Additional Reports for the APCM 2026

1) Wardens' Report

General Comments for all three church buildings

All annual testing and inspections were completed during the year, including servicing the gas boilers, checking fire extinguishers, fire alarm system, electrical PAT testing and dividing doors. Ensuring all our buildings and infrastructure is safe for all user's.

St Andrew's Church

We are grateful to Jon (A-Z Landscapes) who continues to beautifully care for the churchyard and has undertaken some additional maintenance tasks in the church grounds. We thank Allstons for their annual trimming of the boundary hedges and trees.

A huge thank you to Carolyn and Steve who continue to care for the churchyard and maintain our records relating to the churchyard.

During October 2025 work was completed to replace the front pathway. There is now a wider level path. The access into the church has been improved. The step down into the porch has been removed providing level access into the church. The stone step was repositioned once the builders had levelled the path with the porch entrance. An additional pair of internal porch doors have been skilfully crafted, a wooden surround with glass infill. We can now retain the heat inside the church, while providing a more inviting welcome to those coming in. Visitors can see the church is open and hopefully no longer find it daunting to enter.

We are grateful to those who assist with tea and coffee each week and especially those on the flower rota team who keep the church looking beautiful and cared for.

St Matthew's Church

St Matthew's continues to be used by Little Angels preschool and the Guides uniform group. Open Table Network meet each month and share a time of fellowship and Holy Communion. We thank God their meetings continue to thrive, and they enjoy the safe space of St Matthews.

Allstons removed the tree by the front gate due to disease. Otherwise, no significant work has been undertaken during 2025, apart from general maintenance and upkeep. We are grateful to Tim Chandler for his assistance with DIY tasks, and Jon (A-Z Landscapes) for maintaining the outside grounds.

We are in the process of obtaining quotes to undertake some essential structural works. To make the apse safe by removing the rotted wood in the uprights and to replace the glass in the front skylights and improve the way in which the glass is held in place. We also need to decorate the main area of the church as it is looking tired and neglected following the high volume of use it experiences during the week.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the back outside area and what we can do to significantly improve this area. Something will need to be done to improve the surface and stop it becoming a dirty area. To achieve this, grants will need to be applied for to raise the funds required to undertake this project.

St Anne's Church

Church@10 is now well established, and it is lovely to see new faces at our weekly services as well as a growing fellowship among our regular church family.

The Community Café met every alternate Saturday morning, and has been renamed Chat and Chill, for 2026. We are pleased that our local Councillors support this initiative and other community activities we provide.

Little Angels Preschool stopped using St Anne's Church in July, when they decided to centre all their activity at St Matthew's. The scout uniform groups continue to meet at St Anne's. It is lovely that the scouting groups take part in some of our church activities and our Remembrance Sunday Service.

We are really pleased to report that the transformation project started at the end of October 2025 and was completed earlier this year. There is now level access to the rear of the church's outdoor area. We are grateful to the dedicated work of Built to Last (BTL) who constructed the decking area, ramped access to a patio. Installed planters and replaced the old, dilapidated sheds with a beautiful, hand-built purpose designed storage facility. A pair of windows have been replaced with double opening French doors onto the decking. Photos are included below for those who haven't been able to visit St Annes and see the completed works. The raised beds continue to thrive, thanks to the green fingers of Sue Boughtwood who tends them and keeps them tidy and productive.

We would like to thank Ant Chapman for his DIY skills and his willingness to help care for our church building. Again, a huge thank you to Ant for his weekly assistance to clear away after Church at 10 and set up for CCS (Course of Christian Studies) who use the Church Monday evenings. We also extend grateful thanks to Paul Allen for his care of the front grass and garden of the church, for the flowering plants he has generously provided to brighten up the front of the church.

We are also grateful to all those who help with the set-up of Church at 10, washing up and clearing away after.



The new doors leading to the garden



The outside decking area



The patio and raised beds



The new sheds



The new patio area seen from the garden

Thank You

We would very much like to thank our Ministry Team for all their efforts, often going above and beyond. Thank you for all your hard work in our parish, in our schools, for all your pastoral care and ministry.

