

The Abbey Church of the Holy Cross Pershore



**Reports for
Annual General Meeting of
St Andrew's Centre Trust
Meeting of the Parishioners for the Election of
Churchwardens
The Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Tuesday 5 May 2026

At 1900 at St Andrew's Centre

The Parish of the Abbey Church of the Holy Cross, Pershore

Tuesday 5 May 2026

Opening Prayers

Agenda

Annual General Meeting of St Andrew's Trust

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous Meeting of St Andrew's Centre held on 6 May 2025
3. Report for 2025
4. To receive and adopt the Accounts for 2025 and appoint the Independent Examiner

Meeting of the Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens held on 6 May 2025
3. Choosing of Churchwardens
4. AOB

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 6 May 2025
3. Presentation of Electoral Roll
4. Election and appointment of:
 - a) Members for PCC
 - b) Independent Examiner
5. To consider and receive the following:
 - a) A report on what PCC and the parish have done this year
 - b) PCC accounts for year ending 31 December 2025
 - c) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church
 - d) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
6. Statement on Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adult Policies
7. AOB
8. Date of next Annual Parochial Church Meeting

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
HELD at ST ANDREW'S CENTRE on TUESDAY, 6th MAY, 2025 AT 19.00.

Present:

Revd. Canon Claire Lording - <i>Chair</i>	Michael Hodges
Samantha Andrews – <i>Warden</i>	Margaret Goodrich
Martin Fowler - <i>Warden</i>	Sarah Thomson
Edward Denley – <i>Treasurer</i>	Jean Andrews
Sara Speed - <i>Secretary</i>	John Andrews
Peter Stansbie – <i>Lay Vice- Chair</i>	Jo Greenaway
David Long	Judy Dale
Sandra Long	Jane Knox
Janet Stansbie	Richard Williams
Suzanne Clarke	Olive Hall
Robin Hancox	Hilary Fowler
Susan Denley	Michael Doley
Jan Ayres	Jason El’Habid
John Ayres	Jean Pritchard
Ann Bray	Martyn Spence
David Bray	Revd. Jayne Parker
Ven. Chris Liley	Revd. Nigel Hawkes
Canon Chris Terry	Bill Newman
Barbara Priscott	Sally Whyte

Apologies:

Julie Newman	Stephen Knox
Jean Evans	James Macdowall-Scott
Jean Pritchard	Catherine Cadbury
Alison Jeynes	Duncan Cadbury
Carolyn Harford	Julia Hawkes

Canon Lording opened the meeting in prayer.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of ST. ANDREW'S TRUST

1. Apologies

Apologies were received.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting of St Andrew's Trust held on 7th May 2024

The minutes of the previous Meeting were received.

Proposed by Peter Stansbie, seconded by Richard Williams. Approved.

3. Report for 2024 R. Hancox was thanked for preparing the report included in the Annual Meeting booklet.

There were no questions.

Bill Newman proposed, seconded by Judy Dale, to receive the Report of the Trustees 2024. Approved.

4. Accounts

Robin Hancox explained that it had become much more difficult to obtain grant funding. The criteria for eligibility for the National Lottery Community Fund had undergone frequent changes, but current funds should be adequate for the year ahead.

Jean Andrews proposed, seconded by Martin Fowler, that the Accounts for 2024 be received and adopted. Approved.

The Trustees were grateful to Eric Wiles for his help in preparing the Accounts.

Edward Denley proposed, seconded by David Long, that Eric Wiles be appointed as Independent Examiner of Accounts. Approved.

Canon Lording thanked Robin Hancox and the other trustees.

ST ANDREW'S PARISH CENTRE TRUST – SECRETARY'S REPORT 2025

The Trust was established in 1971 to raise funds for “the conversion of the former Church of St Andrew’s and its subsequent maintenance.” It receives funding through grants, donation, legacies and fund raising at coffee mornings and socials – we thank PASA for organising these.

The Trustees have received £12,000 from Wychavon for the PCC’s project to improve the area surrounding the font. Having met the cost of the initial surveys and architects fees the balance was refunded to Wychavon and will be reissued in 2026.

Additionally the Trustees obtained a grant of £5950 to enable the PCC to upgrade the sound system.

The Trustees are holding £1800 from Benefact Trust together with £2740 from Reserves for the repairs to the East and North Walls where there is a water ingress issue. Additionally we have offers of £2500 from Droitwich Preservation Trust and £4500 from Pilgrim Trust for this work which should be carried out in Summer 2026. The Pershore Place Board awarded the PCC £3885 for the replacement of the St Andrew's Chancel carpet and the lobby flooring on 11 December 2025

The withdrawal of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme which enabled VAT to be recovered will add to the demands on charities which support us.

We are delighted to see the Centre being well used by the community - we will continue to play our part.

The Trustees are : Rev Canon Claire Lording (Chair), Robin Hancox (Secretary/Treasurer), Richard Hill and Richard Williams.

St Andrew's Parish Centre Trust 501353

Receipts and Payments to 31 December 2025

Balance as at 1 January 2025

CAF Bank	£17,542.45	
Cash In Hand	nil	
	£17,542.45	
Reserved Funds		£17,179.05
Unreserved Funds		£363.40
		£17,542.45

Income

Donations – Coffee Mornings	£366.14	
Grant Lottery	£5,950.00	
Fund Raising	£117.50	
Bank Interest	£20.94	
	£6,454.58	

Expenditure

Abbey PCC - Place Board		£420.00	
Abbey PCC - Architect – Outside Works		£840.00	
Abbey PCC - Place Board Refund		£10,740.00	
Abbey PCC - Sound System Upgrade		£5,950.00	
Bank Charges		£64.00	
		£18,014.00	

Summary of Funds

Reserved Funds	as at 1/1/25	Income	Transfer	Expenditure	as at 31/12/25
Grant – Sound System	nil	£5,950.00	nil	£5,950.00	nil
Grant –Outside Improvements	£12,000.00	nil	nil	£12,000.00	nil
Stonework/Guttering	£4,540.00	nil	nil	nil	£4,540.00
Grant – Turner Trust- Toilets	£639.05	nil	nil	nil	£639.05
	£17,179.05	£5,950.00	nil	£17,950.00	£5,179.05

Statement of Funds as at 31 December 2025

Reserved Funds	£5,179.05
Unreserved Funds	£803.98
	£5,983.03

Balance as at 31 December 2025

CAF Bank	£5,983.03
Cash In Hand	nil
	£5,983.03

Reviewed By Eric Wiles

Signed



Date 20/7/26

MINUTES OF THE MEETING for the ELECTION of CHURCHWARDENS
on TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025

1. Apologies

Apologies were received.

2. Minutes of the previous Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens held on 7th May 2024

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were received and signed by Canon Lording. Proposed by John Ayres, seconded by Jason El'Habid. Approved.

3. Choosing of Churchwardens

There were two nominations for churchwardens, namely Samantha Andrews (proposed by Robin Hancox, seconded by Sue Gooderham) and Martin Fowler (proposed by Wendy Perks, seconded by David Long). There being no other candidates, they were duly appointed to serve as churchwardens.

The Wardens were thanked for their support over the past year.

4. Any Other Business

None.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
On TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025

1) Apologies

Apologies were received.

2) Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 7th May, 2024 were received and signed by Canon Lording. Proposed by Sandra Long, seconded by Susan Denley. Approved.

3) Electoral Roll Officer's Report

William Newman gave the report. There were 182 names on the Electoral Roll, with 133 being resident within the Parish, and 49 non-resident. W. Newman was thanked for his work in completing the full revision of the Roll. The names on the Electoral Roll would be available to view at the Benefice Office or by contacting the Electoral Roll Officer.

4a) Election of Members of the Parochial Church Council

Susan Denley had completed a term of 3 years' service and did not seek re-election. Canon Lording thanked Susan for her service.

Jean Andrews (proposed by Michael Hodges, seconded by Janet Stansbie), Edward Denley (proposed by Richard Jones, seconded by Graham Gooderham) and William Newman (proposed by John Ayres, seconded by John Bragg) were duly elected to serve for a 3 -year term of office. Ann Bray, Suzanne Clarke, Sandra Long, Sarah Thomson and Sara Speed would continue to serve.

Revd. Jayne Parker, Judith Dale, Martin Fowler, Jason El’Habid and Peter Stansbie serve as ex-officio members. The PCC was thanked for service given.

4b) Appointment of Independent Examiner

The Treasurer reported that Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd. had given excellent service over the past year.

Samantha Andrews proposed, seconded by Judith Dale, to re-appoint Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co. Ltd. as the Independent Examiner for 2025. Approved.

5 a) PCC and Parish Reports

A comprehensive review of the work and activities of the Abbey had been included in the Annual Meeting’s booklet (page 9 onwards). There were no questions.

Janet Stansbie proposed, seconded by Martyn Spence, that the Annual Reports be received. Approved.

5b) Treasurer’s Report and Presentation of Audited accounts for the year ended 31st December, 2024

A full report had been included in the Accounts for the year ended 31/12/24. The Treasurer noted that he been in post for 3 years, but the first 2 years had been complicated by the Replacement Organ Project. With this year being “normal”, it had been easier to have a clearer view of the financial situation.

