

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 31st December 2024

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St Margaret's Church Warden's Report for January to December 2024

In 2024 attendances at regular morning church services remained strong thanks to a very committed core congregation. The numbers averaged around 60 per week and up to 75 for communion services. Attendances over Advent and Christmas were up on the previous year, with well over 400 at the special services which were offered.

2024 was a wonderful year for our church and ministry team. On March 21st, Bishop Neil led a special service to licence Elveen as Rector of Stratton Team Ministry. This was followed by a celebration in the St Margaret's Centre with many of our congregation and distinguished diocesan guests. In July, Charlotte Stansfield joined the ministry team as curate and quickly established herself as a very popular and valued member of the team. We are blessed to have her. And we continue to enjoy the brilliant support of our lay ministers Alison Burston and Lisa Lodwick. Dan Read continues to be a lay minister emeritus. In addition to our normal service schedule, we once again enjoyed Taize services and a Prosecco & Praise service. 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. Mark Tubey, Rev. Michael Johnson, Rev. Victor Howlett and Richard Burston. Even so, it was necessary for a couple of services to be warden led, with the 'Desert Island Hymns' format proving popular, and we would always welcome other groups or home groups to lead services, bringing their own skills to 'morning worship'.

Sadly, in November 2024 we lost Bill Kingdon who served over many years as a stalwart member of our PCC, and we remember him fondly and with gratitude.

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 weddings and funerals on request. At Passiontide they led a 'living service', taking the congregation inside and outside the church and on July 21st they performed Joseph, a brilliant production which inspired all who attended. A huge thank you to all the choir for their dedication and also of course to 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 1 listed Norman church and work on the bell tower refurbishment progressed well during the year. The bells were taken away to be restored and upon their return we welcomed Bishop Neil back to St Margaret's for a Blessing of the Bells service in September. The major works on the new storeroom, facilities, raised bell ringing chamber and church kitchen facilities were all completed and in the last months of the year we were able to enjoy the fellowship of post-service coffee in church. Looking ahead we can see exciting opportunities for new activities in the church building.

Several fundraising and mission events were held during the year. Russ Riggs led quiz nights at the St Margaret's Centre which attracted around 20 teams with many residents joining members of the congregation. The second Stratton Community Fete was held on Saturday September 12th, again offering live music, dance, competitions,

a dog show, church heritage talk and a live rock band in the church, attracting families and residents of all ages to come and enjoy our wonderful church and St Margaret's Centre. Thank you to the planning team (Roger Smith, Georgina and Ian) for organizing the event and to all the volunteers who helped on the day. 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 2024.

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. And Ann Marie Dom continued her regular Jigsaw sales in support of the Children's Society.

For Remembrance Day on Sunday 10th November, we were joined by the Boys Brigade, Stratton Brownies, 1st Stratton St Margaret Scouts, Beavers, Cubs and Squirrels. Thank you to Graham Spackman who played the Last Post and the Reveille and to Ken Kirkman who read the exhortation. Some Junior Boys Brigade members read out the names of those who we remember from this parish. It was a meaningful service, and it was lovely to see a very full church sharing together in our act of remembrance.

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 maintains 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; Flower arrangers; Food collective; Funeral Vergers; House Groups; Knit & Natter; Magazine; Messy Church; Ministry Team; Morning prayer meetings; Mothers Union; Music Group; Operation Christmas Child (shoe box appeal); Organists; Pastoral Visiting; PCC Meetings; PCC Secretary; Prayer Diary; Readers and leaders of intercessions; Recycling; Social events; 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, 2024

It is that time of year again as our APCM approaches when I can take the opportunity to talk about St Mary Magdalene Church and tell you what a busy year we have had. Also, it is a chance to say thank you to everyone in our church who have supported me through another year as Churchwarden.

There have been many lovely services at St Mary Magdalene during 2024 and have hosted several team services, when congregations from Saint Margaret's, St Leonard's and Coleview churches have joined us. We also took part in two services at the Stratton Methodist Church this year.