We thank everyone who supported the Ministry Team during 2025. Those who take part in the smooth running of services and the tireless upkeep of our church buildings and grounds. Thank you to everyone who takes part in our Mission and Outreach activities. To those who represent our church in the local schools and community services, such as Foodbank and Community Supermarket, Pride in Place, Community 360, etc.

We thank each and every one of you for keeping our churches going in faithful worship and witness of God's kingdom, and for your financial giving. The cost to upkeep our three buildings and pay our allocated portion of the Parish Share is a continual cost pressure. Please continue to keep our church in your prayers, and we all thank God for his generous provision.

Yours in Christ

Ruth Snowling and Marie Paget
(Church Wardens)

2) Safeguarding Report

Over the past year fortunately we have not had many safeguarding issues and those that we have had have been dealt with promptly and procedures have been followed in order to take appropriate action to resolve these. We have used the Diocesan Safeguarding team in Chelmsford for advice and have followed this appropriately.

I am pleased to report that those people who were due to undertake the training offered by the Diocese have done so and this includes myself. Please remember that this training has to be redone every three years in order for us to be up to date with changes in safeguarding, particularly those that apply to the Internet and cyber bullying.

We now have the Dashboard which is used to record the activity in the parish and I am pleased to inform you that after this meeting we will be up to date with all our policies and procedures. The Dashboard has a traffic light system which indicates where the parish is at and we will have green lights on all the safeguarding measures we have to take.

I would like to remind people that when a new activity or group is set up in the parish a risk assessment has to be undertaken and I am responsible for ensuring that this has taken place and that we have covered all aspects of risk. If you are involved in setting up any activities, please contact me so that I can see the risk assessment to ensure that everything is covered. If you are unsure about any particular aspect of the risk assessment, please contact me so that we can discuss this.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the PCC for being vigilant in regard to safeguarding and would encourage you to remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility with regard to children and vulnerable adults.

I am at the end of a phone and my number is on all the posters and I am always happy to speak to anyone who may have concerns about a member of the congregation or a member of the public. Even if you only have a query, it is okay to phone me or email me. It is better to be safe than sorry.

Let us hope that 2026 to 2027 will be a year free of safeguarding issues, but if we have them they will be managed appropriately.

Susan Watson
(Parish Safeguarding Officer)

3) Discipleship Courses

Over the course of last year, as a parish, we facilitated three discipleship courses. These were conducted online, using Zoom, and held on weekday evenings. They were well attended with members of our church family engaging well.

The courses which we have run are as follows:

- ### Understanding the Sacraments

  Starting on 11th March and continuing for five weeks through the season of Lent, we ran this course which explored the sacraments within the Church of England and why they are used.

- ### We Believe – Exploring the Nicene Creed

  2025 was the 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). Throughout the year there were global ecumenical celebrations and a renewed focus on the Nicene Creed as a foundational, shared statement of faith for Christians. As part of this, we ran this 4-week course from 2nd September, exploring and unpacking each of the clauses in the Nicene Creed, allowing for delegates to learn about the history, and the reasons why this ancient creed is used today as an affirmation of our Christian Faith.

- ### Voices of Advent

  Starting on 25th November and continuing for four weeks, we ran this course during Advent. Across the weeks, the course explored the following topics:

  - Week 1: The Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
  - Week 2: The Prophets – Isaiah and Micah.
  - Week 3: The Herald – John the Baptist.
  - Week 4: The Virgin Mary

The course explored the Bible's various perspectives that shape our preparations for Christmas.

Martin

4) Monthly Prayer Group

Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.

Jeremiah 29:12 (NRSV)

This little group has been up and running for just over the year, and continues to remain powerful, peaceful, and very rewarding. Everyone is welcome to come along, to join in if you feel led or just sit in fellowship with a cuppa and be in God's presence.

