

THE CHURCHES OF

St Michael All Angels

Southam, Woolstone, Gotherington & Oxenton

Parish of Bishop's Cleeve with Southam

- **St Michael & All Angels Church, Bishop's Cleeve**
- **The Ascension, Southam**

Annual Vision Meeting

Incorporating:

**Annual Meeting of the Parish
and Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Monday 20 April 2026 at 6.30pm, in St Michael's Church

A Note from our Chair

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on 2025 has been quite difficult, simply because there has been so much going on! It has been very encouraging that naming, and aiming to address, some of the items in our Vision 2030 has already created forward momentum.

A prime example of this has been our schools work. Thanks to Lucy Betts all four local primary schools engaged with Experience Christmas in 2025. Ben has been a regular feature taking assemblies at BCPA and has spearheaded the creation of a Chaplaincy Team in Cleeve School, also obtaining funding from the Diocese for a chaplaincy pilot project.

Similarly, there has been real investment in the area of prayer and discipleship. St Michael's now hosts 15 Life Groups as well as running Alpha Courses and Lent Courses. All of our church life, is underpinned by various expressions of prayer. During 2025, between Ascension and Pentecost, we held a Prayer Walk for every street of Bishops Cleeve. We began a Central Prayer meeting at 12 pm every Tuesday - and the whole Benefice owes an ongoing debt of gratitude to the ever-faithful House of Prayer.

Towards the end of 2025 and into this year we have experienced a wonderful influx of newcomers and as a result both the 9.30 and the 11.15 services have seen increasing attendance. There is a clear imperative for us to make "welcoming" a priority - something else we aspire to in Vision 2030.

As you will see from the statutory parts of this report, God has been incredibly faithful and generous during the past year. Our gift day in October raised almost £40,000 and we have received a generous legacy from Graham and Esme Teale. The challenge for our leadership is to spend all that we receive, wisely, and as an investment, to grow the Kingdom of God in our villages.

THANK YOU for all the ways that you have given and served in 2025 - in so many wonderful ways! I appreciate that this report can only scratch the surface.

Mingled with so much that has been good in 2025, there also remains a deep vein of sadness. This year we have lost several, quietly spoken, and yet very great heroes of the faith and we still miss them. The call to proclaim Resurrection Life to our community is more urgent than ever.

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. John 12

Much love to you all,

Tim

Rev Tim Garrett
Team Rector

Annual Vision Meeting

Tuesday 20 April 2026 at 6.30pm, in St Michael's Church

AGENDA

A register will be taken as you enter the church, and apologies will be noted.

Annual Vision Meeting

Welcome and Worship

Vision 2030: Our Church Mission for the Future

Annual Meeting of the Parish (Vestry Meeting)

Elections

Vote on a formal resolution to set aside the standard limit of 6 terms of office.

This can be revoked at any Annual Meeting in the future

Election of our Churchwardens for 2026/27

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Minutes

Approval of 2025 Minutes.

Elections

- **Re-Elections to the PCC**
- **New Elections to the PCC**

Reports

All statutory reports are included in this Annual Vision Meeting booklet and are published on the website. It would be helpful if you could send any questions for clarity or discussion prior to the meeting to PCC Secretary Zoe Homes zhomes@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk.

The following statutory reports are to be approved:

- PCC Secretary's Report
- Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Parish
- Safeguarding Report
- Deanery Synod Report

A handful of additional reports have been included with the APCM papers to give members an update on life in our Churches.

Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

Our Annual Accounts for 2025 have been published in advance. In addition, our Treasurer, Tim Powell, has provided some commentary in his report, which is included in this booklet of papers. You are encouraged to read and digest these prior to the meeting.

It would be helpful if you could send any questions for clarity or discussion prior to the meeting to the Treasurer treasurer@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk. Opportunity will also be given at the meeting.

Receive the Electoral Roll

This year was Our Electoral Roll total stands at 248. The names of those on the roll have been published in church.

Closing Prayers

This meeting will be followed by a brief meeting of the new PCC.

PCC Secretary's Report

This report covers the period from April 2025 to March 2026. Prepared by Zoe Homes.

Our PCC met to conduct its business six times in this period, in May, June, October, November, February and March. All our meetings have taken place in person, and each meeting was preceded by a Standing Committee meeting. There was an additional Standing Committee in July 2025.

In addition, we met for a short meeting immediately following the Annual Vision Meeting in May, and for a morning of fellowship and discussion relating to our Vision in November.

Membership

Our membership totalled 22 this year. At the time of reporting, the membership consists of:

- Elected PCC members: 12 (out of 15 allowed)
- Elected Deanery Synod representatives: 1 (out of 4 allowed)*
- Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwardens: 3
- Readers and Lay Ministers: 1
- Clergy: 4

*Was 2 at the start of the year. One of our Deanery Synod representatives stood down mid-year, but remained on PCC for the remainder of the session, making up the 22 total members.

Our serving officers, and therefore our Standing Committee membership, has been:

- PCC Chair: Rev Tim Garrett, Team Rector
- Lay Vice-Chair: Kathryn Lea
- Secretary: Zoe Homes
- Treasurer: Tim Powell
- Churchwardens: Ann Jessop and Andrew Young, with John Donovan acting as deputy Churchwarden for Southam.

Vision 2030 and the Teale Bequest

We are hugely grateful to Esme and Graham Teale for the large bequest they gave to our church.

This incredible gift has shaped much of our discussion at PCC over the last year, and in particular about how we can use the legacy to fund some of the Vision 2030 ideas we have had over the last 18 months or so. In November 2025, PCC approved a written set of principles to guide decisions on how the bequest monies will be used.

The first spend from the legacy was the refurbishment of the doors, completed in early 2026, which it was felt was very in-keeping with the wishes behind the bequest.

Other potential uses for the money being discussed include (but are not limited to): addition of more toilets, church activities and outreach in Homelands, future funding of the Chaplaincy project, the Vestry windows, worship and music leadership in church, the AV system, and the provision of WiFi. Each of these ideas is being worked on thoroughly, and PCC will make decisions as the scope and need of each project/activity is determined.

The money itself is currently invested in a variety of fixed term bonds so that it is earning interest while we make decisions on the projects we will use it for. This means we are in no rush – PCC agreed we do not need to spend the money immediately, we should be confident to spend when we feel God is calling us to spend it.

Other Highlights

Chaplaincy Project: PCC has been very happy to support work to establish a chaplaincy at Cleeve School, and are grateful to Ben and others who have taken this project on. We are encouraged that the Diocese plus a group of Chaplaincy Champions have been willing to fund this for the first three years. We look forward to seeing what God can do through this project over the coming year.

Safeguarding: Guided by our Safeguarding Officer, PCC has been working to get up to date on the Safeguarding Dashboard, which has included having an interesting discussion on Safeguarding culture in our parish, alongside updating and approving the required policies. We are committed to keeping Safeguarding matters high on our agenda over the coming year.

Mission Partners: Following the introduction of our new Mission Partners working group last year, PCC actively worked to increase opportunities to give both time, awareness and money to our Mission Partners this year. Total contributions made via church accounts rose to around £3,000, including approximately £1,200 from Christmas collections. This compares with roughly £600 in the previous year. We had a successful Mission Sunday in 2025, and will plan another for this summer.

Pattern of Worship: We are blessed that general attendance at services and activities in our parish has increased over the last 12 months. In part linked with our Vision 2030 but also XXX, PCC continues to discuss our regular pattern of worship and how that might be adjusted and improved to best serve our existing and potential new congregations.

Deanery Strategic Plan: PCC have been hearing with interest about the Deanery Strategic Plan, which aims to be visionary, reinvigorating Deanery life with financial investment. We are keen to engage with the plan, including the recruitment of the new Deanery Operation Leads.

Gift Day: The faith and effort of our PCC and wider congregation have once again been rewarded. Our annual Gift Day in October 2025 was hugely successful, helping to support general church funds as well as our new Vision fund (which includes our CFM work).

Southam: As PCC for the whole parish, which includes both St Michael's as well as our daughter church at Southam, we have worked to support Southam as they have completed their large-scale refurbishment work, all of which is now complete. We have been challenged this year to consider what elements of our Vision 2030 can be linked with Southam specifically, and will look to do more of this over the coming months.

Stewardship: We continue to work with our Churchwardens to ensure proper stewardship and use of our facilities. This has included refreshing our Safety policy, which we are required to do every three years.

In everything we have done and through every topic we have discussed over the last 12-months, we have collectively done our best to always look to Heaven for guidance, use our gifts to serve God as both individuals and as a group, been graceful in our discussions, and prayerful in our decision making.

We expect the year ahead to continue to present its challenges, but we hope and pray we will look back and see continued and new developments in our mission to bring Jesus to those around us.

My formal thanks to all PCC Members, including those who also sit on Standing Committee, for all their support, work, and prayerful doing of church business.