We celebrated two delightful weddings in the summer, with one couple joining our congregation ever since. There was also a service of renewal of wedding vows with a couple who married at our church ten years ago. At the same service their two children were baptised. It was a great pleasure to welcome Reverend Trevor Day to take those services. By Dutch tradition he gave the couple a pair of clogs.

There were three further baptisms during the year, which is most encouraging.

Mary Crichton, who left our congregation to head for Norwich last year returned to visit us in February. Some members of our congregation together with Rev Elveen joined her for lunch to celebrate.

The church Quinquennial took place on 5 February with no major problems coming to light. The bells were mentioned as we are not ringing them because one of the bell supports requires attention. I have been in touch with Taylors Bells and am waiting to

hear. I will try them again. This was followed by our Triennial Inspection. Rev Sally Robertson came to do it and all went extremely well.

Early in the year I was invited by Angela and Rob Breakspear to share in the hymn choosing evenings and have very much enjoyed them. 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 but we also have had a little help from the internet when plans have changed at the last minute. We are very fortunate to have such a great team of musicians who provide us with such excellent music.

The Choir, led by Angela and Rob put on an excellent performance of the Passion at St Margaret's. The fantastic singing was interspersed with dialogue and an amusing view from two pigeons' points of view enacted by Liz and Roger Hillman was included. I also had a part to play. The whole performance was excellent and deeply moving.

On the 21st March I attended a service for Rev Elveen when she became Rector of the Team churches instead of Priest in Charge. It was another wonderful service with Bishop Neil of Swindon presiding over it and the Churchwardens handing her the keys to their churches. This means that Elveen can now remain with us for as long as she chooses giving us and her, continuity. The service was followed by an excellent buffet purchased from the Salvation Army.

I have continued to receive requests to reserve burial plots in the churchyard and in 2024 processed two burial plots and started two more for cremation plots at the end of the year. The process of obtaining a faculty takes about three months.

We changed the name of our Coffee Morning, every third Saturday in the month between 1000 and 1200, from Meeting Point to a Community Coffee Morning. A new sign, which was donated to us is now put outside the village hall on coffee mornings. Thanks to Richard and Pat and Will and Tina for their hard work providing delicious cakes and cooking bacon butties. Bill Giles began helping us with the cooking when others were away, together with Michelle, who also acted as front of house with me and has brought many of her friends to join us for coffee. Thanks to June Lewis too who has supported us and cooked bacon butties. Numbers have definitely gone up and we have a good gathering each month.

Home Communion visits have continued monthly during the year with Elveen and then Alison Burston and later Charlotte.

I have continued to run our All Age Worship service, once a month on the first Sunday. As always we have started with refreshments and some social time. Thanks to Rachel Jones for her help towards the service on some occasions too and the popularity of the service has continued. In August for the second year running we had a service of Praise and Blessings.

South Marston School came into church for their Easter service and as always it was excellent, with each class singing a song and a ukelele tune being played.

I would like to thank our School Governors who work very hard making sure the School and the Church have plenty of contact. Rachel Jones joined the staff of South Marston School in September and has now become a Staff Governor instead of our ex-officio Governor. However, when Rev Charlotte arrived she took Rachel's place as Ex-officio governor. We, therefore, continue to have a strong team of Governors from the church as Karl Glover continues to support us as a Foundation Governor, for which we are very grateful.

The School were invited to have their leavers' service in church, but plans had already been made to hold it in the School. Each leaver was presented with a book from the Church entitled Soul Fuel for Young Explorers by Bear Grylls.

We commemorated D-Day with an afternoon tea in the Church Garden. 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.

Rev Charlotte, our Curate, arrived to help Rev Elveen, in July which we were all very pleased about. She is a wonderful support to our Church.