The PCC was grateful for the generous financial help received from the Friends of Pershore Abbey towards fabric costs.

There had been a small surplus of £7,623 for the year as a result of successful fundraising events, more concerts and increases to St Andrew’s hiring activity. Factors, such as increased energy costs or bad weather for the Plum Fayre, could easily deplete this surplus.

There were no questions.

Hilary Fowler proposed, seconded by Barbara Priscott, that the Accounts for 2024 be adopted. Approved.

The Treasurer was thanked for his work.

5c) A Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

A copy of the thorough report compiled by the churchwardens and Judy Dale had been included in the APCM booklet. The Inventory and log book were available in the hall for inspection. There were no questions.

Sally Whyte proposed, seconded by Jane Knox, that the report be received. Approved.

5d) Deanery Synod Report

A written report giving details of the activities of the Deanery Synod had been included in the APCM booklet. Judy Dale, Jason El’Habid and Martin Fowler were thanked for their service as Deanery Synod representatives. The other churches in the Benefice do not have any Deanery Synod representatives, but Canon Lording provides updates. There were no questions.

Robin Hancox proposed, seconded by Bill Newman, to receive the report. Approved.

6. Statement on Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Policies

The Safeguarding Report for 2024 had been included in full in the APCM booklet.

Suzanne Clarke (Safeguarding Officer) read out the Safeguarding Statement.

Safeguarding training and necessary DBS checks had been carried out during 2024.

All Parish policies for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, as listed in the report, have been reviewed and adopted by the PCC.

There were no questions.

Canon Lording thanked Suzanne Clarke for all the help she had given in training and record keeping across the Benefice.

Any Other Business

On behalf of everyone, Suzanne Clarke thanked Canon Lording for her service over her 10 years at Pershore Abbey.

Date of the next APC Meeting

The next APCM will be held on Tuesday 5th May 2026.

The Meeting closed with The Grace at 7.30 pm.

4) Election and appointment of:

- a) Members for Deanery Synod
- b) Members for PCC
- c) Independent Examiner

5) To consider and receive the following:

- a) A Report on what the PCC and the parish have done this year

VICAR’S REPORT

As we review 2025 it is clear that the many challenges of the pandemic are now behind us in terms of Abbey life and activity. We have continued to build on the growth that we have seen in the past few years and are in a secure position as we seek to build God’s Kingdom in this place. Our commitment to being a healthy and sustainable church has not diminished and as a result there is much to celebrate.

The Abbey community has continued to grow, with an average Sunday attendance of 160, the majority of whom are sharing in the 1030 service. It is interesting to note that the choral tradition which is so important at the Abbey is attracting worshippers from other parishes in the deanery as well as from further afield. This is also seen in some of those who join the service via the live stream, with many of them joining from the other side of the country or from other parts of the world. The online Abbey community also continues to grow, through the live stream and our well-established social media platforms.

The smaller services offered by the Abbey are also important in the worship we are able to share. The saying of the daily office each weekday, the midweek communion, the service for healing and wholeness and Iona worship all attract a faithful congregation and regularly welcome new people. The breadth of worship offered reveals our commitment to remembering that one style of worship will not suit everybody.

One of the aims on our Health and Sustainability Plan is that we want to have at least 10 families involved in the life of the Abbey by 2027. Café Church has been the primary focus for this aim and has been successful in not only welcoming families and children to the service but also enabling them to attend month after month so that Café Church becomes their church. This has provided a good foundation for Sam Andrews, our Children and Families' Worker, Suzanne Clarke and the team who work alongside them, to offer other events and occasions when children and families can be involved in Abbey life. We have not met our aim objective yet, but we are confident that we are doing the right things to engage with as many children and families as possible.

The number of people who wanted to share in Easter and Christmas celebrations was really encouraging this year, with an increase of those attending compared with last year. The significant attendance increase at Christmas was astonishing and it was a real joy to share in celebrating the birth of Christ with so many people of every generation.

Our wedding ministry remains stable in a fast changing and competitive market where couples can choose to get married in all sorts of places and venues. Although we conducted fewer marriages this year, 8 compared with 10 last year, we were involved in 3 marriage blessings compared with none last year. We value our wedding and couples' ministry and receive consistently good feedback from our couples about the group marriage preparation we offer and the support shared on the day of their service.

This year saw a significant increase in the number of funerals we were involved with, 43 compared with 27 last year. Last year we had concerns that faith-based funerals were simply not meeting the community's needs, but that doesn't seem to have been

evident this year. It is always a privilege to journey with bereaved families as they give thanks for their loved ones and friends.

Similarly, there was an increase in the number of baptisms conducted, 29 compared with 17 last year. This is really encouraging and sees a return to similar numbers pre-2024. This can also be seen as evidence that our work with children and their families is bearing fruit as parents make the choice to invite the church to be part of their child's special day. It was also significant that this year we conducted several adult baptisms. This was further evidence of the quiet revival amongst Gen Z.

Throughout the year we have continued to focus on our welcome ministry with an additional focus on how we can reach out to those living with dementia, neurodiversity and their carers and families. We hope to launch some specific resources and strategies in 2026. Our work as a Welcome Directory church was also affirmed when Revd. Matthew Farrow from HMP Eastwood Prison, was our guest preacher on Prisons' Sunday.

It has been another full year at the Abbey with many different events and services taking place which have reflected our core desire to be a place for everyone in the community. There are too many occasions to mention in this report, but it is worth mentioning a few of them to give a flavour of what we have been about. The resident peregrines proved to be a global draw, with people travelling to Pershore to view them or following their progress via YouTube. We welcomed a group from our link parish in Salzwedel and had a fun weekend with them. We welcomed Paul Robert as our guest preacher during Christian Aid Week. We hosted the Wellbeing Hub at St Andrew's as they provided a Christmas Day lunch to 50 people who might otherwise have been on their own.

During the year much attention has been given to the fabric of the Abbey, not only working through the Quinquennial Report requirements and our plans for a greener heating system, but also the challenges of a moving northeast transept. Judy Dale and the fabric team, including our architect, Joanna Daykin, have done an incredible job in ensuring we are the best custodians of the fabric entrusted to us.

St Andrew's Centre once again proved to be vital as a mission resource, enabling us to be home to a great variety of community groups and events. We are still patiently waiting for the completion of the legal processes which will enable us to take over the ownership of St Andrew's. It is hoped that this will then enable us to have better access to grants and funding for necessary repairs and the development of the centre.

Once again, all those who work for the Abbey, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, have excelled themselves in giving so generously of their time and talents, often doing more than would be expected. It is that level of commitment which enables us to do all that we do and they deserve our wholehearted thanks.

The Abbey has worked hard to be a warm and welcoming community and the increase in engagement levels from across the community and beyond bears witness to that. We hope to continue to build on this in 2026, confident at all times that we are joining in God's mission in this community.

Revd Canon Claire Lording

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

2025 was another busy year at the Abbey. The very full schedule of services, regular and occasional, together with the wide range of concerts and other events in the Abbey through the year are only made possible by the dedication and enthusiasm of our many teams of volunteers, too numerous to mention by name. To everyone who has yet again in 2025 given so willingly of their time and talents, a huge thank you. Without you we would not be this lively and joyful community serving God in Pershore.

Some new things to the Abbey included Walking Church, which met for the first time in May and has continued to meet bi-monthly ever since. This new way of being Church is open to all including four-legged companions with refreshments afterwards. Another first was the Easter and Christmas Wreath Festivals displayed in the side aisles. Participants were invited to take part from groups or individuals with a connection to the Abbey or St. Andrew's, and this was extended to our local schools at Christmas. Fourteen wreaths were displayed at Easter and eighteen at Christmas.

The house bible study groups continued during 2025, looking in more depth at St. Luke's Gospel. Groups met in January/February, June, and September/October with at least four different venues and days available to choose from. Thank you to all who hosted and led these bible studies.

Our thanks to Stevie Quick, our Events Coordinator, who stood down at the end of the year. We were delighted to appoint James MacDowall-Scott as our new Venue Events Coordinator. James will combine this new role with his existing position as Director of Music.

Thanks also to Chris Liley, who also stood down at the end of the year, from his role as Coordinator of the team of "Lifters and Shifters" who erect and dismantle staging and move furniture before and after concerts.

Once again in 2025 all the many aspects of the Abbey's life and work have been brilliantly supported by Elizabeth and Fiona in the Benefice Office and we thank them for their hard work and commitment.

The Churchwardens' responsibility for the upkeep of the building is largely exercised through the Fabric committee and we are grateful to them, particularly the chair Judy Dale, for their work during 2025. Their activities are reported separately. Of special note, however, was the arrival of the Steinway grand piano, generously gifted to the Abbey by the Friends. New Choir robes were also obtained during the year and both processional crosses were repaired. We can confirm that the routine maintenance tasks and records for both the Abbey and St Andrew's were properly completed during 2025

We have, as ever, been encouraged by Claire and the PCC and are grateful for their support.

Sam Andrews and Martin Fowler, Churchwardens

ABBAY LINK MAGAZINE

Abbey Link rolls gently on. We have still have the main team – in no special order – of David Paynter who manages billing of advertisers and is invaluable as proofreader; Bob Doust who seeks out new advertisers and liaises with existing advertisers over updated copy. Roger Piper who manages the logistics of delivery through letterboxes in Birlingham, Pershore, Pinvin and Wick. Each of these roles involves considerable effort and thought. I am very grateful for their work.