PCC Calendar 2026/27

Standing Committee	Tuesday 12 May, 7.45am
PCC Meeting	Tuesday 2 June, 7.45pm
Standing Committee	Tuesday 23 June, 7.45pm
PCC Meeting	Tuesday 21 July, 7.45pm
Standing Committee	Tuesday 15 September, 7.45pm
PCC Meeting	Tuesday 29 September, 7.45pm
Standing Committee	Tuesday 20 October, 7.45pm
PCC Meeting	Tuesday 10 November, 7.45pm
Standing Committee	Tuesday 12 January, 7.45pm
PCC Meeting	Tuesday 2 February, 7.45pm

Agenda Items

Should you have items of business you wish to be discussed at our PCC meetings, please email these to PCC Secretary, Zoe Homes, via zhomes@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk. Agendas are prepared at least one week before each Standing Committee meeting date listed above.

Minutes

Minutes of PCC meetings are posted on this notice board once approved. An archive of minutes can be found in the folder kept next to the kitchen.

Questions

If you have any questions about PCC, please speak to any PCC member, or email PCC Secretary, Zoe Homes, via zhomes@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk

Churchwardens' Report

This report has been prepared by Churchwardens Andrew Young and Ann Jessop for St Michael and All Angels in Bishop's Cleeve and from John Donovan Deputy Churchwarden for the Church of the Ascension in Southam.

This report covers the year 2025, with some reference to the first part of 2026.

The Churchwardens

The churchwardens for St Michael's in Bishop's Cleeve are Andrew Young and Ann Jessop. By law, these are also the churchwardens of Southam. John Donovan is Deputy Churchwarden for the Church of the Ascension at Southam, which is the daughter church to St Michael's. At the time of writing this, Andrew and John intend to stand again while Ann intends to stand down at the 2026 APCM, although expecting to continue to be an active member in the team. All three of us are willing to speak to you about any matters that concern you.

Churchwarden Andrew Young reports as follows:

2025 has been a year of continued change as we have moved forwards with plans and ideas generated during the Vision 2030 process. It has been encouraging to see the level of initiatives gaining strength or starting up during 2025, to call out a few:

- Alpha becoming a recurring work
- Youth Alpha run by both Lucys
- Central Prayer
- Connect Chatter group on a Friday
- School outreach increasing
- Praise & Play Gotherington
- Parenting course run by Lucy Betts and Marion Young
- Bereavement course run by Nat and Pete Muir
- School Chaplaincy pioneered by Ben
- Prayer Team support back at all 11:15 services
- Baptism via full immersion for candidates who wanted this

We have continued this year to try and post videos of the sermons online hosted on our YouTube channel @StMichaelsBishopsCleeve (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW-3aTl2JS3Xit8k2CBKoYA>). As of the 15th of February 2026, we had a total of 92 videos online. Statistically the videos of the second services at St. Michael's get better viewing figures more people watching them to the end. If both services are taken by the same service leader, I would normally post the second service video unless there was an issue with it or if there had been children captured in the background passing through as this can cause issues around privacy. If the two services have different sermons I try to post both.

A few interesting statistics specifically related to 2025 are:

- 2,840 video views (236 view per month on average)
- Viewing time up by 50% from 2024
- 83 subscribers (up by 38 in 2025)
- 133 viewers per month (77.2% were new viewers – not subscribers at time of first viewing)

The contactless device located at the back of church has been working throughout 2025. There have been mobile network challenges during 2025 meaning this device displays a "Failed to connect" message. This has hopefully now been resolved by Vodafone/ O2 whose hardware had issues.

There has been attempt to get quotes for Wi-Fi access within the church which would allow us to stream videos and access more content for use during services and events. We are also looking at the practicalities of providing public Wi-Fi access, but this will be driven by costs and agreed with PCC as appropriate. Recently two companies I was in contact with, withdrew and refused to quote or even assess what would be required due to it being a listed building and the complexities of approvals and faculties to make anything happen. There are other options and we are progressing them with Ben having found one company that offers this as part of wider service.

During 2025 and continuing we are having significant issues at times with our Audio-Visual system. This made some of the services over Christmas extremely difficult for the service leaders and clergy as the availability of visuals was at best unpredictable. Steve Dowle has been amazing in his efforts to manage this and do any tactical repairs possible. Laurie Hilditch has also stepped in and has been a huge blessing for the sound part of things. Until we manage to resolve all these issues please bear with us as we try to make this work for each service it is required for, if it fails, it is not from lack of effort or willing from Steve, Laurie and the team, both prior to and during services please let them get on with their setup and duties without interrupting them or talking to them. Please understand that we try to resolve any issues as quickly as we can when they come about, when standing behind the AV desk and something goes wrong, having 70 pairs of eyes looking at you does not help you think clearly to sort the issues; I can speak from personal experience.

The current Audio-Visual system was installed in 2020 and the issues we are facing now are primarily due to technology in use then failing or becoming unreliable. The boxes in question cannot readily be replaced as they are no longer made as technology has moved on significantly in the last six years. Rev Tim, Rev Ben, Steve, Laurie and I have met and agreed exactly what we need going forwards and how to simplify the current setup. Rev Ben and I are now engaging with several external companies who specialise in this kind of setup within churches to understand how much of the existing hardware we can reuse and areas where we need to replace outdated technology /hardware. This shall be going to PCC as appropriate when we can move forwards, the goal is to not do any fabric changes that require a new faculty but to use existing channels and boxes etc.

During this year I have had to step in to take on the administration and management of St. Michael's hardware, software and internet presence following the tragic passing of Allister Homes. Thankfully Allister had documented so much of what we have, account details and technical specifications that although this has not been easy, it has to date been possible. I have now transferred over many of the accounts administered previously by Allister into my name and I have agreed with James Hall that I will be setting him up with an account and I have updated the documentation as I go to ensure there is a backup if I for some reason am not available. This work is key to the basic functioning of our church as it ensures the office staff can work, email is available, our webpage is online and we can interact with funeral directors, the diocese and our parishioner easily.

Churchwarden Ann Jessop reports as follows:

The Churchwarden Team Ethos

A team of about eight (this varies) is dedicated to assisting the clergy and churchwardens as needed in all their duties. We are Jenny, Mark, Kevin, Tony, Laurie, John, Ro, Nick, Julie, Ann, Andrew. As a Team with special responsibilities, we describe our ethos as follows. We maintain our faith, hope and love in all that we do for this church. God is in all that we do. To labour is to pray.

Our Needs

- Our teams who clean the church give their time once a month to make this place hygienic and pleasant. We need more workers in this ministry.

- Our churchwatchers come once a week to greet and look after our Monday to Friday visitors. Anyone could walk in the door, with surprisingly different experiences and expectations. If we had more churchwatchers, we could open the church for more hours.
- Our stewards serve once a month to make our Sunday worship flow smoothly. We set up the building and the altar ready, we manage the microphones, prepare Holy Communion items, we look after the needs of the clergy and the congregation, we tidy up and close down afterwards. We work best if there are two of us, giving us time to get to know everyone and introduce new people, but we do not have enough stewards and for some of the time there is a sole worker trying to do everything. We also need stewards on duty for weddings, funerals, baptisms and special events.

If you would like to be involved in any of the three above ministries, we would love to hear from you. Training will be given.

In addition, there are teams involved in children's work, pastoral care, prayer, laundering, polishing, flower arranging, gardening, Audio Visual, First Aiding, catering, bellringing, music making and many others, all happy to receive new members. The churchwardens are grateful to all our volunteers. We are a busy and caring church, pulling together in His work.

The Law

The Representation Rules require that the churchwardens bring to the APCM *a report upon the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church or churches of the parish, under section 51 of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991*. Therefore, some of this report is about the buildings and contents. The inventory is available to view at this meeting. The 2024 quinquennial report is also on view. The building and contents are an inheritance which we have a duty to care for and to hand down to future generations. The 1991 Measure says *Any person or body carrying out functions of care and conservation under this Measure or under any other enactment or rule of law relating to churches shall have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission*.

Fabric in 2025-2026, St Michael's, compiled by Ann Jessop

- Our quinquennial inspection took place in March 2024. A full copy is available to view at the APCM, along with our progress report.
- The terrier is available to view at the APCM.
- Some high masonry work was carried out in 2025 on the North transept outside wall.
- Some lime mortar fell from the ceiling in the North chapel area of the church and repairs were carried out in 2025.
- In 2025 we had our quinquennial EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) inspection and completed the required remedial work.
- PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) was carried out in 2025 and covered 57 items.
- Rentacure inspected the church for any signs of woodworm in 2025 and found no cause for concern, except we are to monitor the oak chest and spray it with an approved insecticide from time to time.
- The roofs are generally in good order but we do need to replace loose tiles from time to time. In 2025 a special Restec coating was applied to part of the south facing lead roof where there seemed to be a weak place causing leaks. At the same time, some masonry was filled over one of the south facing windows.
- The main doors, south and west, were soda blasted and treated with Liberon early in 2026.
- The café parquet floor was treated in 2025. Other areas are scheduled for 2026.
- The bellringers organised some improvements to the bells in 2025, including a flapper board for the 2 and some adjustments to the clappers of all the bells. A new clapper for the 8th bell will be considered in 2026.
- Routine checks, tests, small repairs and servicing on gutters, drains, electrics, boiler, mower, lightning conduction, fire provision, clock, bells, heating, organ etc are all up to date.