When Rachel joined the teaching staff at South Marston School, she began bringing the School Celebration Assembly, along with parents, into church on Friday afternoon about once a fortnight. This has been very successful. The children also took over one of the window sills to illustrate the season. They began with Harvest and then Remembrance and have done some very good displays. The School Harvest Festival was also held in the church on 9 October, which was another delightful service.

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. The Church services and a letter from Elveen, but now Charlotte, are included in each issue.

We were very grateful to Alison Burston for leading our Remembrance Sunday Service on 10th November. It was followed by a service at the Warm 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. I had a visit from the Architect, used by St Margaret's for their re-ordering. He is providing some sketches, free of charge, so that we can ask a builder to give us a price in order that we know how much to raise.

Then suddenly Christmas was approaching and we began by holding our Christingle Service on the 1st January. The School choir came and sang two Christmas Carols and they were wonderful. The church was full and every child had a Christingle to take home.

For the second year running we were invited 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 school brought their nativity plays into the church. The stage was put up so that all the children could be seen. The plays were excellent, with most of the plays performed through song.

Charlotte led our Carol Service, which we kept to Friday night, 20 December, when we had a record attendance. Our Crib Service was held at 5.00 on Christmas Eve, which was delightful. That was followed at 9.00 with Christmas Holy Communion.

All our Christmas services were extremely well attended and possibly slightly better than the year before.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us keep our lovely church open and our services and congregations growing. We are fortunate to be able to keep our church open each day and I would like to thank Will, Tina, and Richard for opening and closing daily. Also, I must thank Will and Richard for winding the church clock each week.

Thanks to Mary and Dot for keeping the church sparkling. Thanks to our wonderful flower folks 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.

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 too.

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 with a view to being 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

Since the last report in April 2024, 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. Ably assisting us are the 'eyes and ears' in the parishes, Chris and Anne Pope for Stanton, Diane Whitford at South Marston, Liz Hillman and Dave Thomas who are 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 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.

As in previous years, we have been keeping all members of the two PCCs current with their DBS certificates. There are 15 certificates that will need renewal this year as part of the 3 yearly renewal cycle.

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.

A training session will be held in May for the Foundations in safeguarding. If anyone would like to join the 22 people already signed up, please contact Mary or Mike. This training maintains accreditation for those who require specific training to maintain their posts in the parishes.

**Mike and Mary Boshier
Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) April 2025**

PCC Secretary's report for the year 2024 - 2025.

The six PCC Meetings were all held in the Pollard room this year mainly due to the building restoration work being carried out in the church during the summer, and then in the winter it saved on heating costs.

During the past year Rev Elveen Mead has led our 4 churches with her dedication and enthusiasm. She has been greatly assisted by our two lay preachers, Alison Burston and Lisa Lodwick. We have now been joined by Charlotte Stansfield, our Curate, which is a great blessing. Some of the services have been cut this year, as there were not enough clergy, visiting clergy or lay preachers to cover them in all the churches.

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, flower arrangers, cleaning and many other important jobs. South Marston is still looking for a second Churchwarden to assist Diane.

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. Their reports are attached. We are hopeful that the Archdeacon will visit our churches to explain how the Parish share is calculated.

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 extensive this year at St Margarets. The bells were removed, repaired and re-installed. The inside bell ringing floor level was raised up onto a mezzanine floor, and a toilet and storeroom installed underneath. A new staircase was designed to give safe access to the bell ringers. Also, moveable kitchen units have been built at the back of the church, and they are utilised in a refreshment and social area. New moveable and stacking seating is still to be purchased. This was enabled with the help of an inheritance given for work to repair and rehang the bells, together with grants from various bodies. Bishop Neil visited to bless the bells once they were safely rehung.

There is still work to be done to repair some areas of the roof and porch as a matter of urgency, and money is in place for this. Also, there have been discussions for a disabled ramp into St Margaret's church, new church heating in both churches, and a new sound system which we hope to see installed at St Margaret's in the near future. A design for a new toilet for St Mary Magdalene is also being looked into by Diane Whitford. There have been several people involved in this work, but special mention should go to Richard Pflieger, Roger Smith and Ian Jones at St Margarets, and to Will Hiscocks, who does a great deal of the general maintenance at St Mary Magdalene. The previous Church Architect has been discontinued and a new Church Architect, Christian Randall, has been employed by both churches.