Then there are people who distribute copies of the magazine for delivery and the many, many folk who make the final deliveries. We are grateful to everyone.

There is an ongoing need for new deliverers as people move away or become too infirm. Roger's suggestion of appeals in Abbey Link itself as well as in the weekly bulletins has been paying off, but the need continues.

There has been a steady trickle of articles from people in the Abbey, for which I am very grateful. Please carry on, everyone! For the year 2025 the magazine has made a profit for the PCC of £3,041.58 - calculated by in-year payments received (£7,671.58) less payments made (£4,630.00 for printing). This is up again, by £264.08 from 2024 with the advertisement pricing structure unchanged since 2023. We have been regularly ordering 5,200 copies per edition. One edition last year increased from 28 the usual pages to 32 pages, to accommodate a one off additional whole page advert. Printing costs have been holding steady.

Christopher Kimberley, Editor

AFTER SERVICE COFFEE 2025

Our team of willing and cheerful volunteers continued to provide refreshments and a friendly welcome, enabling all to enjoy this special time of fellowship each week.

Your generous donations were given to:

Wick Care Farm (Jan- Apr) - £211.62

Friends of the Holy Land (Lent Appeal) - £76.50

Elgar Rotary's Humanitarian Aid to Ukraine (May – Aug) - £317.34

MAGGS (Sept – Dec) - £1,129.79

Thank you for your support.

We are keen to welcome more volunteers to our rota either to serve the drinks, or to wash the mugs afterwards. The dishwasher in St Andrew's is a catering style machine, 4 mins cycle, all mugs done in about 15 mins, operating instructions given! All-terrain trolley available to transport to the kitchen. Please contact Sara Speed (710776) for further details.

Sara Speed

BABIES AND TODDLERS

The group continues to have 20 -30 babies and toddlers attending each Friday morning. They have enjoyed playing with the wide selection of toys and play equipment, or developing their artistic skills with paints, chalks and many craft activities. Sharing stories, songs and rhymes remain popular.

We have been fortunate to receive several donations of good quality toys, plus a huge supply of knitted dolls clothes and bedding – I'm sure we have the best dressed dolls in Pershore!

Here are some of the activities enjoyed over the last year:

- making snakes from paper plates to mark the Lunar Year of the Snake
- planting pansies in pots and making cards for Mothering Sunday
- making Easter cards and chocolate nests
- a group activity to make the Easter and Christmas wreaths for display in the Abbey
- baking gingerbread cookies, raising £81.30 for Children in Need
- a Christmas party, with a visit from Father Christmas (special thanks to Duncan Cadbury!) and a nativity story book and chocolates for each child

Sam Andrews has provided invaluable support at the sessions, and has been able to make good contact with many of the families.

Revd. Alma helped us to celebrate Palm Sunday with paper palms to wave as she told the story, Harvest Thanksgiving with a short service in the Abbey, and coming to share her own special telling of the Nativity, aided by a set of knitted figures. Thank you, Alma.

I am very grateful to the team of helpers for their continued support in making the families feel welcome, keeping everyone fed and hydrated, and always with a happy smile.

Sara Speed

BELLS RINGERS

2025 was a busy year, with more visitors than usual joining us for both practice sessions and our Sunday ringing but slightly fewer visiting groups. In addition to our regular service ringing, we rang on New Years Eve – a half-muffled quarter peal, Good Friday – a fully muffled quarter; the 80th Anniversary of VE day (dedicated to the election of the new Pope Leo); prior to the service of thanksgiving in celebration of the life of Mary Bickmore and also for the Plum Festival. Our ringing on New Years Eve was dedicated to Stuart, our Tower Captain, following his serious accident – from which we are delighted to say he is now recovered and back at his post.

We have welcomed some new learners – Tom and Poppy Spaughton and Sue Butler, and congratulate Alistair on ringing his first quarter peal as conductor. Sadly, a Pershore stalwart, Bill Newman, has decided that he cannot continue ringing at the Abbey (far too many stairs) though he will continue at St Andrew's.

During the year we rang for 7 weddings and welcomed 5 groups of visitors, several of whom rang at both churches. We also hosted the WDCRA Striking competition and AGM on 1st November.

We have had a number of 'rope events' during the year, with repairs being necessary and the Tenor clapper in St Andrew's also broke. We are now progressing the purchase of 8 new ropes for the Abbey. The chairs in the ringing room at St Andrew's have now been reupholstered.

We hosted our 2nd PASA Coffee Morning in October, raising £60 for the St Andrew's, plus some extra for the Breast Cancer Collection.

Sally Stewart, Secretary, Pershore Abbey Society of Bell Ringers

BOOKSTALL & WELCOMERS

I am pleased to report visitors to the Abbey continue to comment on the warm welcome, friendly smiles, and helpful information they receive from our welcomers. It remains a real privilege to share our beautiful building and its history with those visiting for the first time, as well as those returning again.

As in so many aspects of Abbey life, it is the volunteers who make all the difference. I am sincerely grateful for their continued enthusiasm, flexibility, and commitment throughout the year. While we are still not able to have welcomers during every hour the Abbey is open, the gaps in the rota are gradually reducing, and many volunteers generously step in to cover events when needed.

Turnover during 2025 from the Bookstall has remained strong and steady, with profit from takings exceeding £6,000, split fairly evenly between cash and card payments.

I have continued to stock our established range of cards and gifts while introducing some new items including Fair2Trade decorated items and glass ornaments. Our expanded card ranges have been well received, covering a broader range of celebrations, annual festivals, and everyday life events, while remaining in keeping with the ethos of the Abbey.

My heartfelt thanks go to all our welcomers and to everyone who has supported the Bookstall during the year.

Sally Whyte, Bookstall Coordinator

CAFÉ CHURCH

Café Church met every month during 2025, including August for the first time, on the second Sunday (except for November.) We continue to base the service around a theme according to the time of year in the church calendar. Highlights from this year included Selfishness and Temptation - where we watched a clip from a Harry Potter film when Harry is tempted to keep the elder wand and we also thought about modern temptations; The Good Samaritan – where members of the team and the congregation acted out the different parts and we made a collage to show ‘Who is our Neighbour?’ During this service we also celebrated all those who serve in Children, Young People and Families Ministry through the RECOGNISE part of the 30k Project.

For our first service in August we used the iSingPop - Pop Box - Heroes of the Old Testament resources which the PCC generously agreed to buy at their meeting in May. We also used the iSingPop resources for October’s and December’s services. Other parts of the services included playing a game of Guess Who, processing around St.

Andrew's gardens on Palm Sunday and exploring what happens in Holy Week and writing on a protest wall!

We welcomed Jo Greenaway to the team, which otherwise remains the same - Suzanne Clarke, Susan Williams, Beth Seale, Christine Chambers and Sam Andrews. We still meet regularly to plan each service and also have regular helpers from the congregation on the day, to whom we extend many thanks.

We continue to use PowerPoint presentations for everything we need to deliver the services, which mostly works well with only the occasional hiccup with the technology! The 'self-service' style breakfast, where people can make their own toast with a choice of spread, jam and marmalade along with fresh fruit, croissants, brioche and crepes, works very well with adults and children happy to help themselves.

Suzanne, Susan and Sam continue to lead the service, with Suzanne, Susan, Chris, Jo and Sam sharing doing the talk. Many thanks also go to Angela Gerrard who came and did a talk for us in May. The prayers have been prepared and read by Beth, Christine, Susan, Suzanne and Sam. A very big thank you must go to those who help in the kitchen to provide the food and drinks, including Susan Williams, Beth Seale, Chris Chambers, Ingrid Fox and Sue Gooderham.

Throughout the year the numbers attending have varied with our highest attendance of 10 children in February, our highest attendance of 21 adults in October and our lowest attendance of 13 adults and 2 children in July.

Sam Andrews, Children and Families Worker

CHILDREN'S WORK - CHURCH ACTIVITIES

At Easter, 43 local school children aged 5 – 10 yrs enjoyed our annual Good Friday Activity Day in St. Andrew's. This is a very popular day where the morning was spent in the Abbey, re-enacting the Easter story, then after lunch the children enjoyed singing and making various Easter crafts – Easter egg lantern, wooden decorated crosses, baking and making their own Easter Garden.

Also over Easter, from Holy Saturday to Pentecost, we held our first Easter Wreath Festival. The fourteen wreaths, all made by groups or individuals connected to the Abbey and St Andrew's Centre, were on display in the side aisles of the Abbey. Each group or individual was invited to create a wreath and personalise it. Those taking part included our Babies and Toddler Group, Stepping Stones Day Nursery and Pershore High School.

Following the success of the Easter Wreaths, we also held a Christmas Wreath Festival which was on display from Advent Sunday until Epiphany. Eighteen groups took part, and as well as some who had taken part at Easter, it also included local schools: Abbey Park Primary, Bowbrook, Holy Redeemer, Orchard Primary, Pershore High and Pinvin CofE Academy. Pershore High and Holy Redeemer also came for a guided tour of all the wreaths.