- Our cleaner Andy Fallon is contracted for 26 hours per month to clean the church and 6 hours per month to tidy the churchyard. Our volunteer teams do a dusting stint on Fridays. It is more important than ever to be clean, and so we strive to maintain high standards.
- We are investigating the costs and method of improving the vestry glazing.
- We have a quote for restoring the missing masonry in the crossing.
- We are investigating the possibility of installing an additional toilet in church.
- In future the church might consider improving the outside lighting and adding CCTV coverage, but we have not had the capacity to address this up to now.
- Andrew reports elsewhere on the AV system, electronic giving and the office equipment.
- We mitigate the expenses of maintaining the building by applying for grants from outside sources for special projects, and by regular and determined work by our volunteers wherever possible. Till now, via the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme, we have been able to claim back the VAT costs incurred on building and maintenance projects, and in 2025 we were able to reclaim £1,188 for St Michael's and £5,519 for the Ascension. Unfortunately, the government has now withdrawn this facility. This will have an impact on our future expenses.

[Fabric in 2025-2026, Southam Church, as reported by John Donovan and Ann Jessop](#)

At the beginning of 2025 our Church of the Ascension was faced with the daunting task of finding enough money to complete the repairs to the floor recommended by our former architect in his last quinquennial report. That report and our progress record is available to view at this APCM. The terrier is also available to view.

I am pleased to report that all the work to restore the church floor has been finished along with repairs to the decorative pillars to the altar and the specialist cleaning of the pulpit and font. Needless to say, we did indeed find the money to complete the restoration work. Donations came from church members, residents of Southam village and grants from the Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust, The Listed Places of Worship scheme, and the Benefact Trust.

The church was cleared and contractor Rex Bishop was engaged to remove any residue of asbestos. Kevin Paul, our stonemason, was contracted to lay new stone to cover the Victorian ducting that used to house the original heating pipes.

The next job to be tackled was the restoration of the oak panelling surrounding the inner walls of the church. This job I undertook myself as I felt I wanted to make a contribution of my own.

To complete the work at Southam, we asked David Wintle, our organ restorer, to submit a report on the state of the organ. He discovered that it needed some essential work to repair broken parts of the mechanism, along with a much needed clean. I am pleased to report that all this work was completed thanks to another generous donation.

The maintenance of the church continues, and I am pleased to say that the church is flourishing.

Ours is an outstandingly beautiful church with an unusual history.

[Other St Michael's Matters, reported by Ann Jessop](#)

Hygiene

We are past the days of Covid and lockdown but we continue to maintain high standards of cleanliness, to prevent the spread of infection. At the time of writing, we still offer Communion wafers dipped in the wine, as an alternative to sharing the common cup. Hand sanitiser is provided in several locations. Kitchen and catering are managed to a professional standard of hygiene, led by Annie Nixon.

Fuel costs

Fuel costs have stabilised at around £10,000 a year. In winter, it is important to not leave the doors open for longer than necessary and we should use the warm air curtain whenever they are open. We are enrolled with the Parish Buying Scheme which obtains for us the best possible fuel deals. All our electricity is from renewable sources. The gas heating is provided by a double boiler system which has an A rating for Eco status. Management of the fuel contracts has been taken over by our admin staff.

Heritage

Whenever the church is open, you are free to explore the porch room, an ancient and fascinating part of our building, housing our collection of photos and documents and memorabilia.

On our walls in the main church, we still have history factoids which we made in 2023 to link the history of our church with the history of the monarchy.

In the baptistery we have various information guides about the church.

Health and Safety

The Safety Policy is reviewed by the PCC every three years and was last signed off by the Rector in 2025.

Safeguarding is managed by Lesley Sadler and is reported on elsewhere.

Emergency services ask for our What3words, rather than a postcode. See [What3words.com](https://www.what3words.com) for further details. For our two churches, the words are as follows.

- St M West door: union.achieving.tame
- St M South door: prep.rush.gladiators
- St M Main gate: play.cure.fuels
- Southam door: editor.dame.agents

Thanks to a grant of £400 from Bishop's Cleeve Parish Council, we held a First Aid Training course in 2025. It is important to renew our training every three years, and to recruit new first aiders, as this is not only a service for our church but a way of taking our useful skills into the community, wherever we might find ourselves.

We replaced the defibrillator pads in 2025.

Portable safety lights have been provided for the tower and the main church.

Fire safety training is overdue.

Churchyard

Ours is a closed churchyard which means there can be no new burials. (The exception is that existing plots can be opened to receive the remains of another family member, if there is room.) The Closed Churchyard became the responsibility of Tewkesbury Council in 1990. Subsequently, the church wished to provide better maintenance than the Borough was delivering, so they took on themselves some routine work in return for an annual grant from the Borough. In September 2019 we entered into a formal contract with the Borough, defining the level of the annual payments to us (£6,000, index linked, now worth about £7,000) and the extent of our duties, which include care of lawns, gates, walls, trees, paths, graves. The Borough still has ultimate responsibility. We can only manage on this small budget because our volunteers put in so much work.

This is a space which is important to the whole community. Three rights of way cross it, and the public frequently meet us here. General management falls to Tony Dixon and Ro Hunt, and the churchwardens must ensure safety of boundaries, paths, trees and headstones. The grass is cut by Gotherington Garden Services (Vince Larcombe). The benches are cleaned regularly and treated by volunteers each year. The

Garden of Remembrance continues to be lovingly cared for by Keith and Annie Hawkes, while Pauline Readings and Ro Hunt tend that charming garden by the priests' door. We still need volunteers from time to time to take waste to the tip, and to help in working parties. The Community Payback Scheme members are now well established in working for us. The work they are doing includes digging, hedging, clearing, weeding, strimming, composting, treating the benches, whatever is needed. We continually monitor the condition of the headstones and the boundaries and instigate professional repairs when needed. Our Eco provision now includes bird feeders, bug hotels, a log pile, a stone pile. In 2025, sadly, we had to fell one of our old pine trees as it had become diseased and unsafe. Our tree contractor Chris Arnold regularly inspects the trees and keeps all in thriving and safe condition.

It was a great disappointment to find in 2025 that persons has used the churchyard for a barbecue and then caused 3 of our wheelie bins to be burnt to the ground, leaking melted plastic into our gulley and drain. There were similar events in other parts of Bishop's Cleeve. The Borough Council were very kind to us and replaced the bins free of charge. The event did not cost us much money but did cause us a considerable amount of clearing up.

Our Track Record

Our congregations might not be aware of the considerable standing that we have in church circles, and the success of our efforts over the years. Here are just a few examples.

- In 2016, we won the John Betjeman award for the conservation work on the medieval oak stairs.
- In 2017, Jane Lloyd won the Cannon trophy for her outstanding performance for Ride and Stride.
- In 2018, Mary Hughes won a The Little Deeds competition, organised by Ecclesiastical Insurance.
- In 2022, the National Churches Trust pronounced us the best maintained church in England.
- In 2022, our church kitchen was awarded 5 stars for hygiene by the Food Standards Agency, a standard we have maintained ever since.
- In 2023 the A Rocha organisation awarded us the Silver Eco Church Award for our eco work in Worship and Teaching, Management of Buildings and Land, Community and Global Engagement, Lifestyle. We are not far from achieving the Gold award.
- In 2025, our own Terry Richer won the GHCT photograph competition with a stunning picture of St Michael's which was used for the official Christmas cards for GHCT.

We strive for excellence in all our doings. The above achievements received public recognition and we are pleased. But your churchwardens do not forget all the quiet and hidden and sometimes unnoticed loyalty, generosity, acts of kindness, which make our churches His churches.

Safeguarding Report

Prepared by Lesley Sadler, Safeguarding Officer.

This past year has been busy from a safeguarding point in completing all the components for the Parish Dashboard. We are up to 98% completed with just a couple of outstanding safeguarding training to be completed by members of the PCC. This training has been offered in house as a group or can be completed individually online.

The link to any training can be given by the church office.

Completing the parish dashboard means that we are compliant with Gloucester Diocese as well as the wider Church Of England to which we belong. It also helps us as a church to stay safe and vigilant as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

As Parish Safeguarding Officer I have completed all the necessary training required to continue to ensure St. Michaels and Southam churches are safe places to worship.

