

# **St Mary's Stretton with Claymills**

## **2025 Annual Report**



**April 2026**

St Mary's Stretton with Claymills  
Registered Charity No. 1130916

## PCC MEMBERS

Revd Dennis Warner	Associate Minister
Karen Fearn	Licensed Reader (resigned and retired as Reader February 2025)
Shirley Irons	Reader Emeritus
Jenny Knopik	Licensed Reader
Janet Royall	Church Warden
Charles Pidsley	Chair and Treasurer
Christine Budworth	Deanery Synod Representative
Melanie Siner	Deanery Synod Representative
Laura Spencer	Deanery Synod Representative and Secretary
Louise Burke	
Ruth James	
Pauline Pidsley	
Paul Spencer	
Andrea Tabberer	Resigned 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2025
Paul Ward	

## **Deanery Synod**

Over the past year, the Deanery Synod have met on 4 occasions at Red Lion House in Horninglow, Rolleston Church, Hoar Cross Church, and St Paul's Church in Burton. Guest speakers have included the Diocesan Director of Ministry, Ecclesiastical Insurance and the Diocesan Church Building Support Office. We have also had presentations on Church Finances and Church Commissioners Investments. When the Deanery Synod met at Hoar Cross, there was a Eucharist service followed by a tour and talk on the history of the church.

There are currently 9 parishes in our Deanery who are without a Vicar. Our Rural Dean will be 70 this year and he has been given permission by the Bishop to continue in this role.

*Chris Budworth*

*Mel Siner*

*Laura Spencer*

*Dennis Warner*

## **Warden's Report**

Two key tasks of the Churchwardens are to care for the fabric and contents of the Church and to represent the Church membership (laity) in co-operating in this time of vacancy, to create a harmonious Christian community as part of the Church of England. In this report I believe there are no new issues within the fabric of the church at the time of this report.

The 2025 Terrier (inventory) was carried out in April and revealed the loss of 1 piscina with pebbles and there had been no other loss or new damage, but items found in the vestry cupboard will need adding onto the inventory.

The wooden crosses in the whole of the churchyard, where there was a stone memorial in place, have all been removed, especially in the cremated remains plot. We have erected a large sign within the cremated remains plot, that informs every one of the regulations concerning the plot, and I will be putting notes on those memorials that have solar lights, glass receptacles and photographs asking for them to be removed over the next 3 months.

We have had to repair the church gates leading onto the main road, which have been done to a very high standard, also a repair to the inner left hand south door, as it had been broken, this is hopefully in place at the time of the APCM. A part of our retaining wall has been knocked down, but repairs are in hand.

There are several parishioners involved in caring for the Churchyard to make it an attractive and welcoming environment. These include Shirley's house group, Angela, Charles and John. A big thank you to you all.

I would personally like to thank the significant number of Church members who volunteer their time regularly to ensure the Church services take place as smoothly as possible. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all the sides persons,

service co-ordinators, Sacristan Assistants, and refreshment providers, as well as the speakers Dennis, Shirley, Jenny, Ray and Louise and the worship team who lead us in worship every week, our readers, and those who lead our intercessions, including the Bishop, Archdeacon and other clergy. Thank you to Chris Rimmer whose hard work and dedication allows us to Live Stream our services opening the word of God to those outside of our church. A big thank you to Dennis, whose love and service to us all allows us to have communion, and who is a living example of a Servant Heart, an inspiration to us all.

Ricky who cleans the Church, those who arrange flowers, clean the brasses and manage candles and sacristy materials, as well as those who give up their time to decorate the church for those special occasions. Not forgetting the very popular In Our Back Yard Events, our second Walk of Witness and the Meditations.

Thank you to Laura who sorts out the funerals and weddings, for Laura, Val and Paul who are our wedding and funeral vergers, and for Laura as the secretary of the PCC who does her best to keep me under control. Thank you.

Thank you to Charles for his continued support of myself, for his wisdom and kindness shown to me throughout this year, and my personal thanks with all my heart to everyone's loving support and heartfelt prayers. Words could never say what that has meant to and for me. Thank you.