Our Outdoor Morning Praise service was held in June on a rather windy day! This meant that the 'Fun at the Abbey' games were taken inside to stop them from blowing away!! Both adults and children enjoyed playing skittles, a magnetic fishing game, giant snakes and ladders, plus others, and those who braved staying outside played Number Kubb (a wooden skittles type game) and paddle catch. This was all followed by having a picnic together.

Summer's Little Seeds was provided again as an alternative to our Baby and Toddler group, which breaks up over the summer. It ran for the first four weeks in August on a Friday morning in St. Andrew's. It was decided to offer it to preschool children and their siblings up to six years old with an accompanying adult, as last year the activities didn't hold the attention of some of the older children.

The Summer Activity Morning in the Abbey was held on the 12 August with a preparation session held a few days beforehand. For children up to 11 years old, this drop-in activity included the following crafts: cork boats, lolly stick dragonflies and caterpillars, cardboard tube robots, sand clay, biscuit decorating, colouring and puzzles. Drinks, biscuits and fresh fruit were provided for the children and whoever had come with them. Many thanks to all who helped on the day and with the preparations.

On the 31 October, we held our third Light Party for children, (the first time of having it on Halloween,) with crafts and games in the Abbey, which was decorated with lots of fairy lights and carved pumpkins, followed by watching an animated story in St. Andrew's whilst enjoying a hot dog and hot chocolate. The children made pumpkin prayer plates, a cardboard tube lighthouse, decorated cup cakes to look like the night sky and played glow stick bowling. Many thanks again to everyone who helped on the day with the crafts and in the kitchen.

At the beginning of November, we held our annual Shoe Box Sunday. This year we trialled the packing on a Saturday, where a team of volunteers including ladies from St Andrew's Craft & Chat group helped packed 100 boxes for Teams 4U. On the Sunday morning during the 10.30 service the boxes were presented for a blessing. The Abbey congregation and the Craft & Chat group were incredibly supportive contributing items, empty shoeboxes, and money for postage. Many thanks to all who helped make

this happen, especially the ladies who knitted the 100 hats, gloves, scarves and material bags!

The Avon Vale Cubs enjoyed a visit and tour of the Abbey on the 12th November.

On the first Sunday in December, 17 children aged between 1 and 9 years old and 1 baby, took part in our 5th 'Edible Nativity'. The story of Jesus' Christmas Party by Nicholas Allan was read out, pausing in certain places, so the different gingerbread nativity figures can be decorated. We then came across to the Abbey to join the congregation and share what we've been doing – a great time was had by all! A huge thank you again to all who helped on the day and to all who baked the gingerbread ready for being decorated.

Sam Andrews, Children and Families Worker and Suzanne Clarke, ALM (Children and Youth)

CHILDREN'S WORK – SCHOOLS

During 2025, volunteers have gone into our local schools to take assemblies - fortnightly visits to Orchard Primary School and Pinvin C of E Academy and the Open the Book team have continued to go into Abbey Park Primary School once a term.

It was so lovely to welcome again the Year 4 children from Abbey Park Primary School in March and the Year 5 children from Orchard Primary in July, both to take part in Monks' Days. The children thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Abbey, dressed in mini-Monks' habits and experiencing the life of a monk. They shared a meal together and learned about the Benedictine Monks who once were at Pershore Abbey.

At the end of January, after a meeting with the nursery manager, some of the children and staff from Stepping Stones Nursery started to visit the Abbey on Wednesday mornings, to coincide with the midweek communion after service refreshments. Whilst with us they have given us biscuits they have baked, done some colouring, brought us roses for Valentine's Day and made stained glass window pictures. On the 17 December, during their final visit of the year, each child was given a gift bag containing a knitted Mr Men or Little Miss, made by Hilary Fowler, and the matching book. Thank you so much for doing this, Hilary, the children loved them! We are looking forward to welcoming them back in the new year.

We held two organ workshops during 2025. The first for Pinvin C of E Academy, who came with 50 year 7 pupils and 3 members of staff on the 24 January, and the second for Pershore High School, who brought 7 students studying music. Both workshops were led by James MacDowall-Scott and some of the pupils from Pinvin and all the

students from the High School were able to have a go at playing the organ themselves. We look forward to offering more workshops next year.

God and the Big Bang returned for a second time on the 25 September. On the day 102 year 5 pupils and 11 members of staff from Abbey Park, Holy Redeemer, Orchard Primary and Pinvin schools took part in this wonderful day. Suitable for all, those of any faith or none, the children took part in workshops which provided the opportunity to discover, discuss and debate the compatibility of science and faith. A very big thank you to members of the congregation who hosted some of the team for a meal and overnight stay, and Pershore Rotary who partly funded the event.

An iSingPop workshop for Abbey Park Primary took place on Wednesday 1 October, led by Kirsty Pierson, who is working in partnership with Worcester Diocese. A celebration workshop based on Positive Mental Health was requested and the day included: three age-appropriate workshops for KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2, two catchy iSingPOP songs and dances to learn! An interactive bible story/animation, a group prayer activity and a celebration assembly where the whole school joined together to show what they'd learnt and to have loads of fun!

Thirteen children and two members of staff from Holy Redeemer's Eco Gardening Team, came to help with the preparation of the Wildflower area. Once done, they were then able to sow the seeds. They all worked really hard and we're looking forward to seeing the results.

Year 1 from Inkberrow School visited for the day on the 24 November. It began with a welcome and a prayer followed by a tour of the main features of the Abbey and our children's discovery trail. After lunch they heard the story The Birth of Jesus by Katherine Sully and the children arranged woollen crib figures by the altar to help tell the story.

Many of the local schools including Orchard Primary, Abbey Park Primary, Pinvin C of E Academy, Bowbrook and Pershore High School have visited the Abbey for their various services – Christmas, Easter and Leavers' assemblies. We are so looking forward in 2026 to welcoming all the schools to visit Pershore Abbey.

Sam Andrews, Children and Families Worker and Suzanne Clarke, ALM (Children and Youth)

Collection over Christian Aid Week (Coffee Morning, 8am Breakfast and House Collection) raised £2,567.22 to which 41 Gift Aid submissions were added.

Congregation collections were made for special appeals - £204 for Sudan, £102 for Myanmar and £170 for Afghanistan.

The Christmas Card Board Collection raised £550.

Many thanks to all who support Christian Aid through their time and donations both personally and through the Abbey

Sarah Thomson.

DIGITAL MEDIA

	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024	March 2025	March 2026
Facebook Likes	224	468	628	741	821	894	
Facebook Followers	240	519	683	862	1032	1228	1616
Twitter Followers	58	123	157	187	203	199	198
Instagram Followers	73	208	356	585	821	854	900
You Tube Subscribers	4	97	278	351	445	562	703

This year has been remarkable for our Facebook and YouTube engagement which has resulted in a very healthy increase in organic following.

It goes without saying that our Peregrine family remain a hugely popular source of engagement on Facebook and the humorous tales of their escapades are very popular. One touching piece of feedback this year was from someone whose friend was suffering an unexpected bereavement and apparently the tales of the Peregrine family were keeping her going. We always increase followers once the chicks have hatched and so many people are emotionally invested in them.

I must pay tribute to James, our Director of Music, for his Musical Advent Calendar. We had to post the videos to YouTube first to avoid Facebook violations for copyright and an unexpected bonus was that we gained around 75 subscribers on YouTube as a result.

One bonus of Meta's changing systems is that if I now post a photograph on Instagram which is automatically shared to Facebook, the number of likes on Facebook is recorded on Instagram which increases our reach via the algorithms. The Diocese only has 1718 followers on Instagram so at 900, we are doing well.

X (Twitter) is still a political minefield and I continue only share our weekly vlogs to avoid toxicity and abuse. This is only because The Church of England and the Diocese are still using the platform daily - if they leave X then we will follow suit.

Photographs are the most popular posts on our social media, especially those of people and activities. They reach a wider audience than videos. Claire and Sam do a sterling job at obtaining photographs. Community event photographs such as the Christmas Lights, Spring Flowers, Carnival, Plum Festival etc are enormously popular and usually result in more followers.

In summary, our online presence is increasing healthily after 6.5 years, and it continues to help us hold a very good standing within the community.

Trudy Burge, Digital Media Volunteer

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & ORGANIST

2025 has been an eventful year for the musical life of the Abbey. The choir is steadily growing and we are exploring new repertoire to enhance worship every month.

We said goodbye to several members of the choir as they moved on to new ventures, pastures new and retirement from the choir - many thanks to all who have all contributed to the worshipping life of the Abbey, there is forever a welcome for you at Pershore Abbey. The Advent Carol service and Christmas Carol services attracted a larger congregation and the choir excelled themselves. Through the musical Advent Calendar on YouTube, the musical offerings reached an unprecedented global audience- many thanks to Elizabeth, Judy and Trudy for recording the organ and putting up with my multiple outtakes!

We have hosted the international recitalist, David Briggs, who played a stunning recital on our world famous Ruffatti, cementing the instrument as a fine recital and liturgical instrument. Through the generosity of the Friends of Pershore Abbey, we are now custodians of a very fine Steinway grand piano with the formation of 'Pershore Jam' - our worship band for Morning Praise, we have broadened the contemporary worship song repertoire and this has featured the Steinway in a liturgical setting. Further concerts are planned for 2026, including the Piano Concerto No 2 by Franz Liszt. The Sunday promenade concerts attract a wide audience and I am pleased to welcome more performers to play in 2026 - exciting news as I seek to encourage more people to hear the instrument.