My thanks and gratitude to Kate and Tracy in the office for all their help and support with admin and to John Barton for his support with safeguarding.

Tewkesbury and Winchcombe Deanery Synod Report

Prepared by Tim Powell, Deanery Synod Representative.

We are entitled to four lay members on the Deanery Synod but currently I am the only one. We need to change that. I volunteered to join the Deanery Synod in 2023. My first reaction on attending my first Deanery Synod meeting was that it was not a particularly good use of my time. It seemed to be a collection of people from many disparate parishes who largely did their own thing. But that has changed. So it is now much more important that we are well represented on the Deanery Synod.

In particular The Diocese has decided to set aside significant funds to help each Deanery to develop its Strategic Plan (now called a Strategic Pathway). In total they are prepared to offer each deanery resources costing up to £100,000 a year for five years to help develop and implement the plans. They intended these moneys to be used to finance the employment in each deanery of a Deanery Operations Leader.

This effort is being managed by David Evans, originally an external consultant but now employed directly by the diocese. As Deanery Treasurer and a member of the Deanery Standing Committee I have been involved in a couple of meetings with David Evans and I have been impressed with his approach. He has been quite sensitive to the fact that the deaneries all have their own ideas about how this money can best be spent, whilst the Diocese also wants to retain some control on how the moneys are used to further the long term future of all the deaneries in the diocese. Not an easy balancing act.

The initial reaction of those developing our Deanery Strategic Plan was a little sceptical. They were not sure exactly what the Deanery Operations Leader would do, but could see plenty of other ways in which £100,000 could usefully be spent within the deanery.

Instead of employing a full time Deanery Operations Leader they proposed a half time post (possibly by sharing with another Deanery.) and suggested using the rest of the moneys for other projects particularly youth work or day to day administrative support. In further discussions with the Diocese it became clear that the Diocese were not very happy with this idea. They definitely wanted a full time post in each deanery. The appointed person would work closely with the deanery team but would be employed by the Diocese and would work closely with the other Deanery Operations Leaders. At present the diocese have started detailed discussions with three deaneries and have started the recruitment process.

The Deanery Synod has met twice since last years report. The first time was in September. The meeting started with a presentation by Nigel Bennett about the Street Pastors designed to encourage more support throughout the deanery. However, the main topic of discussion was about the diocese's suggestion that they were prepared to finance a Deanery Operations Leader for five years.

When this situation was explained to the members of the Deanery Synod, many of whom knew nothing about it until that moment, there were many questions as to what was really going on and perhaps a degree of scepticism. David Penny, our Area Dean then stated that for our deanery things were still at an early stage, that the Deanery Standing Committee would continue working on it, and continue discussions with David Evans and the Diocese with a view to preparing a more detailed proposal. In so doing we would have to take on board that, whilst the Diocese did not want to dictate in any great detail how the available money should be used, equally we did not have a totally free hand to spend the money in any way we liked. We had to work something out in consultation with the Diocese.

The second meeting of the Deanery Synod was in February of this year. Between the two meetings there had been considerable further discussion between David Evans and the Deanery Steering Committee and a motion had been prepared for discussion at the Synod agreeing that we wanted the diocese to appoint a person who could help coordinate activities across the deanery.

David Evans, who was a guest at the Synod, then explained that his role is to help the deaneries move forward on their pathway. So far, three deanery operations leaders have been appointed in the diocese. The appointments are proving successful and he sees no reason why they should not work well for the other deaneries. In answer to questions, he said that persons appointed should relieve priests of some administration and the question of on-going funding after 5 years is a matter for the diocese.

After David had spoken with one abstention, the meeting agreed to the motion that we should go ahead quickly with the diocese in recruiting a suitable Deanery Operations Leader.

The decision of the diocese to offer to spend so much money in each deanery in this way is obviously contentious, and was the subject of much scepticism at first. However as discussions proceeded the reasons why they wanted to do this became clearer and gained more acceptance. My own view is that on balance I welcome the fact that the Diocese has to some extent stuck its neck out by taking this initiative. I think we should all strive to support it, modify it where we think it can be improved and pray for its success.

Treasurer's Report for 2025 and Outlook for 2026

Prepared by Tim Powell, Treasurer.

The purpose of this report is to present a snapshot of our current financial situation. This should help us to decide what we need to do, from a financial point of view, so as to maintain and strengthen our presence as one of the main sources for spreading the Christian message in Bishops Cleeve, Woodmancote and Southam. A more detailed description of our income and expenditure in 2025 is given in the full Financial Statements for that year.

Our current reserves

As Table 1 below shows at the start of this year the PCC had reserves, potentially available to spend of over £375,000. Of this total just under £40,000 was allocated for the church in Southam.

Table 1: Our current reserves and allocation by Fund			
Fund	As at 31 December 2025	As at 1 January 2025	Difference
Total all Funds /Assets	375,310	161,921	213,389
of which			
General Fund	107,907	85,307	22,600
Fabric Fund	4,801	5,922	-1,121
Churchyard Fund	11,993	9,553	2,440
Organ Funds	18,500	16,500	2,000
Southam Funds	39,418	41,476	-2,058
Teale Fund	184,956		184,956
School Chaplaincy Fund	4,607		4,607
Other	3,128	3,163	-35

It is the formal policy of the PCC that "the PCC will maintain three month's costs in general reserves at all times." In 2024 three months costs amounted to just over £69,000.

The PCC has also decided that some of our reserves should be allocated to designated funds, intended to build up specific reserves for the inevitable need for occasional major expenditure on maintaining the Fabric of St Michael's and to maintain the organ at St Michael's. The PCC have agreed that £2500 should be added each year to the designated Fabric Fund. They have also agreed that £2,000 each year should be added to the Organ Fund which now stands at £16,500.

Change during 2025

It can be seen that during the course of the year our reserves increased by more than £213,000. This is great news. The principal reason for this is that we received a legacy of slightly more than £183,000 from

the will of Esme Teale. Older members of St Michael's will remember Esme and Grahame Teale as faithful members of St Michael's for very many years.

But another reason for the increase in our reserves is that we had a very successful Gift Day last autumn. Even without the Teale Legacy our reserves would have gone up by about £28,000. This was despite the fact that in total at St Michaels and Southam we spent nearly £343,000. Running our parish is not a cheap operation.

If we look at how the balance in our various funds has changed over the year a few points stand out.

The balance in the General Fund has increased by £22,600. The General Fund includes all our reserves which have not been specifically allocated for a specific purpose. It is thus very good news that its balance has increased by this much.

There was a small fall in the balance on our Fabric Fund. Our expenditure on the fabric inevitably varies from year to year. Last year we spent £4800 on stonework and lead roof repairs, considerably less than the nearly £14,000 spent in 2024. However, with a large, old, listed building we will occasionally find that there is something quite expensive that we have to do to maintain the fabric of our church. It may well be that we should consider adding rather more than the £2,500 that we currently allocate each year to the Fabric Fund so as to build up a bigger reserve.

There was a welcome increase in the balance on the Churchyard fund. The income for this fund comes from Tewkesbury Borough Council and we can only spend the money in the fund for the maintenance of the Churchyard. It cannot be used for any other purpose.

The reduction of only just over £2000 in the Southam accounts is despite the fact that during the course of the year the Church of the Ascension spent over £58,000 on repairs to their fabric and organ. The majority of the cost was covered by very generous donations including from the congregation, the village and two grants of £2,000 from the Gloucestershire Historical Churches Trust and £1775, from the Benefact Trust.

The two new items in the Table 1 are the Teale Fund and the School Chaplaincy Fund. These are discussed below.

The Teale Fund

The Teale Fund has been set up to record, monitor and control the substantial increase in our reserves from the Teale legacy. The PCC have set up the following guidelines:

1: The moneys received from the Teale legacy should be placed in a separate designated fund, (the Teale Fund?) This is to recognise the Teales' generosity and to enable evaluation of how the bequest is spent.

2: The purpose of the fund is to support project in line with the quoted purpose of the legacy which was to be used by *"The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Bishops Cleeve...for its general charitable purposes with the wish (without creating any binding obligation) that the gift is used for the benefit of the fabric fund of St Michael and All Angels Church."*

3: The release of funds from the "Teale Fund" to further such projects should be subject to the approval of the PCC. They also endorsed the following general principles

- We should avoid using the Teale Fund for routine spending, including current CFM activity and our Parish Share.
- The money should be earmarked for projects that are aligned with our church vision work, whether they be improvements to the fabric of our building to allow us to carry out that work, or projects which enhance existing activities or start new ones.

- There is no rush to spend the money at once, and we will make decisions as projects are properly planned and as we discern God leading us.

So far the PCC have approved the expenditure of £2,600 to sand blast the outer doors at St Michaels. A number of other projects are being considered.