The matter of safeguarding has been discussed every meeting, and all proper procedures have been adhered to at the request of our Safeguarding Representatives Michael and Mary Bosher. 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.

A new H&S Spreadsheet has been created by our H&S representative Karl Glover, which has been most useful with regard to safeguarding and during 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. The ECO project was started with a service to draw our attention to ECO living. St Margaret's have moved to a different renewable Electrical tariff and awareness is growing. St Margaret's obtained a Bronze Award status in January this year and are working towards a Silver.

Care homes are regularly being visited, and June Lewis and her team have done a tremendous job of visiting and holding services at them.

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 to a better appreciation of music. The choir presented a musical play of "Joseph" during the summer, which was both fun and thought provoking. 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.

I cannot end without giving special mention to Georgina Martin, who is our Administrator for the Benefice. She has done an amazing job, and keeps this large ship afloat.

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

[Coleview Community Centre Church Report - January to December 2024 - APCM on 25th April 2025](#)

We are pleased to report that in 2024 we held a service each month - 7 Celtic communion services, , 5 led by Rev. Elveen Mead; 2 led by visiting clergy – Rev. Barbara Sheppard and Rev. Trevor Day; 3 Team services - 1 led by Rev. Elveen Mead, 1 by Lisa Lodwick and 1 Carol service in December.

We are pleased to have a regular congregation of at least 23 worshippers who join the other churches, if they are able. Those unable to come to Coleview, we keep in

contact either by telephone or visiting and taking holy communion to them. Some were really pleased to be at St. Margaret's church on March 21st when Bishop Neil, the new Bishop of Swindon, led a special service to license Elveen as Rector of Stratton Team Ministry.

In July, Charlotte Stansfield joined the Ministry Team as curate after her ordination at Bristol Cathedral on June 30th 2024. We are blessed to have her and it's like she's been here for ages! At her licensing reception in St. Margaret's Centre, it was great to meet Charlotte's husband, Anthony who has become a regular worshipper across all the churches. They have 3 children and Archie the dog and reside in the church house at St. Philips, Upper Stratton.

Elveen is still the only member of our clergy team licensed to officiate at a communion service and has to divide her time between St. Leonard's, St. Margaret's and St. Mary Magdalene. With the aid of her husband Alex, Elveen mostly drives straight to Coleview having led a service at one of the other churches first, often battling the traffic and roadworks to arrive on time!

We are blessed to get wonderful support from our lay ministers Lisa Lodwick and Alison Burston but sadly, due to ill health, Dan Read (lay minister emeritus) has retired from the rota. We thank him for his wonderful support over many years. We are further blessed to have support from the clergy mentioned in the first paragraph and others on our rota.

We are very grateful to our organists Rob South and Geoff Walters, who like Elveen usually come straight after playing at an earlier service at another church. Many thanks go 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.

It is so important to keep communications flowing between the churches and congregations and our grateful thanks go to Georgina Martin, our church office administrator, for being the cog at the centre! Part of her role is keep our Facebook page and Website up to date; print out the monthly magazine; update and print the orders of service needed for the specific time in the liturgical calendar.

A special thank you to our Coleview church team, Marion Wighan who opens the room and sets up the altar table each month; Doreen Jackson and Josè Skittrall who welcome the people in; Sheila White for putting up the hymn numbers; those who read the lessons and those who lead the intercessions. Also to Anne-Marie Domm, from St. Margaret's church for organising the refreshments for the Team services.

During 2024, the Coleview congregation supported the Swindon Food Collective, Rags2Riches, Operation Christmas Child, recycling at St. Margaret's Centre and financially to help meet our quota.