*Janet Royall*  
*Church Warden*

## **PCC**

In 2025 there were 5 meetings of the PCC. In addition, there was a meeting with the Archdeacon relating to the ongoing vacancy on 5<sup>th</sup> February as well as several written communications.

There was a meeting of PCC members Jan 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Archdeacon's visitation report. There were also meetings in March and July to discuss the creation of a parish profile for St Mary's alone.

## **Summary of PCC Meetings**

March 20<sup>th</sup>

CW &JR reported on meetings with local stonemasons held to resolve issues about non-compliant memorials in the cremated remains.

Lack of Safeguarding officer discussed but not resolved

CB took over the co-ordination of pastoral visiting.

Separate policy for cremated remains plot reviewed and amendments ratified.

Decision made to employ cleaner for the Church.

May 22<sup>nd</sup>

Shirley Irons' permission to officiate supported  
TAR signed off by the independent examiner  
Accountants CLH appointed for 2025 account IE  
CP & JR reported on meeting with Julie Jones retired CEO of the Diocese about the vacancy.  
JR reported that the Diocese had given permission for wooden crosses to be removed once memorials installed.  
Agreed for improvements to Hall stage, new curtains and other repairs.

July 15<sup>th</sup>

GDPR policies reviewed and agreed  
JR & CP reported on meeting with Fiona North from Diocese about future developments at the back of Church.  
Lone worker policy approved.

October. 1<sup>st</sup>

LB took over the Baptism Co-ordinator role  
Alpha course scheduled for the New Year. Invites on Christmas cards agreed  
Discussions about ongoing delay in filling incumbent vacancy

November 12<sup>th</sup>

Social media discussion. Agreed PCC member to moderate each group including Facebook.  
JR agreed to take on Health and Safety role.  
Review of Wedding and Funeral extras fees and Staff salaries.  
Report received that Parish Support Officer allocated to St Chads and that funding allocated from deprivation fund to St Chads to support combined vacancy of the two Churches.

*Charles Pidsley*  
*Chair of the PCC*

## **Treasurer's Report**

We are now completing our second year in vacancy. Thanks to a strong leadership team including an active PCC, the expected contraction seen in our first year has now begun to reverse with a net gain in attendances to services especially the Easter and Christmas events. This has translated into a stabilisation of income from giving and from fees. In addition, active marketing of our Church Hall has seen a small rise in income accelerating towards the year end.

We have been very fortunate in receiving a considerable non restricted donation from a Church member of £20,000 which provides financial stability. The PCC has included this as a designated fund for future developments. These may include

development of the Church to improve our offer to the Stretton community and further reduce our carbon footprint.

Other significant income comes from the Thursday afternoon Cafe. This is steadily increasing its footfall and drawing in members of the community to our Church services.

The Church continues to be attractive for large funeral parties and has hosted two choir concerts successfully.

In terms of the Church fabric, the major activity of 2025 has been to install a new roof alarm system. This cost £7000 and was supported by a grant from the Benefact trust received in 2024. We expect the residual cost of £5000 to be balanced by reduced Insurance premiums over the next 3-5 years. It can be evidenced by the reduction of £800 shown in the accounts for this year 's premiums already. The other benefit is removal of the loss due to metal theft restriction previously applied by our insurers due to a non-approved alarm system.

We continue to give to other charities as part of our annual tithe amounting to £8270 for this year.

YMCA, BYFC, Footprints, CMS, £2000 each  
Church of England Childrens Society £270.

*Charles Pidsley*  
*Treasurer*

## **Planned Giving**

2025 has shown a slight dip in donations compared to 2024. This, however, is small, and the amount of people Gift Aiding donations has increased. The number of donors has stayed stable, which is pleasing to note considering we are currently in vacancy.

Gift Aid has enabled us to claim just over £9,000 in tax refunds from the Government. If you are a UK taxpayer you can Gift Aid your donations, making them worth 25% more to us. If you are not already giving regularly, I hope you will consider it. Thank you all for your generosity.

There has been an increase in those giving via standing order rather than envelopes.