The School Chaplaincy Fund

This fund has been set up to support the appointment of a school chaplain at Cleeve School. In response to an appeal a total of £4607 had been given specifically for this project. Further sums have been pledged for the future. The Diocese has also agreed to support this work and will be providing £25,000 for this purpose for the next three years.

Review of Income and Expenditure in 2024

Table summarises the main components of our income and expenditure in 2024. Most of the headings in the table should be self explanatory.

Table 2: Income and Expenditure by Activity

St Michaels General and Children's and Families Ministry Funds

Income	2025	2024
Parish Giving Scheme (including Gift Aid Reclaimed)	201,212	200,071
Collections and Donations (including Gift Aid Reclaimed)	33,602	29,898
Legacies	2,000	
CFM Attendance Charges and Donations	3,774	2,693
PCC Fees for Weddings and Funerals	7,078	8,202
Other Receipts for Weddings and Funerals	14,757	17,450
Bank Interest	3,740	1,913
Collections for Charities	2,540	608
Other Income	3,852	7,942
Southam Contribution to Parish Share	10,000	7,000
WGO Parish Contribution to Common Costs	6,500	
Total	289,055	275,777
Expenditure	2025	2024
Parish Share	113,683	104,060
Administration and Office Costs	55,602	56,954

Cost of CFM ministry including staff, hall rental and other expenses	38,185	35,288
Payment of Statutory Fees and to Helpers at Weddings and Funerals	14,590	17,361
Annual cost for insurance, gutter cleaning, fire security, gas and lightning conductor checks	9,856	8,812
Energy (heating and lighting)	11,514	11,964
Cleaning	4,785	4,290
Donations to Charities	3,043	612
Other	10,627	6,347
Transfers to Organ and Fabric Funds	4,500	4,500
Total	266,385	245,688
St Michael's Fabric Fund		
Income		
VAT Refund (2025) and Other Income (2024)	1,188	3,749
Expenditure		
Stonework Repair	3,309	
Lead Roof Repairs	1,500	
Total	4,809	13,881
St Michaels Churchyard Fund		
Income		
Tewkesbury Borough	7,673	7,507
Expenditure		
Mowing and Upkeep of Churchyard	4,909	4,532
Repair of Memorials	324	618
Total	5,233	5,150
Southam General Fund		
Income		
	11,219	11,431
Expenditure		

Contribution to Parish Share	10,000	7,000
Other Expenditure	2,310	2,951
Total	12,310	9,951
Southam Fabric and Floor Funds		
Income	57,265	3,357
Expenditure	58,234	4,635

By far our single largest source of income is the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a scheme started by Gloucester diocese but now run centrally for the Church of England. It is a very efficient scheme which enables people to commit to regular monthly giving. The Scheme then automatically claims any potentially Gift Aid from the Government, which we get much more quickly and with much less work than if we had to claim it ourselves. If anyone wants to know more about the scheme there are leaflets at the back of the church explaining the scheme, but also feel free to contact me.

We also had a very successful Gift Day in 2025. In total we raised about £39,000. This included some contributions to the School Chaplaincy Fund. The income from Gift Day is partially recorded in Table 2 above as income from the Parish Giving Scheme and partly as Collections and Donations. We also received a significant one off donation and two small legacies. Without the Parish Giving Scheme and these other one off donations we would have had a deficit on the General Fund for the year of about £27,000.

The largest single source of our expenditure is our Parish Share payment. This is our contribution towards the total costs of the Diocese. The Diocese is responsible for overseeing all the work of the Church of England in the area of the diocese. It pays the salaries and costs of housing of all the parochial clergy including Tim and Ben.

Each year the diocese asks all the Parishes in the diocese to make a contribution towards their costs and suggests what would be an appropriate contribution. Our PCC have agreed that we should strive to meet this request. Even with all the suggested contributions from the parishes the diocese is not fully covering its costs. Instead it is having to rely on the sale of some of its inherited assets. This cannot go on for ever.

Outlook for 2026 and The Way Forward

Whilst we can congratulate ourselves that in total the parish more than covered its costs for 2025 we cannot afford to be complacent. Our costs of doing what we did last year will increase by about 5% an increase of about £13,000. Both our regular income and our Gift Day collection are helped greatly by a few large donors whose presence cannot for ever be taken for granted, although I am happy to report that during the course of the year our income has been increased from a number of new donors.

We have also for the last two years been developing our Vision 2030 Project and 2030 is now getting nearer. We hope to be able to use some of the Teale Fund to help finance some of the new activities being envisaged for Vision 2030 but it may need to be augmented.

If anyone has any questions or suggestions about our finances, please feel free to contact me via tim@stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk.

Financial Statements

The Financial Statements for year ending December 2025 can be found on the church website. Look at the bottom of the homepage of our website - <https://www.stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk/>

The accounts were approved by PCC on 17 March and subsequently approved by our independent examiner on 2 April 2026.

Paper copies of the statements are also available to view on the PCC noticeboard in St Michael's Church.

Electoral Roll

Following the required update process, our Electoral Roll stands at 248. This is 12 higher than last year's **236**. There were 17 names added to the roll and 5 removed.

The names of those on the roll have been published in church.

If you have not filled in an application yet but would like to be on the Electoral Roll as a member of our church family, forms are available online, and from the office. Please speak to Julia Dowle or any member of the PCC if you would like to be included in the roll.

Additional Reports on the Life of the Church

Our Ministry in Southam

Prepared by John Donovan.

Our small church continues to provide two holy communion services a month, on the occasion of bad weather for church on the hill we hold a short reflection service in church, and or we use the church as a starting point on sunny days.

The outreach we provide for the village is our breakfast church service, this is held in the village hall on the fourth Sunday of each month, we are delighted to welcome over 30 people from the village and surrounding areas.

Children and Families Ministry

Prepared by Lucy Betts.

Praise and Play

This year, our three Praise and Play groups—two at St Michael's Centre and one at Gotherington Village Hall—have continued to grow and have been wonderfully busy. The relationships formed within these groups have become increasingly strong, and as a result, we have introduced *Praise and Play Extra* on Sunday mornings in place of our usual crèche provision.

Although several team members have had to step down for various reasons, we are grateful that God has provided new volunteers to join us. As our ministry continues to grow, we want to ensure we care well for our team and avoid overburdening anyone. With that in mind, please prayerfully consider whether you might be able to volunteer with any of our three groups.

Your support makes a real difference—thank you for considering it.

Sunday Morning Explorers

Over the past year, we have introduced several changes to our Sunday morning format. Children now begin in the 11:15 service and join the congregation for the first two songs before walking over to St Michael's Centre. There, we spend around an hour together, including a song, a Bible story, and a short thought. The children are then given the opportunity to choose either to explore the theme more deeply through discussion or to take part in a craft activity linked to the topic. After this, we gather together once more and walk back to the church.

We are delighted to have welcomed an encouraging number of new young families in recent months, and this updated format appears to be serving them—and our children—really well.

JAFFA (Jesus A Friend For All)

JAFFA is an after school group and continues to thrive with about 15 children attending

This is headed up by Judith Jenkins. The children love coming along, and this continues to build a really positive relationship with the school.

Bible Brick Club

The Bible Brick Club is now a flourishing club with about 15 children attending and often bringing their friends too. The club is open to those in school years 2-6 . We have attendees from all three schools from Bishops Cleeve. During the session the children will hear a story from the Bible, we will have a short discussion then they will be asked to build something from that story. They are then displayed in the church.

Experience Easter

This Easter we had 200 children from Year 3 from Bishops Cleeve Primary Academy, Woodmancote Primary and Grangefield Primary. They all had a great time learning and experiencing the story of Easter.

Experience Christmas

In December we had around 200 year 3 children coming into the church to do Experience Christmas and then we took the session into Gotherington Primary School to the Year 3's

Summer Holiday Club

This Summer we had our Space Hoppers Holiday Club with around 40 children aged 5 -11 over three days we had great fun learning about Stories from Peters Life

Christmas

Along with Experience Christmas, we also hosted three of our local schools in the church for their Christmas services. We also had our Christmas Craft and tree decorating session which was wonderful and well attended. We also had great fun at our Christingle and Nativity service. We also hosted 4 of our local Pre-schools for their Christingle service.

Youth Work

Prepared by Lucy Barbour.

Following on from the foundations we laid in 2025, we have continued in our commitment to nurturing the faith of young people in our Benefice across the year.

Building on the success of the Youth Alpha course, we have continued the Friday night youth club at Gotherington Chapel during term time. This has now settled into a regular group of between 8 and 12 young people, mostly from school years 7 to 9. While not all of them are regular churchgoers, they clearly really enjoy the club and feel a genuine sense of belonging. To keep things engaging, we have been using Rock Solid materials from *Youth for Christ*. These resources provide a great balance of games and Christian content, allowing the group to explore faith in a way that actually speaks to them and encourages fun.