New choir members are always welcome and there is no formal audition, we rehearse on Fridays from 18.15-19.30 in the Abbey.

James MacDowall-Scott, Director of Music

ECO CHURCH

This year Eco Church has upgraded the criteria so there is a need to reassess our progress towards Gold. We are part way through doing this.

Highlights for this year as well as 3 lots of litter and weedy picks were:

- The Wildflower area in the park and the work this has involved including Holy Redeemer School.
- Earth Hour publicity and tower light switch off Saturday 22 March.
- Walk in the Wetlands 28 June, where we had the unplanned pleasure of Bob Gillmor as one of the leaders.
- Film about Dr. Kinari Webb on Saturday 5 July. She has assisted a community with unprecedented reverse deforestation in one part of Borneo.
- Give and Take Saturday Coffee Morning at St. Andrew's on the 19 July.
- Visit to Mucknell Abbey on Thursday 4 September to see how they live with a light touch on the earth.
- Judy Dale's Talk on Friday 25 September on a Welsh house she used to sometimes live in entitled 'Living off the Grid'.
- Climate Sunday with Liz Etheridge on 28 September with a well received Q&A session during the service.

Thanks go to the team for organising the actions and activities, newcomers welcome

David Oldham

FLOWER GUILD

The Abbey Flower Guild have continued their weekly flower arrangements in the Abbey. Some ladies have retired but we have been fortunate to obtain some new arrangers.

The death of our Treasurer, Julie Newman, at the end of 2025 was a great sadness to us all. Julie had been our Treasurer since 2013 and carried out her duties with quiet efficiency and good humour. She will be much missed.

Mary Cope, Secretary

PERSHORE FOODBANK

Comparative data 2024 and 2025

Parcels distributed by age group (using legacy age group bands)

Adults	2024	2025	+/- %
17-24	148	149	
25-64	883	838	
65+	78	80	
Total	1109	1067	-4%
Children			
0-4	203	172	
5-11	353	249	
12-16	268	254	
Total	824	675	-18%
TOTAL	1933	1742	-10%

The Pershore Foodbank operates under the auspices of Churches Together in Pershore while maintaining membership of the Trussell Trust, a national anti-poverty charity and NGO that supports a nationwide network of foodbanks. This enables us to use a number of standardised procedures for such subjects as: client and volunteer data security, the regular inspection of our protocols and the nutritionally recommended composition of our food parcels. A representative of the Pershore Foodbank was able to join with some of the much larger West Midlands foodbanks for a mass lobby of Parliament in July of 2025.

Our client numbers have continued to show an overall slight decrease, with a breakdown of ages and family composition showing roughly the same proportions (see table below). A high proportion of our clients have complex needs often involving sickness or disability although it is not always possible to accurately quantify this. We are able, however, to monitor the frequency of visits with an overall average of slightly under 2.5 visits per client. Signposting is offered to all clients and those attending more than five times are identified from our records and contacted individually.

The community of Pershore and the surrounding villages continues to provide an excellent level of support with both food and financial donations, sometimes with the most creative initiatives. A good example is the opportunity given to us by the Pershore Medical Practice to put up a regular display illustrating our services and objectives. After all, a doctors' waiting room provides a ready-made captive audience. Pershore Rotary Club held an event at the local Co-op which not only collected plenty of extra donations but informed the Saturday shoppers of the type of donations that we are looking for. A permanent collection point has now been set up for us at the newly opened branch of Aldi in the town centre.

During 2025 we have welcomed several new and enthusiastic volunteers onto the team which contributes to future resilience whilst sharing out the tasks, keeping training up-to-date and ensuring that no-one ever need feel overloaded. The loss of our “overspill” warehouse at Holy Redeemer Church in the summer proved quite a challenge and the current replacement in the form of a garage rented from Rooftop Housing remains a “work in progress”.

Nicola Ainsworth, Project Leader, Pershore Foodbank

THE FRIENDS OF PERSHORE ABBEY CIO (FOPA)

Trustees:

The following were elected as Trustees at the FOPA AGM held on 14th September 2025

Elected Executive Committee

Dr Judith Dale

Margaret Goodrich

Michael Hodges (Chairman of the Executive Committee Meetings)

Sarah Ingles

Jonathan Sington

Martyn Spence

Patricia Steel

Robin Whittaker

Honorary Officers

Peter Dann Hon Treasurer (Chairman of the FOPA Finance and Investment Committee)

Erica Norton Hon Secretary

Ex Officio

President

Duncan Cadbury

Vicar

Canon Claire Lording

Churchwardens of the Abbey

Samantha Andrews

Martin Fowler

1. Finances

As reported at the 2025 FOPA AGM, the FOPA accounts for the period ending 5th April 2025 showed a balance of £2,802,021 (previous year £2,847,540). Grants to Pershore Abbey PCC for the year amounted to £25,087 (previous year £84,631).

The FOPA Finance & Investment Committee meets regularly to review investment strategy with appointed fund managers LGT. Much gratitude must be expressed for the careful stewardship of the Investment Committee and the guidance provided by LGT who ensure that FOPA's investments are aligned with Church of England advice and UN sustainable development goals.

2. Achievements

Notable achievements for the year to 6th April 2025 included provision of funding for pipe organ maintenance, the quinquennial inspection, a new sump pump in the boiler room, gutter clearance and stone repairs.

3. Lecture

Fundraising activities were largely focussed on Sir Nicholas Coleridge's Friends Memorial Lecture which took place on 11th April 2025. This was well attended and a great financial success.

4. Legacies

FOPA continues to receive legacies from those who have held the Abbey in high regard during their life and wish to see it remain in good condition after their death. We are grateful for these gifts and are committed to stewarding them with discernment and in accordance with the aims of the Charity.

5. Membership

Membership numbers are steady at 342 (previous year 357). The Executive Committee are keen to drive membership up in 2026 through leaflet distribution in the town and beyond. All new householders in Pershore receive a FOPA leaflet in the Town Council's Welcome Packs.

Michael Hodges, Chair

IONA

The Pershore Abbey Iona service is held at 5pm on the 4th Sunday of the month except in August and December. Iona Community and related worship materials are used, approaching social, environmental and personal themes from fresh perspectives. Iona worship uses accessible and creative language, folk music from around the world, stories and times of quiet reflection.

With a dozen or more people, and sometimes people joining via Zoom, we have been

able to have informal discussions, time for sharing or practical activities. During 2025 service themes have included 'Reconciliation' and 'Forgiveness', 'Refugees' and 'Prayers for peace', 'Water' and Christian Aid Week's focus on environmental community projects in Guatemala. In October, Dianne Bennett came to tell us about the Lighthouse Project in Evesham which supports local homeless people.

Because the Iona service is different to the worship offered in most churches, we were joined by quite a few visitors to Pershore. Several people from the area, regularly travelled to Pershore, to join the service.

Helen Oldham

MISSION GIVING

Given the uncertain financial climate that we are all living through, where costs have increased across the board, the PCC could be forgiven for wanting to hold on to their assets for unexpected expenditure. So it is good that the PCC takes following Kingdom values seriously and wants to continue with mission giving as a way of looking outward and supporting the work of those who care for others in different contexts.

This year we once again met our commitment to give £3000 to organisations which we believe make a difference. This was distributed as follows:

Berega Hospital, Tanzania £1000
Friends of the Holy Land £1000
Maggs Day Centre, Worcester £500
Pershore Riverside Youth Centre £500

During the year further donations were raised for Christian Aid, through Christian Aid Week and specific appeals. We also contributed to the Churches Together in Pershore Lent Appeal for Friends of the Holy Land.

Mission Sunday, which is the opportunity for the PCC to share with the various congregations where our mission giving has been allocated, is planned for 18 January 2026. This also gives us the chance to pray for those whom we are supporting.

The PCC is always grateful to those who make the decision to give to the Abbey with planned giving, as this is where our mission giving money comes from. Our generous response to God's generosity enables us to be generous to others, which is always worth celebrating.

Revd Canon Claire Lording

MOTHERS' UNION

Firstly, members are very sad about the loss of Julie Newman. She will be truly missed.

Last year a new MU committee was formed to run the branch. We feel there is enough 'get up and go' in us to continue with all its history and achievements. We are thankful to the members for their encouragement. We have 17 members and 3 Diocesan members.

A quick resume of 2025: We enjoyed hearing 5 speakers, including Peter Stansbie, who took us down memory lane reminiscing about Sundays in the 1950s. Wendy Malkinson recounted her invitation to the Maundy Thursday service in Worcester Cathedral. Jean Andrews gave a presentation about her family in India. Tim Ainley outlined his work in Neonatal care. Paul Chambers, a dementia nurse from Willow Bank, gave a bright presentation on what can be an uneasy subject.

Meetings without a speaker gave us more time to get to know each other. The Lady Day communion was kindly led by Janet Robbins. We invited friends to a Strawberry Tea, raising £80 which was split between the Long Lartin Prison MU project and Away From It All holidays. Finally, we were delighted to welcome friends from the Abbey to share with us Advent carols, readings and a delicious tea.