I am, as always, very well supported by Charles Pidsley in my role and in navigating the online portal for donations and Gift Aid claims, which is much appreciated.

*Susan Ward*  
*Planned Giving Officer*

## **Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll has been revised with notice issued on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026 and it closed on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

After last year's new roll, there were 53 people. On completion we have 54 people - 16 men and 38 women.

The roll will reopen after the APCM on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026

*Charles Pidsley*  
*as Chair of PCC in absence of Electoral Roll officer*

## **Safeguarding**

It is with my thanks and a testimony to the people of St. Mary's, that everyone has renewed their Safeguarding and DBS in a timely manner. We are one hundred percent compliant. Safeguarding is the responsibility of us all, I know the endless legislation is a challenge, but St Mary's has risen to that challenge and excelled, thank you all so much.

*Janet Royall*  
*Safeguarding Officer (for now)*  
*Church Warden*

## **Alpha**

When we ran our first Alpha in a while in February 2025, we had 6 candidates and all of them currently attend Church. So after the success of last year's Alpha we have held another this year. Again we have 6 candidates, 4 of whom currently attend Church. One came through receiving the Christmas card. We have just had the Away Day, which was in Rolleston and went very well. This wouldn't run without all the prayer support, speakers and all the lovely people who have cooked food. A special thank you to the helpers who give up their time every week.

*Lou Burke*

## **Baptism**

We have had an exciting time over the last year with Baptisms. We have had 2 children each month that we have had a Baptism. Janet, Dennis and myself meet with the families and talk through the service and explain the promises to be made by themselves.

We show them a clip of Baptism and discuss any questions they may have regarding this. We ask that they come and visit the Church at least once but

suggest a couple of times is better. We are pleased that people have attended the Baptism services and from that have booked their own child's Baptism. We also send a card on the child's anniversary up to their 5<sup>th</sup>.

Just a big thank you for Cheryl who put in a lot of hard work in before me and Janet who does the visits with me.

*Lou Burke*

## **Burton YFC**

This year has been one of remarkable growth and deepening impact. We connected with 2,344 young people across schools, churches, and community settings, representing a 16% increase from last year, with overall engagement rising by 14%. In total, our team delivered 1,432 youth work sessions, providing safe and consistent spaces for young people to grow physically, socially, mentally, and spiritually.

Our support work with local churches also grew significantly, increasing by 38%, supported by our Young Leaders Training Course for 16–20-year-olds, which is equipping the next generation to lead with confidence and faith. A particular highlight was our residential, which saw a 40% increase in participation, with 63 young people from four youth groups coming together for a time of fun, community, and faith exploration. Most significantly, eight young people made decisions to follow Christ.

We also saw stronger connection and continuity across our work, with many young people now moving between school, community, and church-based activities, experiencing a more joined-up journey of support. A further highlight was our first pop-up prom dress shop, where 43 young people chose their prom outfits for free, offering a simple but powerful expression of practical care. Across the year, we delivered 3,266 hours of direct contact time with young people. This included 210 young people being given the opportunity to respond in person to the message of Jesus.

With your support we have been continuing to be a consistent Christian presence in our communities, offering inclusive, accessible, hope-filled support to all, regardless of background or belief. Thank you for your generosity and ongoing prayers.

For more details, please see our latest Impact Report August 2025 at [Impact Report 2024-2025 – Burton Youth for Christ](#) or sign up to our newsletter at [Updates – Burton Youth for Christ](#)

*Sue Garb*  
*Burton Youth for Christ*

## **Chatterbox Café**

The café was re-started just four years ago and is still going strong! It is 'run' by 21 volunteers and the number of those coming have built up from about 15 to a regular 20-25 attendees who come for the food, the company, the chat, and to a lesser extent, the games and jigsaws.

At the moment, just under half of the regular members are from the village, which is good, but although I do really appreciate the church members who come regularly, it would be good to have more so that more contact could be made with people from the village. However, I must end with a huge thank you to all those who just come, or serve and those who bake cakes, as it would be nothing without you.