Alongside our weekly sessions, we've enjoyed a number of socials in the year and held a particularly successful Church on the Hill youth event on a Sunday at the end of the school year. This brought together adults and young people to make kites while considering the message of Acts 4, the sharing of possessions. Our work with Cleeve Secondary School also remains a highlight; we delivered a very successful week of GSUS Live at Easter, alongside *Youth for Christ* and returned in December to run Christmas lessons for the Year 7 students. On Sunday mornings, we have continued to run "GPS" for those in Year 7 and above, ensuring there is always a dedicated space for them to grow in their own discipleship.

Life Groups

Prepared by Sue Blakey.

There are now 15 groups meeting regularly with about 140 people involved, although differing in frequency, membership and areas of study. We have been able to provide places for anyone who wishes to continue exploring discipleship post Alpha courses although many groups are now at capacity. My hope is that larger groups will consider dividing so that spaces are available for the regular requests to join a Life Group.

Church on the Hill

Prepared by Lucy Barbour.

In June 2025, we celebrated four years of Church on the Hill. The ministry continues to be supported by a consistent group of regulars, providing a much-loved space for outdoor worship and contemplative reflection.

We have continued to vary our locations across the Benefice, visiting a number of different spots. A particular highlight was a prayer walk to a supported living community in Bishops Cleeve during the Big Prayer Challenge, where we were able to gather and pray with the community there.

A similar highlight was a Sunday morning making kites and reflecting on Acts 4, *The Sharing of Possessions* with a mix of our Youth Group, their families and the Church on the Hill community.

A strength of Church on the Hill is the opportunity it provides for different members of the wider congregation to lead and preach. This year, many individuals have taken on these roles. The informal nature of our outdoor gatherings creates a safe and encouraging environment for people to explore ministry in this way. Alongside this, it remains a space where experimentation and personal reflection is welcomed.

As we look toward the coming year, our main priority is to discern how Church on the Hill should develop. Revd Lucy will be facilitating a meeting to explore these options with all who are concerned. We continue to welcome ideas from the wider church as we consider the next steps for this ministry.

Overseas Mission (Mission Partners)

Prepared by Lucy Barbour and Kathryn Lea.

The mission team continued to communicate this year and has maintained a presence on the PCC and standing committee agenda. We have been encouraged by the steady progress made with regard to Overseas Mission at St Michael's Church and how it is becoming a more natural part of our church life once again.

In June 2025, we held a successful Mission Sunday with a joint service, followed by a Pizza fundraising lunch and presentations from our key partners. The event raised £546.45 and was well supported by the congregations. The hope is to repeat this again in 2026.

The Church Office has also been busy hosting coffee mornings to raise funds and awareness for our mission partners. We are very grateful to everyone who popped in and supported them, raising £280 over the year.

We have also worked hard on improving how we share news about our mission partners, so that they have a more continuous presence in our ministry. This has involved weekly updates on a dedicated Mission section of our online news. Similarly, teams from both Mission Macedonia and Grassroots

Rwanda have been on trips across the year and have had the opportunity to share updates with the church.

One of our main aims this year was to address the dip in giving that had been a concern since COVID. Between the Mission Sunday and coffee mornings, we've seen an increase in both financial support and general awareness which is very encouraging. Moving forward, it's important that this continues to be a priority and we consider new and imaginative ways to engage our congregations around the work of our mission partners and missional thinking in general.

Prayer Ministry

Prepared by Ian Drake.

An inspiration: A group of young ministers came to visit the church of Charles Spurgeon the famous preacher. He offered to show them his boiler room. They were not interested, but he showed them anyway. He took them downstairs and opened a room where dozens of people were praying. "This," he said, "is my boiler room." He often attributed the success of his ministry to the people who prayed for him. So must we.

The House of prayer, still meets each Tuesday evening and Saturday morning on zoom and there is a prayer meeting in the church on Tuesday at 12 noon. Every fourth Saturday of the month the Prayer meeting takes place in the church at 9:30.

Prayer ministry is now a regular thing where people can be a prayed for during or after a service.

In School News

Prepared by Revd Ben Williams.

Since September 2025, myself (Ben) and Amy Todd, Youth Connector for the Diocese of Gloucester, have been steadily growing the chaplaincy's presence, reach, and impact across the school community.

A small but exciting milestone: we now have official school badges and a dedicated school email, meaning we can book rooms, liaise easily with staff, and increasingly function as integrated members of the school team.

Here's what we've been up to this term:

1. Cuppa with a Chaplain

Every week we host coffee, cake, and conversation for staff in the staffroom.

This has become a valued time of:

- rest
- encouragement
- honest chat
- and simple wellbeing in the middle of demanding school weeks.

2. Mentoring and Pastoral Support

We are working closely with the pastoral team to support vulnerable young people on a weekly basis. A pastoral lead wrote this to share with you:

"It is hugely beneficial for them to have a chaplain to talk to, who has the time to spend listening to them and offering support on a practical and emotional level. Some of the students being seen are incredibly vulnerable, and having someone impartial to talk to will positively impact their emotional wellbeing."

This work is expanding further as we have two new volunteer chaplains—Lesley and Emile—now mentoring students weekly.

Their presence has already been deeply appreciated.

3. Detached Youth Work

At lunchtimes, we spend time outdoors engaging informally with Year 7 students, helping build:

- trust
- positive relationships
- and a visible, approachable chaplaincy presence

4. REACH Session

We were invited to contribute to a whole-school REACH session on mental health.

A local psychotherapist (who is also a Christian) filmed a conversation with me, and this video was shown to every student in the school during tutor time.

This was a major moment for visibility and practical impact across the entire student body.

5. Remembrance Assemblies

I worked with staff members who previously served in the armed forces to lead a full week of Remembrance assemblies.

These assemblies included:

- personal stories
- scripture
- themes of sacrifice and hope
- and liturgical elements familiar from Remembrance Sunday

This meant chaplaincy had direct contact with all students and all teaching staff in November 2025.

6. Christmas 2025

Together with St Michael's, the Methodist church, and the local chapel, we will be delivering Christmas lessons for all Year 7 students during their R.E. curriculum—helping them explore the biblical narrative in an engaging, thoughtful way.

7. Bereavement Support

A significant and sensitive part of our work recently has been supporting sixth form staff and students following the death of one of Cleeve School's students.

This support remains ongoing—through listening, presence, pastoral care, and quietly holding space for those who are grieving.

Upcoming Opportunities

1. Recruitment

We anticipate releasing the recruitment advert for the new part time chaplaincy post:

- Live online: the week before the Easter holidays (last week in March)
- Closing: shortly after the Easter break
- Shortlisting and interviews: to follow

This marks a major step forward in the long-term sustainability of the chaplaincy thanks to the grant money awarded to the project from the Diocese of Gloucester. This post will initially be for 3 years with possible extension depending on local fundraising.

2. Enrichment Event – 24th March

We will be taking part in an upcoming enrichment event for parents and students on 24th March—an excellent opportunity to meet families, explain our work, and strengthen the chaplaincy's place within the wider school community.

Encouragements

- We were mentioned positively in the school's staff survey, highlighting the chaplaincy's growing value and impact.
- Two new volunteers have joined the mentoring team (Lesley and Emile).
- Students and staff continue to express gratitude for spaces where they can talk honestly, safely, and without judgement.

Thank You

We are so grateful for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support. None of this would be possible without you.

If you know anyone who might consider joining as a Chaplaincy Champion, please do pass on the invitation.

Supporters can give online through the Cleeve Vision Fund – Parish Giving.

We suggest a gift of £17 a month (or £204 a year), but there is complete flexibility—every gift, large or small, helps this ministry continue to grow and flourish.

Thank you again for walking with us in this important and hope-filled work.

Alpha

Prepared by Revd Ben Williams.

Alpha in Our Churches: Interim Report — Four Courses In

Over the past season, our churches have continued to run Alpha in homes across the parish, now completing our fourth course. What began as a hopeful step into relational, hospitable evangelism has grown into a rhythm of genuine community, open discussion, prayer, and exploration for people at all stages of their spiritual journey.

Participation & Growth

Interest has remained consistently high.

- 25 people signed up,
- yet over 30 participants have attended at least one session across the most recent course.

This reflects both strong invitation culture and the power of personal recommendation. Many guests brought friends or family members with them, and several joined after the course had already begun—an encouraging indicator of trust and openness.

The Alpha Environment: Hospitality & Welcome

A key strength of running Alpha in homes has been the warmth and informal nature of the gatherings. Feedback often mentioned how *“absolutely lovely and so welcoming”* the environment felt. People expressed that meeting around a meal and sitting in living rooms rather than church buildings lowered barriers and helped them relax.