We look forward to welcoming new members to our congregation in 2025.

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. 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.

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

Swindon Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synod met 4 times during the year, with the Deanery Leadership Team meeting between Synods to plan the agenda and work on the Deanery Vision. The highlight of the year was Elveen's election as Deputy Dean, supporting the Revd Sally Robertson who continues as Dean. The main work focus of the year was adding flesh and bones to the Deanery Vision and Action Plan.

The February meeting featured presentations on the breadth of initiatives enabling churches and church members to support schools. The Deanery Leadership team also launched working groups to support the Vision and Action Plan:

1. School Church Relations - creating partnerships between schools and parishes utilising Growing Faith Chaplains;
2. Discipleship - encouraging and promoting Diocesan, parish and deanery wide opportunities to deepen discipleship and evangelism;
3. Marginalised Communities - supporting those who are marginalised in the deanery through partnerships with local councils and other agencies;
4. New Estates - ensuring new housing estates throughout the deanery are served by congregations, outreach and spiritual support.

At the May meeting, Archdeacon Christopher addressed Transforming Church. Together - a strategic plan for the Diocese, with local communities at its heart. He asked each parish to consider its vision for the future in this context. The Synod also heard about Eco-Church activities within Swindon. Several churches from the Deanery (including St Leonard's) are involved in this and had come together to form a Deanery-level group to learn from each other and coordinate initiatives.

In July the Deanery Synod held its annual barbeque and discussed the way our Benefice Plans linked to the wider Deanery Plan.

The October meeting focussed on a presentation and discussion of training opportunities for Lay leaders and congregations.

At every meeting we heard updates on local and diocesan priorities, as well as worshipping in a variety of styles and enjoying the hospitality of the host church. We encourage anyone with an interest in the wider deanery and the topic under discussion to come to our meetings.

**Jules Nolan
St Leonard's Deanery Rep**

5th Swindon Boy's Brigade Company.

We have been busy since our last year's report. We have taken part in competitions and events with the Gloucestershire Battalion, including football, 10 pin bowling, Hike and camps.

Junior Section members from around the Battalion went to Heatree Activity Centre on Dartmoor over the May half-term holiday. They enjoyed pond dipping, games, bush craft and a day at Crealy Adventure Park.

One of the Company Boys went to North Wales with the Boy's Brigade mountaineering club. He and his father, who is one of our helpers, had a great time. Camping and climbing with other members of the Boy's Brigade and enjoying the stunning scenery of North Wales.

He also went to the Battalion Company camp in Swanage for a week in July. Anchor Boys took part in a national competition. We had to make the biggest heart shape with equipment we had in the Centre. We laid this out in the large hall, and the Anchor Boys enjoyed putting everything out. They helped put all the equipment away at the end !

Company and Senior Boys entered the murder mystery challenge. They had a time limit to gather the clues around the hall and solve the case. They worked well as a team, each adding their ideas and the results were sent to Boy's Brigade Headquarters. They each received a certificate for taking part. Well done Boys.

In May 2024, the 5th Swindon BB company celebrated their 50th anniversary. We hosted the Gloucestershire Battalion annual Church Parade at St. Margaret's Church. We were joined by many Companies from the Battalion. After the service, we had refreshments in the Centre and a time to catch up and chat with fellow officers and Boy's. Thanks to Dr. Chris Spackman, one of our "old" Boys, who produced a commemorative badge and book for us, with help from the BB archive trust.

We recognise the Boys hard work in completing badgework and activities at our annual Presentation evening, where badges and trophies are awarded. It is a privilege to see the Boys grow in confidence and skills as they go through the sections.

Can YOU help us ? Do you know any Boys aged 5 - 11 years, who would enjoy games, crafts and making friends? We currently have vacancies for these age groups.

Please email 5swindonbb@gmail.com to find out more.

We are grateful to our staff and helpers for their hard work and dedication, week by week. Thanks to Elveen, Charlotte, Alison, Lisa, Dan and the congregation for their continued support of the 5th Swindon Boy's Brigade Company.

