<u>1,200</u>	
			99,126		88,923
<b>Payments</b>					
Grants	3	3,084		3,340	
Church activities	4	85,418		83,094	
Quinquennial inspection fee		<u>0</u>		<u>899</u>	
			<u>88,502</u>		<u>87,333</u>
<b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>			10,624		1,590
<b>Bank current and deposit accounts 1 January</b>			<u>14,269</u>		<u>12,679</u>
<b>Bank current and deposit accounts 31 December</b>			<u>24,893</u>		<u>14,269</u>

## The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

### Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

#### Designated & Restricted Funds

	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds							Totals
	Rector's Building Discretion Fund	Sound System	Day Window	Restoration Fund	Flower Fund	Choir Fund	Organ Fund	John Cornwell Legacy	Media
Interest	0	33	10	5,275	15	71	290	0	84
Receipts	0	604	105,358	5	105	0	0	0	250
Payments	0	637	110,633	20	176	290	0	0	334
Balance 1 January 2025	0	2,000	0	217,204	240	102	0	23,148	1,041
Balance 31 December 2025	0	-1,363	10	-106,571	-220	74	290	-23,148	-707
Balance 1 January 2025	200	1,591	317	158,732	581	2,080	8,806	23,148	3,313
Balance 31 December 2025	200	328	327	52,161	361	2,154	9,096	0	2,606

#### St. Mary Magdalene Church

##### Restricted Funds

	Fabric Fund	Bell Fund	Harris Fund	Totals
Interest	29	17	0	46
Receipts	395	624	351	1,370
Payments	424	641	351	1,416
Balance 1 January 2025	0	250	351	601
Balance 31 December 2025	424	391	0	815
Balance 1 January 2025	5,693	3,097	0	8,790
Balance 31 December 2025	6,117	3,488	0	9,605

# The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

## Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

### Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2025

#### Monetary Assets

	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Totals 2025 £	Totals 2024 £
Bank current accounts	13,005		6,794	19,799	22,556
Bank deposit accounts	11,888	13,703	53,117	78,708	63,024
Central Board of Finance			16,627	16,627	141,488
Cash in Hand	0	0	0	0	167
	<u>24,893</u>	<u>13,703</u>	<u>76,538</u>	<u>115,134</u>	<u>227,235</u>

#### Debtors

Income Tax reclaim				3,020	3,600
Team expenses				300	300
Fees				142	184
Electricity				457	0

#### Creditors

Door mat hire				0	268
NEST Pension				194	194
HMRC				71	54
Photocopying				0	133
Hire of village hall				108	108
Gas				750	701
Electricity				0	211
Water				19	38

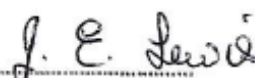
Stocks				360	290
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The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 3 March 2026 and signed on its behalf by

  
 Rev'd Elveen Mead

  
 Diane Whitford

  
 June Lewis

## Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

### Notes to the General Fund Receipts & Payments Account

	2025	2024
	£	£
<b>1) Voluntary receipts</b>		
Gift Aid planned giving	41,473	41,350
Non-Gift Aid planned giving	9,469	9,799
Collections & other giving	4,316	4,898
Income Tax recovered	11,230	12,351
Thursday Coffee Mornings	1,510	1,410
Sundry donations	21,741	3,619
	<u>89,739</u>	<u>73,427</u>
<b>2) Receipts from activities for generating funds</b>		
Fund raising activities	2,354	9,382
Sale of magazines	163	195
	<u>2,517</u>	<u>9,577</u>
<b>3) Grants</b>		
Church overseas	0	0
Home missions	844	800
Secular charities	2,240	2,540
	<u>3,084</u>	<u>3,340</u>
<b>4) Church activities</b>		
Salary & pension costs	16,620	15,779
Diocesan parish share	46,704	44,462
Church running expenses	6,361	4,389
Church maintenance	2,671	2,050
Insurance	4,883	4,789
Cost of services	1,645	1,843
Young families work	230	356
Church management & admin	6,175	4,530
Fund raising & publicity	129	4,896
	<u>85,418</u>	<u>83,094</u>

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT  
TO THE TRUSTEES OF STRATTON SAINT MARGARET WITH SOUTH MARSTON  
PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston Parochial Church Council (the PCC) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

**Responsibilities and Basis of Report**

As the charity trustees of the PCC you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

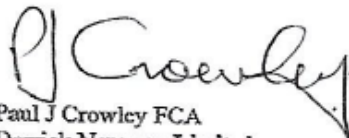
I report in respect of my examination of the PCC's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent Examiner's Statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect :

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the PCC as required by section 130 of the Act ; or
- (2) the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this respect in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Paul J Crowley FCA  
Derrick Newman Limited  
29 Bath Road  
Swindon  
SN1 4AS

14 March 2026