The hosts and leaders across the courses have created settings where conversation flows naturally, and guests feel valued from the moment they walk through the door.

Participant Feedback: What People Are Saying

Across the four courses, participants repeatedly highlighted similar themes in their experience of Alpha:

1. “Understanding—you are not alone.”

Many guests appreciated discovering that others share similar questions, doubts, and hopes. Alpha gave them a space to realise that faith is a journey walked in community, not something they must figure out privately.

2. Openness and honesty without judgement

Guests frequently said how much they valued being able to talk openly about:

- Christianity
- life and faith
- prayer
- their own experiences and questions

One participant said Alpha was the first time they’d been able to express these thoughts without worrying about being judged.

3. Faith becoming real and relevant

A significant comment repeated by several guests was:

“Faith can be relevant in my life in 2025 and not something that is neatly packed away in the back of my mind.”

For many, Alpha reawakened curiosity about God and helped them reconnect faith with the challenges and rhythms of everyday life.

4. A sense of belonging

People consistently shared that they felt welcomed, accepted, and encouraged. The relational element—meals, conversation, laughter, shared questions—played a central role in making the courses meaningful

Looking Ahead

With four successful courses completed, Alpha has proved to be a fruitful expression of mission, welcome, and discipleship in our parish. The home-based model continues to resonate deeply with guests and team alike, and momentum is steadily building.

As we plan the next course, we will continue to:

- nurture hospitable spaces
- encourage invitation
- support small-group leaders
- and help guests discover faith at their own pace

We will also be looking carefully at how to run Alpha in a cost-effective way. While costs will never prevent us from offering the course, we remain committed to stewarding our resources wisely. The aim is to ensure that every course reflects both our heart for mission and our responsibility to use church finances well.

Alpha has become a place where people genuinely feel safe to explore life's biggest questions—and that is something to celebrate as we look to the future.

Choir

Prepared by Ro Hunt.

The choir has had a very enjoyable year and have welcomed some new members. We sing each month on the second and fourth Sundays at the 9.30am service at St Michael's and support Woolstone on third Sundays. We have learned a lot of new music increasing our repertoire, and look forward to singing at all the churches in the Benefice over the next year.

William left to go to university in September and Margaret stepped up to play the organ for as many services as she could manage. We are very pleased to welcome David Gibson, both as a choir member, sometime rehearsal pianist and relief organist. William still appears on occasion, and during holidays is willing to help out. We are very grateful for their playing on Sunday mornings and also accompanying choir practice.

It has also been a sad time for the choir as we struggle with the absence of Mary Hughes. Such a quiet, humble person who played a vital part in everything she did. She is greatly missed.

The Carol Service was particularly enjoyable as we were joined by members of the music group and our extended choir 'family'. Singing together, lit by candlelight at such a special service was very moving. We also enjoyed singing at Oxenton for their carol service the following week, where we were made very welcome.

Over Easter the choir will be singing at St Michael's on Palm Sunday, Woolstone on Good Friday and Oxenton on Easter Sunday.

We continue to rehearse at 7pm on Friday evenings in Church and new members are warmly welcomed. Contact details are available from the church office.

Bells

Prepared by Ann Jessop.

The bellringers continue to ring joyfully for worship and for special events.

Our mission is to call the faithful to worship, and to send out a welcoming message to everyone not inside the church, to remind the village that we are here for them. The inscription on the 4th bell is Peace and Good Neighbourhood, and that is the prayer we send out over the community.

The tower at St Michael's contains 8 heavy bells. The tower at Woolstone contains 6 light bells. We serve both parishes as far as we are able.

Sometimes we welcome visiting ringers who love our wonderful bells. Sometimes we go out ourselves and ring at other towers.

It takes a long time to learn the art of bellringing, and we are constantly trying to ring better, learn new methods, make fewer mistakes.

The towers and the bells take a deal of maintenance and care, which we mostly manage ourselves. When we need to bring in specialist contractors, they are paid for out of funds we have raised ourselves.

The bellringers greet you every week. We are Brian, Mark, Richard, Sarah, Pam, Ian, Ann, David, Angela, Pauline, Charles, Russell, Pat. Colin would ring with us but he is in New Zealand.

The 1890 Smiths of Derby turret clock, still serviced by Smiths, uses the bells to create the quarterly chimes during the day. Simon Waller skilfully adjusts and monitors the clock regularly, to make sure it keeps good time.

Churches Together

Prepared by Ann Jessop.

We are an ecumenical group of Free Church, Methodist, Catholic and Anglican Christians. We are a committee in which all the local churches are represented. Our aim is to maintain informal Christian fellowship between us, including clergy and laity, and to reach out to the community with a united voice. We meet for forward planning three times a year.

Andrew Maxwell is chairman. Kate Bestwick is secretary. Yvonne Penn is our link person for the secular Parish Council and for Christian Aid. Polly Jones and Ruth Whiting are the reps for the Methodists. Alan Carr is the rep for Woodmancote Church. Bob Wickens is the rep for WGO. Wendy Treble, John Barton and Ann Jessop are reps for St Michael's. John Munden represents the Catholics. Our clergy join meetings when they are available. The next meeting is 10am 25th June 2026 in the Methodist Church.

The Bishop's Cleeve group works together as follows.

- We support the Anna Chaplaincy which works in care homes, by providing knitted gifts at Christmas and Easter.
- We organise the World Day of Prayer, hosted at St Michael's in 2025. The 2026 event was in the Methodist Church 06 03 2026. We relate our own Christian lives with those of Christians of other countries and cultures.
- We share the Covenant Service at the Methodist Church. This is an important New Year event in the Methodist calendar, where we all dedicate our lives anew.
- We share ecumenical Communion each Wednesday 9am in the Methodist Church.
- We fundraise for Christian Aid.
- We share details of events for Christmas and Lent in our churches.
- We publish and circulate information about all our churches, aimed at new houses and new people.
- We play an active part in secular events such as the Street Fair, the Christmas Lights, Fun days.
- All the churches are greatly interested in the Chaplaincy project and our heartened by the progress made by Revd Ben.

If you would like to be part of this group and represent the Anglican churches, please contact Kate Bestwick on 07354874617.

What's On and Updates

The above represents just a snapshot of life in our parish.

The best way to keep up to date on what's happening in our parish is to **visit our website** <https://www.stmichaelsbishopsleeve.co.uk/> - where you can read our weekly newsletter and find out more about weekly and special services and activities.

We also have a Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stmichaelsbishopsleeve> where we publish regular updates and invitations.

Annual Vision Meeting 2025

Tuesday 12 2025, St Michael's Church, Bishops Cleeve

DRAFT Minutes

Attendees

Our stewards took a register of those present, and apologies were noted (please see Appendix A).

Worship

In order to frame our meeting in the context of worship, we joined together to sing Goodness of God and How Great Thou Art.

Opening Remarks by the Chair

Rev Tim Garrett (TG) welcomed attendees, describing our Vision Meeting as a time to reflect on the past, anticipate the future, and seek spiritual guidance. He reaffirmed his support for the Vision 2030 initiative, launched in October of the previous year, and shared reflections from a recent clergy day, noting that ministry is not always fully comprehensible and that divine glory often emerges through human vulnerability.

The church's Lenten focus on its "Ways of Life" – Welcome, Serve, Grow, Pray, Give – was highlighted as a continuing framework for communal and spiritual development.

TG invited Rev Ben Williams to provide updates on three key areas of ministry development:

- Schools Outreach: Approval has been granted to establish a Chaplaincy at Cleeve School. A grant application is underway, with additional funding anticipated from the Deanery and church reserves. Prayers were requested for this initiative and for the emerging youth ministry led by Lucy and Lucy, including the formation of a Youth Group using the Youth Alpha programme.
- Alpha Ministry: A new approach to Alpha is being trialled in private homes, with one group of seven commencing that evening. The intention is to run these groups throughout the year, with a call for hosts and helpers to support the ministry.
- Praise and Play in Gotherington: Established in July and now a regular village activity, attracting around 15 families weekly. The programme is intentionally Christian, with scripture shared in homes. Engagement with the Diocese has increased due to the involvement of grandparents. Funding has been received from the Co-op and local housing developers.

BW also reported on seasonal 'extravaganza' events, noting attendance of 47 at Christmas and over 100 at Easter. Plans are in place for summer, harvest, and Christmas events, with potential for a regular Sunday gathering in future. Grant funding has been sought from the Diocese to support this work.

Additional updates included:

- Sermons are now available online, thanks to Andrew's efforts.
- Lucy Betts has scheduled another Holiday Club for August.
- Three new Life Groups have been launched.

- Fi and James are introducing Welcome Lunches to support newcomers and strengthen community integration.

A renewed emphasis on welcome and hospitality was encouraged, alongside a major prayer initiative for Pentecost, involving a prayer app to support street-by-street intercession across the village.