*Shirley Irons*

## **Church Hall**

The Church Hall has seen a steady year for regular hirers with several changes but consistent use by Slimming World, U3A groups and the Scouts. Hiring for private parties has increased we believe due to limits placed by the Priory centre. The PCC has agreed to not hire the hall out to parties for over 16-year-old birthdays. New Year parties are subject to individual assessment by the PCC.

Several improvements have been made to the Hall including, new curtains and new carpet to the stage including removal of a trap door! Claire Goodwin the cleaner, has continued to make ongoing touch ups to paintwork and her family have been kind enough to carry out several repairs.

The new car park surface completed in 2024 has continued to improve the attraction to hirers.

Overall the Church Hall continues to represent a valuable asset to the Church both financially and as a contribution to the community.

*Charles Pidsley*

Please note that from March 1<sup>st</sup> 2026, Claire Goodwin is now the manager and cleaner of the Hall. A specific telephone number for hall enquires will be published in the near future.

## **CMS**

The Link Letters sent by the Day family keep us in touch with their activities in Thailand. They are on display at the back of Church. Can I encourage you to read them.

We are able to support them through prayer and financial support from the Church and individual members of the Congregation.

Jason works as an area personnel manager for Overseas Christian Fellowship in the Mekong Area. Many of the minority groups find that the Bible is not available in a written form that they can understand.

Tracy continues to be involved in the Sunday School as Team Leader at their Church and is a Child Safety/Safeguarding Officer.

Ruby finished at Capernwray Bible College and has moved to John Brown University in Siloam Spring, Arkansas, where she is doing Business Studies. Please pray she can settle here and balance her studies and earning money to supplement her scholarship.

Libby will complete her studies this year. She has recently turned 18 and has passed her driving test! She is applying for University but may have to go to the US as some UK Universities will not recognise her as a national citizen in this country.

As a family, after 23 years with CMS they have decided to move back to the UK during 2026. Please pray for Jason and Tracy as they both begin to apply for jobs in this country.

*Ruth James*

## **Footprints Family**

A Heartfelt Thank You and Impact Report from The Footprints Family to our dear friends at St. Mary's Church,

On behalf of myself as CEO, alongside our trustees, committee members, staff, and most importantly the children and families we serve, I would like to extend our deepest and most heartfelt thanks for your continued and faithful tithe giving.

Your consistent annual support is not only appreciated—it is vital. It provides a dependable foundation that allows us to plan, sustain, and grow our work with confidence. In a world where funding can often be uncertain, your commitment stands as a powerful expression of compassion, faith in action, and belief in the value of every child's life.

Over the past 12 months, your generosity has directly contributed to meaningful and lasting impact within our community in Kenya.

### **Key Achievements Over the Past Year**

#### **1. Education and School Development**

Your support has helped us continue providing quality education to 170 children at Footprints Academy, ensuring children have access to a safe, structured, and nurturing learning environment. We have strengthened our academic programmes,

supported school resources, and integrated digital learning through the introduction of laptops—opening up new opportunities for our children to develop essential skills for the future.

## 2. Family Strengthening and Community Outreach

A core part of our mission is to keep families together wherever possible. Over the past year, we have expanded our family support initiative to move than 14 families providing dignity packs, mattresses, mosquito nets, cooking equipment, and seeds with fertiliser. These practical interventions empower families to rebuild with dignity, improve living conditions, and work towards long-term self-sufficiency.

## 3. Health and Wellbeing

Your giving has supported essential healthcare needs, including access to medical treatment, nutritional support, and ongoing care for vulnerable children, including those with complex health conditions. This has been life-changing and, in some cases, life-saving.

## 4. Food Security and Sustainability Initiatives

We have continued to invest in sustainable solutions such as small-scale farming and poultry projects. These initiatives not only provide food for the children but also create learning opportunities and contribute towards the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

## 5. Safeguarding and Operational Improvements

Over the past year, we have strengthened our safeguarding measures and operational structures to ensure the highest levels of care and accountability. This includes improvements in site security, staff roles, and emergency planning—ensuring every child is safe, protected, and supported.