**Teresa Daglish.
Company Captain.**

Team Choir

The choir membership has remained stable over the last year and I continue to be humbled by the commitment and progress of those who sing with us – they really are a lovely bunch of people and we have a lot of fun. We spent the early part of the year rehearsing for a Passiontide service of readings and music from the Iona tradition, which brought the Easter Story to life and had some very dramatic and poignant moments, Hazel's solo at the crucifixion was particularly moving.

Easter was, as always, a busy time, with two services on Good Friday and three on Easter Sunday – it is a privilege to be able to sing anthems in each of our churches to support festival services.

After Easter much of the choir's time was taken up with rehearsals for "Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat" which we sang in July in St Margaret's. Choir and soloists did an amazing job and the service was very much appreciated by the congregation – there were some standout performances by Rob S as Joseph, Rob B as Pharoah and Hazel as narrator, but I was really encouraged by how many of the choir stepped up and took on small solo roles – all excellently performed. We then celebrated together at the Choir Summer BBQ before taking an extended break over the summer.

We started back in September, rehearsing pieces for Advent and Christmas. In November the choir sang a very well attended and beautiful Advent service in St Leonard's including two anthems, and followed this up with Christmas Carol Services in all three churches, with soloists Jean, Crystal and Hazel for the Once in Royal first verse and anthems including "The Truth from Above", by Vaughan Williams with an excellent solo by Jean, "In the Bleak mid-winter" by Harold Darke with lovely solos by Roz, Hazel, and Robert and a beautiful original carol written by Karen and Robert South "Hush the World" – which I'm sure will become a recurring Christmas favourite. All Christmas services were very well attended and we had many positive comments from the congregation.

My thanks go to the choir for their continued commitment and enthusiasm, to Geoff Walters for his support and amazing flexibility, whatever music I throw at him, and also to the two Roberts – South and Breakspear for their assistance in running the choir.

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

Stratton St Margaret with South Marston – Electoral Roll Report for 2025 APCM

This year we had to carry out a full renewal of the six-year-old roll. Many thanks to those Wardens and home-visitors who made sure everyone was contacted.

The result of the renewal exercise is:

On 22nd April 2025 there were 97 people on the roll.

At the previous APCM there were 98.

The changes may be explained as:

2024 APCM	98	
Added during 2024/25	5	OLD Roll total 103
Deceased in year	4	
Moved away	4	
Migrated to other churches	5	(or chose not to renew)
Various non-replies	4	(all of whom were contacted)
Seriously ill	1	
Possibly yet to reply	1	(counted as not replied)
Total "losses"	19	(Balance of old roll 84)
Old roll renewals	82	
New applicants this renewal	13	
Total new roll	97	(perhaps 1 to be added)

Andrew Martin
Electoral Roll Officer

Thursday Coffee Morning

Has enjoyed another rewarding year. It's not all about the money raised; it's more to do with the opportunity to sit and have a chat. For some the company is a very important part of their lives. However, none of this would be possible without the happy band of volunteers who each donate a cake when they are on duty. Now is the opportunity for me to say "Thank You".

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

A year where we took our first steps on the Eco-church journey. Unsurprisingly, the existing caring practises across our Benefice meant we had a good head start.

Here are the main highlights and if you are interested in our plans, please speak to Russ who hopes to put a small team together as we do what we can and reach out to others working towards similar goals.

St Margaret's and St Leonard's were regularly represented at the quarterly Diocesan facilitated Zoom meetings where central initiatives are explained and rolled out. These meetings create a supportive forum allowing the sharing of ideas/good practises along with time saving advice.

Both churches are benefitting from the £10,000 Diocesan grants towards green initiatives suggested by the surveyor who conducted Energy Efficiency Surveys at St Leonard's, pew heating and lighting improvements completed, and St Margaret's, installation of 3 Phase electricity supply for future gas boiler replacement.