We met at St. Andrew's Church, originally on Fridays, but now on the first Monday of each month, and we have our church doors open ready to welcome and receive those who feel the need of prayer or who just come to visit our church and to sit in peace. It is another opportunity where we can be accessible to those in our community who may be searching. On one occasion we had a person who came in seeking help and now attends our church service on a Sunday morning. This is a reminder to us all, that God works in small ways but with a huge purpose.

In our prayer space we intentionally pray for God's creation, worldly situations, the growth of our Lord's Kingdom, our buildings, the clergy, our schools and our community, as well as personal prayer requests (spoken and unspoken), and anything which has been placed on our hearts. And whilst doing this, we sit and rest in God's presence to listen to what may be given to us. Scripture is sometimes read and prayers flow from this.

We continue to pray that this small group will grow to bring our church prayers flooding to God. So having read this, we hope to see you soon.

Carolyn, Sue B, Martin and Marie

5) St. Andrew's Churchyard

Our churchyard is a beautiful, peaceful, resting place, where pastoral conversations have been had, and many other encounters of speaking to people as we seem to be in the right place at the right time.

We are glad to report that the sapling from the Acacia tree which was mentioned in the previous year's report has continued to grow healthy and again we can see it through the East window in all its glory showing us the new life which we had hoped for.

The maintenance never stops, and we remain grateful to Jon (A-Z Landscapes) whom we would like to thank as he has continued in all weathers to keep our two-acre open churchyard looking cared for and loved. He is so respectful in his work whilst also keeping designated areas for our wildlife projects. On a few occasions he has gone above and

beyond by carrying out extra work duties to our churchyard. One being that of cutting up and disposing of a fallen tree, so we didn't incur any additional costs, and secondly, he managed to fill in a couple of hedgerow gaps with fencing, these gaps were becoming wider by the public as they used them as entrances into the churchyard. We are extremely grateful to him and constantly thank him. We continue to thank Marie for overseeing Jon with clear instructions on any other work to be carried out.

We are also grateful to Allston Tree Surgeons who came and removed a few small trees along the East side which unfortunately had died over the winter. we have used them for many years, and their knowledge is so appreciated.

In both cases the green waste is removed, which is a great help, this then leaves the seven fixed bins which are constantly used and filled by families, so, to enable us to remove this waste we would like to thank a resident for the opportunity to use his Council green waste bin this past year, and he has agreed to do the same for the year ahead which helps very much with the planning of the churchyard. We would, again, like to thank Marie for her efforts in the overseeing of the emptying of these bins – it is a tiresome task, and she takes home the plastic and much general waste from the bins which she recycles at home. This act of kindness is so appreciated, again, keeping costs down by not having a skip.

The general tidiness of the grounds and car park areas is good, as we do tend to get a lot of rubbish due to the footfall walking past. We would like to thank those who regularly litter pick to keep our wonderful place looking cared for.

It is good to see that our allocated bin for our four-legged friends is used, so this is no longer a problem for visitors walking around. This is emptied regularly, though not by the council.

We have been busy with many enquiries of burial plots, either for existing graves or new spaces to be allocated, as well as faculties of burial positions fulfilled, and just general requests to be reunited in loved ones resting place when their time comes.

We continue to maintain the churchyard grave plans, both mapping out the plots and digitally recording all the allocated positions.

Steve and Carolyn

6) Open Church (St Andrew's)

Open Church continues to run every Wednesday afternoon, concluding with Celtic Evening Prayer. A consistent number of adults attend, and they have formed a supportive group, enjoying each other's company and friendship. It is lovely also to see other visitors from the community, coming into Open Church and sitting in our beautiful, holy space. We offer a gentle, peaceful space where anyone can sit quietly and receive pastoral care and an opportunity to pray if they wish.

The number of children who drop in on a Wednesday afternoon continues to increase, and they come from a range of local schools. Good conversations are had with parents both

outside at the gate and inside the church. Open Church now prepares between 90 and 100 small treat bags for the children each week.