Each of these achievements is a direct reflection of your kindness and commitment. Your giving is not just financial—it is transformational. It restores dignity, creates opportunity, and brings hope where it is needed most.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on this work—continuing to transition towards family-based care, strengthening our community impact, and ensuring that every child we support is given the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for walking this journey with us. Your partnership means more than words can fully express, and we are incredibly grateful for your continued trust and support.

With heartfelt thanks and every blessing,

*Kerry Watson*

*CEO & Founder,*

*The Footprints Family*

*On behalf of our trustees, committee members, staff, and children*

## **Funerals**

We have held 9 funeral services in the past year which have been conducted by Dennis, Richard Tebbs, Robin Trotter and Kim Thomas. Verger's duties were undertaken by myself and Val, and the average attendance was 105. Music for these services was provided by Roger Sharp on our Clavinova keyboard, the Gresley Male Voice Choir, or by the Funeral Directors playing recorded music through their portable PA system.

*Laura Spencer*

## **Helping Hands**

We are still running 15 years on, though we are limited in what we offer. We are still here to help those who need it. We arranged 2 doctor's appointments, dentist visit, and have one regular person being visited. Thank you to everyone who supports or has supported over the years, we have met some great people.

*Lou Burke*

## **House Groups**

There are four house groups for bible study operating currently led by Sue Stokes, Charles and Pauline Pidsley, Lynette Yates and Shirley Irons. Three of the alpha group members from the end of last year are involved in house groups and it is hoped to involve the current Alpha course participants in a house group on completion.

In addition, there is a bi-monthly prayer group hosted by Laura and Paul Spencer.

Just started is a coffee morning hosted by Pauline Pidsley.

These are in addition to the Men's Munch monthly hosted by Paul and Laura Spencer and Chatterbox Café on Thursday afternoons manned by a team led by Shirley Irons.

*Charles Pidsley*

## **In Our Back Yard**

We held our Easter event, and we had about 5 families attend, we only had one family come to our summer event. We decided to see what support we would get this year; we advertised on more social media sites. In October we held our Annual Light Party, and we had 35 families attend, which was 42 children, it was lovely and we have made new contacts. The event was support by many of our Church members. We have craft activities, a story or clip and a little talk, and lovely refreshments. Thank you everyone who helps at any of these events.

Thank you to the team who have supported this venture and follow God's plan.

*Lou Burke*

### **Men's Munch**

Men's Munch is a monthly event to which all men who come to St Marys are all invited via the weekly newsletter and by personal email. We meet to have lunch together on the third Saturday of the month and deepen our friendships and encourage each other. We have met every month during the past year and had between 8 and 16 men attend. Everyone speaks very highly of the food quality and the company. It is funded on voluntary contributions from the members so there is no demand on the church's finances. We hope to continue this over the next year.

*Laura and Paul Spencer*

### **Pastoral Care**

We have a small, but dedicated, team who regularly contact parishioners who have requested extra support by visits or phone calls.

Our Lay Reader also takes Home Communion on a regular basis to a few parishioners who have difficulty in attending Church.

We have received one new visit request from a Stretton resident which we have been able to accommodate.

Cards have been sent out at Christmas and Easter to keep in touch with parishioners unable to attend Church. In addition, cards have been sent out to parishioners who are facing illnesses, bereavements, or in hospital – when these circumstances are known. For this, I appreciate being kept informed by members of the congregation.

Two more people have recently joined our team, for which I am very thankful. If anyone else has an interest in this ministry, please contact Janet Royall (Church Warden) or myself.

*Chris Budworth*  
*Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator*

### **Social Events**

In June we held Picnic in the Park, where Melbourne Town Concert Band played. We held refreshments in the hall, which nearly covered most of the cost of the band! It was attended by 40/50 people mostly church people but we had about 10/15 from the community. The weather was good and so was the music.

In February we had an afternoon tea for all the Church members, we catered for 43 people, I hope that everyone had a great time, and we will look to having something in the summer. This was a time to spend time with each other building on family and getting to know people you don't know well.

Thank you to everyone who has supported in these events setting up, making food, tidying up - It is great teamwork.

*Lou Burke*

## **Sunday School**

At St Marys Sunday School we have had a great end of year for the 2025-2026 year. would like to give you some highlights from our last year and a request for some assistance.