St Mary Magdalene had its Survey completed and various plans are being considered.

Last Summer, we had our first Creation Team Service at St Mary Magdalene where Scriptural guidance on caring for God's Creation was brought vividly to life.

St Margaret's switched to a "green" gas tariff and will look at doing the same on electricity when the current contract expires.

Both St Leonard's and St Margaret's achieved a bronze Award under the Arocha UK Eco-church scheme. Jules and Russ wish to thank everyone for their support in achieving this milestone. Both churches play an active role in the local support group of churches working together under the scheme.

Plans are afoot for a Swindon -wide series of events over a week or so next Summer 2026. Early thoughts for us include a nature walk in Stanton Woods and giving stronger profile to Eco-friendly organisations at our St Margaret's 2026 Summer Fete but any other ideas would be welcome.

Both churches are looking at what is needed to try for a Silver Award, but first impressions are that much more congregational involvement will be needed to demonstrate our Eco credentials.

We are including relevant articles and ideas in the Weekly Church Bulletin from time to time to help us consider how we can all work together in this vital area.

We have a Creation Team Service lined up for August this year with Deborah Tomkins, an experienced speaker from the respected Green Christian Organisation, sharing Creation care, again drawing on Scripture.

We hope to hold a traditional Harvest Supper in the autumn. Nothing extravagant, a hearty broth and crusty bread or roll, preferably as an outreach event as experience shows that local communities like to engage with us around traditional festivals.

We have begun looking at our St Margaret's church grounds to see how we can encourage nature eg. by installing hedgehog and bird boxes, considering bird feeding stations and so on. Thanks to some funds secured, there will be strategic planting of bulbs and shrubs later this year, hopefully to encourage insects and wildlife.

St Margaret's PCC will consider the installation of EV charging points in the Centre car park. There is no cost or risk to us, a simple free survey and if agreed, installation is undertaken by electricity suppliers with the church receiving an income based on usage every year. Such spaces can be used as ordinary parking spaces at busy times so there should be no noticeable impact on general parking, but it could be a great demonstration of our commitment to the community, the environment and generate much needed funds.

**Russell Riggs
ECO Champion**

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston
Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

General Funds Receipts & Payments Account

		2024		2023	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Voluntary receipts	1	73,427		73,761	
Receipts from activities for generating funds	2	9,577		7,071	
Receipts from Church activities - fees		4,719		5,057	
Contributions from team Churches		<u>1,200</u>	88,923	<u>1,200</u>	87,089
Payments					
Grants	3	3,340		3,127	
Church activities	4	83,094		84,615	
Quinquennial inspection fee		<u>899</u>	87,333	<u>0</u>	87,742
Excess of Receipts over Payments			1,590		0
Excess of Payments over Receipts			0		653
Bank current and deposit accounts 1 January			<u>12,679</u>		<u>13,332</u>
Bank current and deposit accounts 31 December			<u>14,269</u>		<u>12,679</u>

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Designated & Restricted Funds

St. Margaret's Church														Totals
Designated Funds	Rector's Building Discretion Fund	Restricted Funds												
		Sound System	Day Window	Restoration Fund	Flower Fund	Choir Fund	Organ Fund	John Cornwell Legacy	Fete	Media				
Interest	0	0	52	14	5,200	23	90	397	4,727	95	146	10,744		
Receipts	0	0	810	0	96,351	80	105	0	40,883	4,089	0	142,318		
	0	0	862	14	101,551	103	195	397	45,610	4,184	146	153,062		
Payments	0	0	0	0	702	172	407	0	227,384	6,184	0	234,849		
	0	0	862	14	100,849	-69	-212	397	-181,774	-2,000	146	-81,787		
Balance 1 January 2024	200	5,408	729	303	57,883	650	2,292	8,409	204,922	2,000	3,167	285,963		
Balance 31 December 2024	200	5,408	1,591	317	158,732	581	2,080	8,806	23,148	0	3,313	204,176		