With the appointment of our parish Children and Families Worker, Jackie now organises an activity each week for children to sit and do, building up our church's connection with children in our communities. The children certainly enjoyed decorating the Christmas tree, with each child being encouraged to hang something on the tree.

We are thankful to everyone who volunteers to help at Open Church, making drinks and washing up, handing out cake and drinks to the children or helping Jackie at the activity table. We are blessed with some long-standing volunteers as well as several new members joining the team. It is lovely to see some of our regular visitors step up and take a more active role, making drinks for those who drop in.

We continue to think of new ways to make it a meaningful time for all who drop in and visit Open Church, both young and older visitors. Everyone is welcome, so if you have not been to Open Church, please do, you will be made most welcome.

Martin, Carolyn, Sue Boughtwood and Marie

7) Community Chat and Chill (St Anne's)

This is a welcoming outreach initiative run fortnightly on a Saturday, with the aim of opening our church doors at St Anne's to the local community and creating a safe, warm, and inclusive space for all. The sessions are informal, relaxed, and accessible, offering a place where people feel comfortable to come just as they are.

The core purpose of Community Chat and Chill is to:

- Welcome members of the local community into the church building
- Offer a safe space for conversation, connection, and companionship
- Provide a warm space, particularly important during colder months or times of increased need
- Reduce isolation by encouraging social interaction in a friendly, non-pressured environment

This initiative reflects our church's commitment to hospitality, community engagement, and practical care for our neighbours.

Each session offers:

- A warm and friendly welcome from volunteers
- Opportunities to sit, chat, and build relationships at a relaxed pace
- Hot drinks and light refreshments (bacon sandwiches/cheese toasties/seasonal treats)
- A calm, non-judgmental atmosphere where everyone is respected

There is no expectation to participate in structured activities or religious discussion, allowing visitors to feel at ease and simply enjoy being present.

Community Chat and Chill has become a valued space for:

- Individuals seeking companionship and conversation
- People who may feel isolated or disconnected
- Those in need of a warm, welcoming place to spend time
- Building trust and positive relationships between the church and the wider community

The consistent, friendly presence of volunteers has helped make the church feel approachable and safe, particularly for those who may not typically engage with church life. The sessions are supported by a small team of committed volunteers who help with setting up and clearing away, welcoming guests, making refreshments, engaging in conversation and providing a listening ear. Their kindness, consistency, and care are central to the success of the initiative. All refreshments are provided by volunteers, and any donations received go directly to the church. As a result, there is no cost to the church for this outreach. Funds from this initiative also help support 'The Well' on Fridays.

Moving forward, we hope to:

- Continue running Community Chat and Chill on a regular basis
- Strengthen connections with attendees and the wider community
- Explore gentle ways of responding to emerging needs
- Encourage more church members to become involved in supporting this outreach

Community Chat and Chill is a simple but powerful expression of Christian welcome and care. By opening our doors and offering warmth, time, and hospitality, this ministry helps our church live out its calling to serve and love our local community in practical and meaningful ways.

Nikki

8) Parish Children and Family Worker

Since being in post at the start of December, I have got to know a lot of people in the community and got my face known in the local area, as well as making links with local agencies and local schools. I have gone to Stay and Play, the Brownies, the Youth Club at the Oaks, so that I am having links and building relationships with local families.

I have developed craft activities at Open Church, and we now have children coming and sitting down and doing crafts. The numbers vary, and it seems to be weather dependant as we had more staying in the church when it was colder outside. With the warmer weather, I still have a core group staying and chatting, writing prayers and doing crafts. Sometimes the craft has a link to Bible story or verse, and this gives me a chance to discuss the story - I keep it very brief and informative just trying to sow that seed of curiosity. Some parents and youngsters will also sit in pews and chat, and some will do the crafts too.

In September I will be setting up a toddler group at St Anne's on a Thursday morning 9.30 to 11.00am, with prayer at the start and the end of each session, and very brief Bible verse

or story (as 3-year-olds do not sit and listen for very long!). I feel that this will be a good opportunity of meeting and befriending local families, and with luck - my dream is that they will then come to Jesus and church.