The committee are moving forward with fresh hope and prayers. New members are always welcome! Our programme is on the MU notice board.

Committee: Auriol Ainley, Susan Denley, Elizabeth Kearney, Janet Stansbie, Lynette Wardle.

Wendy Malkinson, Secretary

P.A.S.A – PERSHORE ABBEY AND ST. ANDREW'S SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The end of 2025 was a sad time for PASA as our dear friend and chair Julie Newman passed away. Julie's enthusiasm and commitment was an example to us all. Julie attended the Christmas Carol Service checking the mulled wine and mince pies and organising the PASA Christmas wreath.

Our first event of 2025 was the enjoyable Ukulele Evening with a fish & chip supper organised by Julie.

Shrove Tuesday pancakes and Abbey soups were made for Lent. An Easter wreath was organised and made by Julie and others.

Carnival teas and Plum Fayre teas raised £3904.03. These 2 events couldn't be achieved without the team and all our wonderful extra volunteers, thank you.

The Harvest lunch which Julie organised was a lovely social occasion.

Refreshments were provided for the Advent Carol Service and the Christmas Carol Service. The post-Christmas afternoon tea took place. A special thank you to Ann Bray, now retired from PASA, for not only suggesting the idea, but organising a very successful social gathering.

Throughout 2025 the Parish Coffee Mornings have taken place with different Abbey groups organising them, thank you.

A successful year for PASA raising a total of £4668.87 for Pershore Abbey and St Andrew's. Thank you to the PASA team: Ann Bray, Catherine Cadbury, Mary Cope, Susan Denley, Jean Evans, Hilary Fowler, Lynda Jerrom, Wendy Morrison, Angela Palmer, Barbara Priscott, Sarah Speed and Sarah Thomson and to Julie, may she rest in peace.

Jane Knox, Secretary

PASTORAL GROUP

The Pastoral Group coordinates the Church's response to those in need within our congregational community, gathering information so that the Church is aware of the needs of both past and current members of the congregation. We share awareness of who may be poorly (in hospital or recuperating at home), isolated and unable to attend church temporarily or permanently, and those who are in need of visiting and/or receiving home communion when requested.

We send both Easter and Christmas cards to everyone on our current list of people we are supporting and the group also sends 'Thinking of You' and 'Get Well' cards on a regular basis to help people feel they have not been forgotten by the churches when they are unable to attend and to know they are being prayed for. 'Sympathy' cards are sent whenever we have been informed of a bereavement.

Our success in maintaining contact with so many people depends upon all members of the congregation communicating with us as they become aware of friend's or neighbour's needs so that we can ensure an appropriate response is made.

Angela Gerrard, Pastoral Group Co-ordinator

PLUM FESTIVAL

Pershore Abbey, contributed to Pershore's Plum Festival in 2025, which was held over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Suzanne Clarke attended festival committee meetings throughout the year in planning for the festival.

The open-air Teddy Praise service held on the Sunday before the Plum Fayre, in Abbey Park, was a wonderful service for all ages, led by Claire and Jayne in the warm sunshine! It was lovely to welcome the Plum Posse, along with members of the Plum Festival Committee and good to see many congregation members supporting this service. The annual presentation of one pound of Pershore Plums took place, these were gratefully received by Claire on behalf of the Diocese. Also, on the Sunday afternoon 4 Tower Tours were organised and were well attended.

The Bank Holiday Monday was a huge success, the sun shone, and the town was buzzing with hundreds of people! All our Abbey activities were very well attended, and we were able to contribute to the Plum Fun for hundreds of children with teddy zips, parachute drops, teddy stall and teddy game. Tower tours were a sell out and we could have sold more tours! Pershore Arts along with U3A Arts took part with their art and craft exhibition in the Abbey. We were grateful to the Sea Cadets who were willing to help again, transporting the teddies up the tower for their journey down by parachute or zip wire! We had an amazing show of Classic Cars, over 700 cars filled the park and many thanks to the volunteers who helped with stewarding the cars into their positions.

Pershore Town Choir provided musical entertainment to a packed Abbey.

St Andrew's PASA provided refreshments of drinks and an amazing array of delicious cakes throughout the day!

A huge thanks to all who contributed in any way to the Abbey's part in the Plum Festival – organisers AND volunteers. Together we raised over £10,000 for the Abbey and contributed £400 towards the costs of Pershore's Plum Festival.

A very enjoyable day was had by all!

Suzanne Clarke and Judy Dale, Co-ordinators

SALZWEDEL LINK

On Thursday, 29th May, ten people from Salzwedel in central Germany, with their pastor Matthias Friske, arrived in Birmingham to visit us here in Pershore. They spent

a quiet day with their hosts before going to the Ascension Day Eucharist at the Abbey, where they were formally introduced to the congregation during the service.

Friday was our day for Tewkesbury and its Abbey. Michael Hodges provided local maps in German, so the visitors were also able to go off and explore the area for themselves. In the afternoon we went to Ripple to see its beautiful old church and the magnificent misericords. There were one or two navigational mishaps, but we all finished the day with a bring-and-share supper in St Andrew's accompanied by a slideshow of previous visits.

On Saturday we drove to Oxford. Mark Chapman had organised a few visits for the morning, including the University Church, crucial in the founding of the university; a typical small college – Brasenose – and Christ Church and the Cathedral. In the afternoon we went down to the river to see some of the action on the last day of the inter-college boat races and then returned to Pershore for a fish-and-chip supper and skittles.

Sunday morning saw us at a farewell breakfast in St Andrew's before our visitors headed for the airport and back to Germany. Matthias thanked us for our warm welcome and said that Pershore was like a second home for them. He has already confirmed that we are invited to Germany for the 13th to 17th May 2026.

Plans are afoot for the 2026 visit and everyone in the benefice is invited to consider joining the 2026 party. A warm welcome is assured. Deepening our friendships, mourning our losses and sharing our common faith is what binds both communities together. Please do think about joining us as we journey onwards together in faith. Claire (552071) or Michael (552417) can provide more information.

Michael Hodges

SIDESPEOPLE, SOUND AND LIVESTREAM

Our team of Sunday Sidespeople, and the Sound and Livestreamers once again throughout 2025 did a great job and we continue to receive really positive feedback from visitors about the warm welcome they receive. Several "get togethers" were held during the year to update everyone on developments in areas such as Safeguarding and Emergency Procedures.

The Sidespeople during 2025 were:

Jan Ayres	John Ayres	Viv Breed
David Bryden	Helen Bryden	Mary Cope
Edward Denley	Susan Denley	Carolyn Harford

Jacqui Hughes	Jane Knox	Stephen Knox
Bill Newman	Julie Newman	David Oldham
Kevin O'Neill	Barbara Priscott	Ruth Smith
Sarah Thomson	Sally Whyte	David Williams-Thomas
Jane Williams-Thomas		

The Sound and Livestreaming team during 2025 was:

Nicky von Benzon	David Bryden (8am)	Judy Dale (W&H)
Bob Gillmor	Robin Hancox (8am)	Lynne Raymer
Martyn Spence		

We thank everyone involved for their great work.

New volunteers, as both Sidespeople and on Sound and Streaming, are increasingly needed so that we can maintain the standard of welcome and sound and livestreaming that we have set in recent years and which is so well received.

Martin Fowler, Churchwarden

THE ABBEY STAGERS

During 2025, 26 events took place in the Abbey that required furniture to be moved in preparation and put back in place afterwards. 11 events, plus our local schools' Christmas concerts, needed the tiered staging to be erected and dismantled afterwards.

We are enormously grateful for the stalwart team of volunteers who carry out this work, often late on a Saturday evening. Without them many of the popular events held at the Abbey would not take place.

At the end of 2025 Chris Liley stood down as the team's coordinator. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his commitment and leadership. Also at the end of the year George Clarke, Kevin O'Neill, Roger Piper, Graham Norris and Geoff Izzard stood down from the team, and Terry Palmer will be leaving following his ordination in June 2026 and again we offer them all a big thank you for all their hard work.

The team now is: Roger Chapman, Bill Newman, Steven Skerret, Martyn Spence, Martin Fowler, John Bragg, Jason El'Habid, Nigel Hawkes, Richard Jones, Chris Sealey, Jon Branchett, Philip Highy. More volunteers are always welcome.

Martin Fowler, Churchwarden

ST ANDREW'S SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The PCC sub-committee (known as SAEC – St Andrew's Executive Committee) has continued to run the Centre with the PCC aims to:

- minimise the deficit to the PCC of running St Andrews
- improve Parish and community use of the building
- use St Andrews as a visible sign of our mission to the Parish, Benefice and Town

Demand for use of the building continues to be strong. The Foodbank continues to be held twice a week and continues to be in great demand. The Volunteer Centre run regular lunches and U3A hold regular group meetings. We have several other successful community groups and choirs using the building and continue to expand community use.

Pershore Wellbeing Hub held a very successful Christmas Day lunch and hope to do this again in the coming year.

The building continues to need substantial expenditure on its ageing fabric. Given our need to raise funds for this, the transfer of St Andrew's to the PCC has now been agreed at Diocesan and national level and it is hoped the transfer will be complete by the time of this meeting. The garden area, car park and garage have been retained by the Diocese for the use of the incumbent.