We have completed the *Baking through the Bible* book to great success; we have thoroughly enjoyed all the baked goods we have done as a group. We have also completed our series on the book of *Revelation*, which I thought went really well.

With the older group, we have done a series on Biblical masculinity, looking at how men in the bible compared to Jesus and how Jesus treated women in turn. This, I thought, was much needed during these times we are going through especially on social media. The boys seemed to engage with it and learn from it.

With the younger ones we had Pauline Pidsley do a three-week program on Biblical views of nature which was loved by the children. They thoroughly enjoyed it.

With the older group we just finished a 4-week program on Science and Faith which was really successful. We used the program called *A Test of Faith* produced by the Templeton Foundation and it was well received by all.

We have seen the young people grow, in stature, in knowledge and in their relationship with God. Their confidence has also grown in public speaking and letting their voices be heard. We have also grown in numbers as you can see from the attendance document attached, we have a steady number of young people and adults attending. This has been a blessing but also an interesting effect, I would welcome suggestions on what could be done with the adults who stay in Sunday School as a church. i.e. cell group, etc.

However, this increase in numbers has also meant increment in duties (i.e. more drinks and toast to be made, more resources and time used). It has also meant that we take longer to do everything we do in the Sunday School, and thus we have not been able to go to the main service until after 11, sometimes 11:30.

Normally I would request additional help from the congregation, but I am aware that we are stretched thin enough. So, I would rather like to train the help we need from within the Sunday School.

We need an additional Sunday School leader; I have approached Louisa Cartwright who has been coming for several years, and she has agreed to become the new leader. We will need to get her DBS checked which I would request the PCC to pay for. Also, we will need to train her which is something that can be done internally at no extra cost. Louisa has requested, in addition, to do some volunteering with St Mary's, I have put her in contact with the necessary people.

We also need helpers to make drinks and toast; at this moment we have Ozzy and Enya helping in the kitchen. I would like to make their role more stable and provide a basic food hygiene course for them to complete online. I would also request that the PCC pay for this training. I can find the courses they can do online.

In addition to the staffing needs, we also have some equipment needs. Our sports equipment is in dire condition. We have a couple of balls and a cricket set that its incomplete. I would like to request the following equipment be considered for donation to the Sunday School:

- Cricket soft balls
- Dodgeball soft balls
- Tennis Paddles and soft balls

I hope these requests are reasonable and received in the spirit in which they are made. Thank you again for the support the PCC give the Sunday School, it remains a joy and a privilege to do it.

*In Christ  
Dan and Rachel*

### **Walk of Witness**

We held our first Walk of Witness on Good Friday. It was attended by around 30 people, mostly from St Mary's and St Chad's plus 2 visitors who saw our post on social media. We set off from the four corners of Stretton and we walked to the Church where we held a little service before having refreshments served in Church. Hope you can join us this year.

*Lou Burke*

### **Weddings**

There were just 2 couples who got married at St Mary's in 2025. The services were conducted by Rev Phil Mann of St Werburgh's Church, Derby, and Rev Liz Chamberlain, and verger's duties were undertaken by myself. One couple had their own worship band and the other couple provided all the music for their service on CDs.

Currently, we have 2 weddings booked for 2026. Please look out for notices about the banns of marriage and forthcoming weddings in the Newsletter. All the couples are personally invited to come and hear their banns being read so if you should meet them in church, please make them welcome.

*Laura Spencer*

## **YMCA**

Our Church continues to support the Burton and District YMCA in several ways Firstly, we continue to give £2000 as part of our tithe to the unrestricted funds of the YMCA to support its ongoing work in providing mediation services, counselling and food parcels. The YMCA continues to provide supported living accommodation from three separate units, and provision of cheap household goods via 4 shops.

Secondly, a number of Church members volunteer in both the Burton shop and as a trustee on the Board.

Thirdly, Church members give generously at Harvest to provide non-perishable food for the food bank.

Our Church continues to support a very effective local organisation providing services to local people where the need arises.

*Charles Pidsley*