I am listening to reading at Roach Vale School and at Willowbrook School. This gives me a great opportunity to chat to staff and pupils and let them know about church events.

We have been a pilot for Kick Academy aimed for 11–15-year-olds, and though the project is good, it has not been used or accessed very well in the community at all. The most we have had is two participants, which has been disappointing.

In September we will be introducing iSingPOP to Parson Health School, and we hope that this will be a great opportunity to get youngsters engaged with and hearing worship songs and Bible verses. We hope that this will develop into a regular and exciting group.

I have developed a new event called Chat and Play at St Anne's, and this runs at half term and school holiday times. The age group is 0-11years, with parents/carers, and we are an inclusive group – typically, so far, we have about 20 adults and 30 children who have come to each session. Soon we will be able to use the outside space, which is great and looks so good. Thank you everyone for their hard work.

I have taken School Chaplaincy training, and Mentor training with CYO (Christian Youth Outreach). I have completed an online course on children with distressed behaviour, and I have been to Boxted School with Jo from CYO to see how their Prayer Space activities work. I have also taken two online courses with The Bible Society about running holiday clubs. I have met and shared ideas with two local family workers but as Rev. Sue says 'it needs to work in our parish' as the context is unique.

I have many other ideas to explore, but reflection and monitoring is the name of the game, and building trust and relationship is so important in these early days. I feel very privileged to be in this role with and look forward to it continuing to evolve and develop.

Jackie

9) Parsons Heath School Mentors

As School Mentors we go into Parsons Heath School most Thursdays in term time to talk to the children selected by the Headteacher. At lunchtime we are present in the playground and the children talk to us there.

We mentor two children each week for roughly half an hour sometimes longer, and during these sessions we play games and have various fidget toys, bubbles, stickers, pipe cleaners for them to make something if they wish. We feedback after each session on a specially designed form for the Headteacher. The Staff have been very welcoming, and we feel privileged to offer our help and support.

In the second half of the Summer Term, we will be engaging the Year 6 children with the CYO (Christian Youth Outreach) Bounce Course, led by our Children and Family Worker -

it will be a first for us as a mentor team. This is an activity designed by CYO as a preparation for Children to transition from Junior School to Senior School.

CYO trained us for mentoring, and we have joined the staff for safeguarding training specifically for schools.

The recent Church Schools Inspection (SIAMS) gave the school very positive feedback, and they were particularly impressed by what the Church did to support the school with mentors.

Sarah Chandler and Sandra Coulter

10) Eco-Church Group

Since the last APCM, the Eco-Church Group has organised two Bug Hunts (wildlife surveys of the churchyard) in June and September at St Andrew's Church. The next bug hunt will be on Saturday June 6th, 2026, between 10am and midday at St Andrew's Church. This is for family groups from the parish and beyond.

We ran a "Spend a Penny" campaign to raise money for toilet twinning, and we are delighted that the two toilets at St Anne's Church have now been twinned with some in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nepal. Thanks to Rev. Philip for lending the caravan toilet for use as a collection "bucket" for the donations, and for doing the necessary paperwork.

We collect used blister packs at both St Andrew's and St Anne's churches for recycling at Boots. Many thanks to Mary who oversees this project.

Sue Biffen is very kindly organising a quiz night and fish & chip supper on Saturday June 20th, 2026, at St Anne's Church on behalf of the Eco-Church Group - please put the date in your diary! This event is to raise money for the local and international environmental charity 'People's Trust for Endangered Species'. This is a worthwhile charity to support, and we hope will help towards gaining the Eco-Church Silver Award – St Andrew's Church currently has the Eco-Church Bronze Award, and it is nearly at the silver level.

On a monthly basis, Sarah is helping with the litter pick in St Andrew's churchyard. The wildflower area will be marked out again in the churchyard so that all can enjoy this wonderful space.

Many thanks to all the Eco-Church Group, and to Rev. Sue for her support.

Mary, Sarah, Carrie, Sandra, Sue Biffen and Philip