Joanna Daykin has settled in well as our architect and has been working hard to obtain planning permission for improvements to the outside area (a frustrating experience), as well as advising on the future direction of our work on the building.

Sam Andrews does an amazing job as our part time co-ordinator, and this means the management of the building is in safe hands.

Julie Hurford continues as our cleaner and we have had several comments from users on how well the Centre is looked after.

Our grateful thanks go to all our many users as always.

Peter Stansbie

STEWARDSHIP

Thank you to those who have signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme and those remaining in the Planned Giving Scheme. If you repeatedly make an offertory donation

(including pew yellow envelopes) would you consider one of the two giving schemes?

Of the Gift Aid claims submitted in 2025 for standing order and cash deposits, the refund received was £9,697.55. In addition, £2736.50 had accrued by year end, to be received in 2026. A total of £12,434.05 was therefore received for the Planned Giving Scheme

The Gift Aid received through Parish Giving Scheme (33 givers) for 2025 was £7,478.80.

Sarah Thomson

TANZANIAN LINK

We continue to give thanks that we have a friendship link with the parish of St John, Kihonda in the diocese of Morogoro. We regularly pray for each other and try to discover how we can better support each other as we seek to be faithful followers of Christ.

Bishop Godfrey of Morogoro is a friend of the Abbey and shared his joy with us about the appointment of Bishop Hugh. Bishop Godfrey will be representing the diocese of Morogoro at Bishop Hugh's service of welcome, where we will no doubt ask him to send our greetings to St John's.

Revd Canon Claire Lording

FAIRTRADE

The Fair Trade stall is a non-profit enterprise which helps to support the mission work at the Abbey. With all the big supermarkets now supplying Fair Trade goods, our emphasis has shifted to the producers and artisans whose livelihoods depend on support such as ours. We know that our purchases contribute directly to projects created by the World Fair Trade Organisation in specific areas, particularly in Africa, in connection with education and the effects of climate change. We know we are helping to give struggling families a hand up rather than a hand out. Hilary can talk more about this to any of the Abbey groups who would like to learn more.

As ever, the stall could not function without the help of David, Jane and Viv and our grateful thanks go to them.

Hilary Fowler, Co-ordinator

PERSHORE ABBEY WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Another successful year, beginning with a delicious meal at The Pickled Plum enjoyed by all the members in January. This year included a day trip out by coach to Hatton Country World.

All the speakers have been very entertaining with titles of: The History of the Teddy Bear, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, Campden Nursing Care, Madresfield Court Malvern, Chris Ludlow on Pershore's Past, Information on the Visually Impaired, Instructions on how to use a Defibrillator. Our prayers and Communion service was taken by Claire.

Ending the year with entertainment from Sandra Mason, plus Christmas Cake, Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.

Donations made to: Campden Home Nursing, St John Ambulance, plus Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Linda Layland, Chair

b) PCC Accounts for year ending 31st December 2025

Financial Report - Executive Summary

Summary

Summarised Financial Statements are set out below for the purposes of presenting the key financial information to the APCM. The full financial statements, which are 30 pages in length, are available online from the Abbey's website and will appear on the Charity Commission's website later in the year.

The accounts of the Abbey were subject to an independent examination by Clifton-Crick Sharp of High Street, Pershore. There were no issues to report from this examination.

Financial Position

Annual income increased to £340,054 from £318,752 in 2024. In the absence of any new major project to attract significant grant funding, the main cause of the increase was the receipt of two legacies totalling £15,000. (One legacy of £1,000 was received in 2024).

Income from regular giving, through standing orders and collections taken at services, rose by three per cent, reflecting the increase in Sunday attendance. Following the stewardship campaign in the summer, the number of regular givers increased by ten

per cent. It was also a successful year for fundraising as the profits from the Plum Festival, the Pershore Carnival, the bookstall and Abbey Link magazine were twenty-five per cent higher than the previous year.

The Friends of Pershore Abbey donated £31,439 towards the costs of upgrading the Abbey's CCTV security system, emergency repairs to the roof of the North-East transept, testing and repair of the electrical circuits and our architect's fees for the quinquennial inspection. They also funded new robes for the choir, needed because of the increase in its membership. We are also extremely grateful to the Friends for their generous donation of a Steinway grand piano. The PCC also wishes to give thanks to St Andrew's Parish Centre Trust for grants of £7,210 including a new sound system for St Andrew's.

Annual expenditure increased to £353,324 from £302,217 in 2024. This is mainly because of the Abbey Heating Project. In order to comply with the Church of England's goal to become carbon-neutral by 2030, the Abbey is planning to replace the current gas boiler with heat pumps and solar panels. The project incurred costs of £33,401 in the year for drawing up the detailed specifications and submitting planning applications to the appropriate authorities. These costs were funded from the PCC's restricted fund for Development of the Abbey. Once planning permission is given, the PCC hopes to obtain grants to pay for the costs of implementation and recoup the costs already incurred.

The Food Bank recorded a deficit of £7,666 in the year, compared with a surplus of £8,577 in 2024, but still has adequate cash reserves due to continuing generous support from the community.

The value of investments reduced by £10,979 in the year, wiping out the increase of £9,817 in 2024. These investments are held for the long term and their total value at 31 December 2025 was £273,356. During the year, the PCC moved the balance of the Abbey Development restricted fund from investments to its Premium Savings bank account so that it could be used to pay for the costs of the Heating Project.

The total deficit for the year is £24,248, of which £10,979 (45%) arose from the revaluation of investments. Excluding the Food Bank's deficit of £7,666, the Abbey and St Andrew's together recorded a deficit of only £5,603 despite incurring the £33,401 costs of the Heating Project.

Restricted Funds

The total value of restricted funds was reduced to £168k from the balance of £184k at 31 December 2024, mainly because of the expenditure on the Abbey Heating Project described above.

Full details of the movements in the numerous restricted funds are included in the detailed statements which form part of the annual accounts.

Investments

As noted above, the balance of investments was reduced by £10,979 at the year-end revaluation. These investments are held for the long term and their total value at 31 December 2025 was £392,353.

This includes the value of endowment funds (£224,267). We are unable to spend the capital of these funds – only the dividends received from them which become part of the restricted funds.

Thanks

I would like to thank Elizabeth Long for dealing with invoices and bank reconciliations, Jean Andrews for banking, Marion Rendall for calculating the payroll and Alistair Thomson for making Gift Aid claims. Their help and support are invaluable to me.

Edward Denley, Treasurer

Summary Financial Information for the year ended 31 December 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<u>Income and Endowments</u>				
Voluntary Income - regular giving				
Stewardship giving	73,664	0	73,664	75,118
Tax recovery (Gift Aid)	13,539	0	13,539	17,587
Collections at services	21,403	0	21,403	20,703
	108,606	0	108,606	113,408
Voluntary income - other				
Grants	13,950	51,750	65,700	54,371
Donations and appeals	21,232	465	21,697	17,721
Food bank donations	0	36,832	36,832	47,207
St Andrews donations	150	0	150	146
Legacies	0	15,000	15,000	1,000
	35,332	104,047	139,379	120,445
Activities for generating funds				
Abbey hire income (concerts)	15,383	0	15,383	15,854
Bookstall income	9,963	0	9,963	10,369
Magazine income	8,136	0	8,136	7,315
Plum Festival	10,653	0	10,653	9,921
Carnival	1,062	0	1,062	872
Abbey Music Events	1,642	0	1,642	0
	46,839	0	46,839	44,331
Income from investments				
Dividends	0	4,963	4,963	4,847
St Andrews dividends	0	1,528	1,528	1,492
Bank interest	0	893	893	674
	0	7,384	7,384	7,013
Income from church activities				
Abbey service fees	15,354	0	15,354	11,776
St Andrews hire charges	19,159	0	19,159	18,153
Other income	3,334	0	3,334	3,626
	37,847	0	37,847	33,555
Total Income	228,624	111,431	340,055	318,752

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Ministry and administration				
Ministry share	62,200	0	62,200	60,000
Ministry expenses	1,930	0	1,930	2,154
Worship expenses	2,333	0	2,333	2,542
Youth work and mission	19,397	0	19,397	21,596
Office and administration	43,928	0	43,928	36,383
St Andrews administration	2,452	0	2,452	2,304
Food bank expenditure	0	44,500	44,500	38,629
Music and Organist	10,979	0	10,979	11,075
Social events	-61	0	-61	0
Depreciation	6,130	0	6,130	8,484
	149,288	44,500	193,788	183,167
Other running costs				
Organ expenditure	0	2,472	2,472	1,649
Abbey development fund	0	33,401	33,401	0
Heating and lighting	25,503	0	25,503	24,720
Insurance	0	9,149	9,149	8,550
Maintenance and furniture	24,920	34,072	58,992	57,862
Cleaning	9,363	0	9,363	8,502
	59,786	79,094	138,880	101,283
Fundraising expenses				
Bookstall	4,208	0	4,208	6,348
Magazine	4,630	0	4,630	4,537
Plum Festival expenses	820	0	820	707
Abbey event management costs	4,206	0	4,206	2,001
Other fundraising costs	2,001	0	2,001	2,074
Abbey music event expenses	88	2,440	2,528	0
Carnival expenses	103	0	103	0
	16,056	2,440	18,496	15,667
Governance costs				
Independent examiner	2,160	0	2,160	2,100
Total Expenditure	227,290	126,034	353,324	302,217
Net surplus/(deficit) before gains and losses on investments	1,334	-14,603	-13,269	16,535
(Gains) /Losses on investments	0	-9,817	-10,981	-9,817
Surplus/(deficit) after investments	1,334	-24,420	-24,250	6,718