St. Mary Magdalene Church														Totals
Restricted Funds	Fabric Fund	Bell Fund	Harris Fund											
Interest	34	19	0									53		
Receipts	0	0	789									789		
	34	19	789									842		
Payments	0	20	939									959		
	34	-1	-150									-117		
Balance 1 January 2024	5,659	3,098	150									8,907		
Balance 31 December 2024	5,693	3,097	0									8,790		

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2024

Monetary Assets

				Totals	Totals
				2024	2023
				£	£
	General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds		
	£	£	£		
Bank current accounts	14,102	5,608	2,846	22,556	23,683
Bank deposit accounts			63,024	63,024	2,713
Central Board of Finance			141,488	141,488	281,001
Cash in Hand	167			167	152
	14,269	5,608	207,358	227,235	307,549

Debtors

Income Tax reclaim	3,600	3,509
Team expenses	300	300
Advertising in magazine	0	90
Fees	184	449
Value Added Tax	0	4,309
Ride & Stride	0	354
Electricity	0	351

Creditors

Door mat hire	268	244
NEST Pension	194	194
HMRC	54	39
Photocopying	133	50
Hire of village hall	108	162
Gas	701	786
Electricity	211	0
Water	38	0

Stocks	290	425
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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 11 March 2025 and signed on its behalf by


Rev'd Elven Mead


Diane Whitford


Ian Jones

The Parish of Stratton Saint Margaret with South Marston

Financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Notes to the General Fund Receipts & Payments Account

	2024	2023
	£	£
1) Voluntary receipts		
Gift Aid planned giving	41,350	40,790
Non-Gift Aid planned giving	9,799	10,666
Collections & other giving	4,898	5,715
Income Tax recovered	12,351	12,636
Thursday Coffee Mornings	1,410	1,414
Sundry donations	3,619	2,540
	<u>73,427</u>	<u>73,761</u>
2) Receipts from activities for generating funds		
Fund raising activities	9,382	6,963
Sale of magazines	195	108
	<u>9,577</u>	<u>7,071</u>
3) Grants		
Church overseas	0	0
Home missions	800	1,337
Secular charities	2,540	1,790
	<u>3,340</u>	<u>3,127</u>
4) Church activities		
Salary & pension costs	15,779	15,012
Diocesan parish share	44,462	46,797
Church running expenses	4,389	5,614
Church maintenance	2,050	1,839
Insurance	4,789	4,689
Cost of services	1,843	1,195
Young families work	356	439
Church management & admin	4,530	6,409
Fund raising & publicity	4,896	2,621
	<u>83,094</u>	<u>84,615</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 31st December 2024.

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').

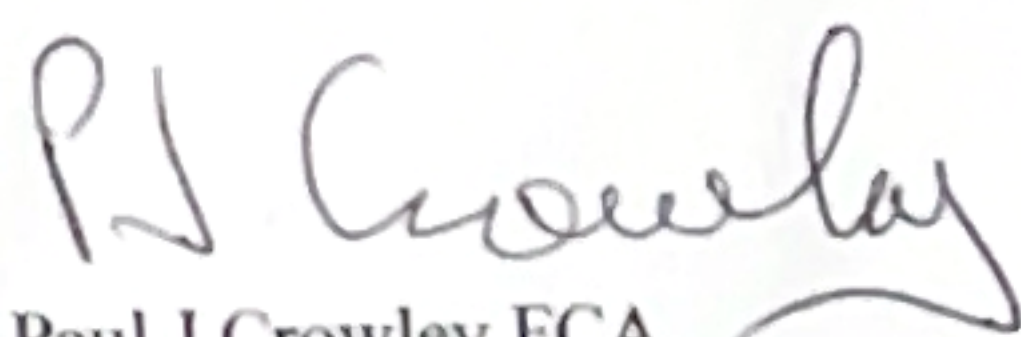
I report in respect of my examination of the PCC's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 2025