Add reserves brought forward	47,303	407,893	465,240	438,888
Total funds carried forward	48,637	383,473	440,990	465,240
Represented by:				
Fixed Assets	7,022	2,724	9,746	9,923
Investments	9,342	264,012	273,354	328,105
Stock, sundry debtors and cash	50,057	125,617	175,674	128,763
Deduct: current liabilities	-17,784	0	-17,784	-1,551
	48,637	392,353	440,990	465,240

Edward Denley, Treasurer

c) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church

FABRIC

For the Pershore Abbey Fabric Committee, 2025 began with our architect Joanna Daykin to study the findings of the Quinquennial Inspection and her recommendations for 'Project Packages' for the next 5 years and beyond. Guided by earlier work by the PCC, these projects focussed on:

1. Sustainable heating, using low carbon energy in line with CofE Net Zero Carbon30 – already studied in depth, to be further explored and action progressed.
2. Improved hospitality, including kitchen and toilet facilities in the Abbey, to identify potential spaces. The significance of St Andrew's noted.
3. Structural work: further underpinning needed to the northeast area of the Abbey. South aisle roof and downpipes were included in project packages.
4. Upgrading our CCTV security system (*completed in May 2025*).
5. Continued regular maintenance.
6. Assessment of the bellframe and the ringing platform.

Heating the Abbey: Assessments were carried out and plans prepared towards introducing sustainable energy and reducing our carbon emissions. The plans are to introduce Photo-Voltaic (solar) panels on the nave roof, and two air source heat pumps near the south east transept, with back-up for winter months from a condensing gas boiler. The old boiler to be removed.

Applications for both Faculty and planning permissions were submitted mid August 2025. Meetings were held, articles written, and a display board placed in the Abbey. At the time of writing we await results.

Improving our Hospitality: Space is limited and the vestry block seems to have the most potential but this is not enough. Further discussions were held but urgent structural issues have had to take precedence.

Abbey Structure: Prolonged drought in the summer months took its toll. In August, mortar dust began to descend in the St John Chapel and in the north aisle, indicating movement. Small cracks appeared in the vaulting. Concern increased in November when serious cracks were noted in the most eastern flying buttress over the north aisle. For safety the areas beneath, both inside and outside, were cordoned off and remedial repointing carried out. Underpinning this area is now to take place urgently, once trial pits have established any other causal factors.

Vestries: After the drought came persistent rain – with water ingress noted in a few spots, but greatly into the vestries and toilet from the flat roof above. This despite regular clearance of leaves and debris, and work during the year to seal potential leakages. Much of this is due to rain pooling on the roof in extreme weather. There are plans to repair/replace the vestry roof in 2026.

Fiona Rice, minutes secretary, moved from Pershore in the autumn – we wish her well and thank her for her contribution. Also thanking members of the fabric committee, Canon Claire and the churchwardens, Joanna Daykin our architect, Clive Haywood our structural engineer, and all contractors. Continued thanks to the Friends of Pershore Abbey CIO for their grant funding.

Judy Dale, Chair of Fabric Committee

GOODS AND ORNAMENTS

The Churchwardens are pleased to report that in 2025 a bigger live monitor was set up in the south transept for the public to see the peregrines on the nest, generously donated by an Abbey volunteer. Thanks again to the ornithologists, with support from Heritage Stone Access, who came and ringed the 3 male chicks and 1 female chick in May. There are plans for a second camera to be installed in the new year.

In April 2025 we updated our security system with new cables, new cameras and monitor. A much needed and more effective system for the security of the Abbey. Our thanks to the Friends of Pershore Abbey for funding this.

The Victorian processional cross was collected on 9th June 2025, having suffered further cracks from its age, and having metal fatigue. It was strengthened by the addition of polished brass channels either side of the weakened vertical stem and returned to us on 6th January 2026. The additions have not been detrimental to the beauty of this old

cross. The work was carried out Peter Meeham, Metallurgist Consultant and was funded by the Friends of Pershore Abbey.

The more modern 1960's design processional cross has been repaired twice in 2025 with replacement of tiny silver pins by our silversmiths, Hart & Son. This was kindly funded by an anonymous donor.

On the 2nd October 2025, we took delivery of a 1983 Steinway Model A Grand Piano. Our thanks to the Friends of Pershore Abbey for gifting this.

14 new cassocks for the choir and 26 new surplices arrived on the 9th December and were worn for the first time at the Christmas Carol service. They were made by Wippell of London and kindly funded by the Friends of Pershore Abbey.

The Inventory and Logbook have been updated, many thanks to Judy Dale for all her help.

Many thanks to Judy Dale and all the Fabric Committee members for their continued contribution and tireless efforts during this past year.

Sam Andrews and Martin Fowler, Churchwardens

d) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

DEANERY REPORT

A significant focus across the deanery this year has been Eco Church. The deanery now celebrates three Silver awards, alongside several Bronze, with 17 churches registered overall, though many have yet to join. Parishes were warmly encouraged to register and to work towards the Church of England's target of net zero carbon by 2030. Eco Church was commended not only as faithful environmental stewardship but also as a valuable mission opportunity, with support available to churches at every stage.

Mission to new housing developments has also been a key priority. In light of substantial local growth, the Diocese has explored creative approaches to engagement, including plans for a coffee motor-van to serve emerging communities. Members affirmed the importance of going to where people are, and of intentionally signposting families to neighbouring churches offering children's and youth provision, in support of the diocesan aim to increase the number of young people in worship.

Racial justice and safeguarding have remained central themes, with updates received from both diocesan and General Synods. Strong support was expressed for fully

independent safeguarding oversight. Work continues through the West Midlands Racial Justice Initiative.

Financial discussions addressed diocesan budget sustainability and ministry share. Feedback was also gathered on the Funeral Support Pilot and the diocesan book keeping service.

The Worcester Diocesan Synod focused on key issues affecting the life, mission, and sustainability of the diocese. Significant discussion addressed the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith process, particularly concerns about support for LGBTQ+ people and the pastoral implications of current national decisions. The Bishop affirmed a commitment to listening, inclusion, and ongoing dialogue.

Wider social concerns were also raised, including increasing racial hostility and hate crime. The Diocese highlighted engagement with community leaders and encouraged local churches to respond thoughtfully and publicly where appropriate.

Financial matters included approval of the 2026 diocesan budget, which anticipates a deficit offset by reserves, alongside modest increases in Ministry Share and clergy stipends.

Mission and ministry were central themes. The Transformation Programme reported early signs of stabilisation and growth, with priorities including children and young people, new worshipping communities, and church renewal. Leadership development was identified as the key factor in addressing challenges such as declining attendance and aging congregations.

Education remains a strength, with most church schools rated good or better and ongoing work in academisation, partnerships, and sustainability. Environmental priorities were also highlighted, including progress toward net zero carbon targets and increasing engagement with Eco Church initiatives.

Finally, the Synod marked a transition in episcopal leadership, expressing gratitude to Bishop Martin and preparing to welcome Bishop Hugh.

Jason El'Habid, Deanery Synod Representative

6. Statement on Safeguarding and Vulnerable Adults Policies

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Having due regard to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable Adults, the PCC wishes to confirm that the guidance has been followed.

Suzanne Clarke is the Safeguarding Officer for Pershore Abbey & the Benefice.

We continue to have Safeguarding as a standing agenda item for all PCC meetings and APCM, we review our policies annually. The Safeguarding officer attends the Diocesan Safeguarding Network meetings throughout the year. We use the online Parish Dashboard which helps us keep up to date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements and ensure that the required safeguarding measures are all in place. The Dashboard shows us what we should be doing, alerts us if we need to take action to renew or review any aspect of safeguarding and produces a Safeguarding Action Plan to inform the PCC. Alongside the Dashboard we are in the process of setting up the Safeguarding Hub tracker, this helps to keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training, creates role descriptions and person specifications and tracks the safer recruitment of new volunteers.

A copy of our current Safeguarding policy, approved by the PCC is displayed, along with contact details on the safeguarding posters in both the Abbey and St Andrew's Centre and on our Benefice website.

We observed Safeguarding Sunday on 16th November, this was an opportunity to let our congregation and community know that we take safeguarding seriously in our church and how we can work together to prevent abuse and create a world where every child and adult can feel and be safe.

All leaders and helpers working with Children & Vulnerable Adults (at Children events, Open the Book, Toddler Group) Churchwardens, PCC members, Tower & Deputy Tower Bellringing Captain and Pastoral Visitors have valid DBS certificates.

14 DBS have been processed, and safeguarding training has been completed by 8 people during 2025, as both are a requirement every 3 years.

Suzanne Clarke, Parish Safeguarding Officer