Areas identified as requiring further progress:

- Pastoral Care: Nat is collaborating with Pete on the Bereavement Journey programme.
- Facilities: Acknowledgement that current toilet provision is inadequate, with no immediate solution identified.
- Estate Ministry: Sportily has been invited by Tewkesbury Borough Council to manage the Homelands Community Centre and has approached the church regarding partnership opportunities for Sunday services and festival engagement.

TG opened the meeting to questions – there were none at this point in the meeting, but Glenda wanted it noted that the update was encouraging and had been explained well.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH (Vestry Meeting)

TG explained this is when we elect our two Churchwardens for the parish, and a deputy Churchwarden for Southam. Those eligible to vote include those on our electoral roll, and those on the local parish electoral roll.

TG confirmed that the only nominations received for Churchwarden are from our existing team – Ann Jessop, Andrew Young, and John Donovan.

Motion: Those present re-elect Ann Jessop and Andrew Young, with John Donovan for Southam, to act as our Churchwardens for the coming year.

The motion was passed with a very clear majority.

Note for all people-elections: Proposers and seconders for each individual elected are noted (and signed) on the nomination forms.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Minutes

The minutes of the 2024 meeting were published as part of the Annual Vision Meeting booklet.

TG asked those who were present at the 2024 meeting if we can adopt the minutes as a true and accurate record.

Motion: The minutes of the 2024 meeting were accepted as a full and accurate record of what took place.

Proposer: Ann Jessop | Seconded: Andrew Young

The motion was passed with a clear majority.

Elections

TG explained our PCC membership and what the group was tasked with doing. He confirmed we were looking to elect one new member, and re-elect four current members:

- New Member: John Barton
- Re-Elections: Jenny Waller, John Doody, Glenda Green, Lesley Sadler.

Motion: This APCM elects John Barton, Jenny Waller, John Doody, Glenda Green and Lesley Sadler onto PCC for the next three years.

The motion was passed with a very clear majority.

This means we have 21 members on our PCC for the coming year:

- 3 x Churchwardens, two for St Michael's, one deputy for Southam (Andrew, Ann, John)
- 11 x Elected members of PCC (Zoe, James, Maureen, John D, Jenny, Glenda, Julie, Yvonne, Marion, Lesley, John B)
- 2 x Elected Deanery Synod representatives (Mal, Tim)
- 1 x Reader (Kathryn)
- 4 x Clergy (Tim, Nat, Lucy, Ben)

PCC members met to elect their officers for the coming year immediately after the APCM.

Statutory Reports

All our statutory reports were published as part of our Annual Vision Meeting booklet. It was noted that these were all checked and adopted by PCC at a recent meeting.

- PCC Secretary's Report
- Churchwardens' Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Parish
- Safeguarding Report
- Deanery Synod Report

Motion: This APCM notes and approves all four statutory reports.

Proposer: Ro Hunt | Seconded: David Horton

The motion was passed with a very clear majority.

A handful of additional reports have been included with the APCM papers to give members an update on life in our Churches.

Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

Our Financial Statements for 2024 were published in advance, along with some commentary from our treasurer, Tim Powell (TP). In addition, TP provided some commentary in the papers booklet, with an anticipated budget for 2025.

TP addressed the meeting with a prepared presentation, after which TG opened the meeting to questions:

- A question was raised regarding changes to the electoral roll and whether this impacts financial outcomes. TP clarified that the change is procedural, occurring every six years, and does not affect the church's financial position. TG added that the reduction in numbers is not significant.
- In response to a query about the financial implications of the new Chaplaincy initiative, TP confirmed that while it was not directly itemised in the accounts due to its recent development, a designated £7–8k allocation for Vision 2030 initiatives would comfortably cover the expected first-year cost of approximately £2k.
- There was appreciation expressed for the clarity provided, noting improved understanding of the financial overview.
- TG highlighted encouraging attendance figures at the Easter service, reflecting a positive trend in congregational engagement.

Motion: This APCM approves the annual report and accounts for 2024.

Proposer: John Doody | Seconded: Alan Hazell

The motion was passed with a very clear majority. There were no abstentions and none against.

Electoral Roll

Our Electoral Roll currently stands at 236, which is a little lower than last year's 261, owing to it being a complete revision year (the roll resets to zero and everyone must re-commit). TG explained he was not concerned by the drop, it was to be expected.

There is no vote required for the Electoral Roll – it was simply noted that the meeting received the updated document. The names of those on the roll have been published on the noticeboard at the back of church.

TG thanked Julia Dowle for compiling the electoral roll. Next year will be a less arduous basic revision.

Questions and Participation

A question submitted in advance by Ro Hunt concerned the return to using the Communion Table/High Altar. RH reflected positively on the Maundy Thursday service, noting the spiritual significance of walking to and kneeling at the altar, and requested more frequent use. TG invited further views:

- Alan acknowledged the practical benefits of communion closer to the congregation but affirmed the deeper sense of worship experienced at the High Altar.
- Ann expressed appreciation for communion celebrated amid the congregation, highlighting its communal nature.
- A suggestion was made to reintroduce occasional evensong services, which received general support, although not as part of the regular pattern of worship.
- Marion preferred communion closer to the congregation, reinforcing the value of shared worship. There was much agreement on this point.
- Linda proposed a blended approach, incorporating both styles.

TG confirmed that the PCC would be reviewing the service pattern over the summer, noting the building's suitability for varied approaches to communion and affirming that this topic would be part of the wider discussion.

TG then opened the floor to further comments:

- James shared a heartfelt reflection on the movement of God within the younger generation and young adults, expressing excitement about potential ministry opportunities at the Homelands Community Centre and the Chaplaincy initiative. He also commended Church on the Hill as a valuable outreach ministry.
- Lucy spoke about the diversity of worship across the Benefice, expressing gratitude for the welcome she has received. She described Church on the Hill as a well-attended space for discipleship, with walk-ins from various areas and opportunities for creative expressions of faith such as contemplative photography. She invited others to participate.
- Carol offered thanks to those who enable ministry across the Benefice, particularly Ann and Andrew, recognising their responsiveness to God's call.
- Ann expressed appreciation for the clergy team, describing them as "amazing people," which was met with a round of applause.
- Alan commended the evening's reports as "fantastically encouraging."

TG closed the session by affirming the ongoing work of God in the church community, expressing joy in serving alongside a dedicated leadership team.

Closing Prayer

Andrew Young closed the Annual Vision Meeting in prayer at 7.40pm.

PCC Meeting

A short meeting of the PCC took place immediately after the Annual Vision Meeting in order to elect our officers for the coming year.

In attendance (15): Tim Garrett (TG), Zoe Homes (ZH), James Hall (JH), Ann Jessop (AJ), Andrew Young (AY), Marion Young (MY), Lucy Barbour (LB), John Barton (JB), John Doody (JOD), Glenda Green (GG), Tim Powell (TP), Kathryn Lea (KL), Jenny Waller (JW), Yvonne Penn (YP), John Donovan (JD).

Apologies: Natalie Garrett (NG), Lesley Sadley (LS), Mal Shaw (MS), Julie Jolly (JJ).

TG asked members if they would be willing to co-opt Lucy Betts, our CFM, onto PCC for the year. This could not be done at the meeting prior because Lucy has not been on the Electoral Roll for more than six months, however a number of members felt this was a very suitable appointment. There was a brief discussion over having an employee on PCC, but the consensus was strong.

Motion: This PCC co-opts Lucy Betts onto PCC for the rest of this year. She will need electing at next year's APCM.

Proposer: Zoe Homes | Secunder: Kathryn Lea

The motion was approved unanimously by all those present. TG will let Lucy know.

PCC members then appointed their officers for the coming year:

Motion: This PCC appoints the following officers for 2025/26:

- **Kathryn Lea – Lay Chair**
- **Tim Powell – Treasurer**
- **Zoe Homes – Secretary**

Proposer: Andrew Young | Seconded: James Hall

This motion was unanimously approved by those present.

It is noted that Standing Committee for the coming year remains unchanged: TG, TP, ZH, KL, AY, AJ, BW. LB will be invited to attend occasionally as part of her Curate training.

Appendix A: Attendance Record

Attendees

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Jenny Waller | 24. Pam Boorman | 47. John Donovan |
| 2. Ann Jessop | 25. Maggie Sadler | 48. Marion Young |
| 3. Joy Dixon | 26. Paul Sadler | 49. Andrew Young |
| 4. Tony Dixon | 27. Gemma Wall | 50. Barbara Burch |
| 5. Mark Stevens | 28. John Doody | 51. Linda Drake |
| 6. Sandy Meade | 29. Philip Cule | 52. Ian Drake |
| 7. Sally Lavis | 30. Valarie Cule | 53. Alan Hazell |
| 8. Kelly Dunn | 31. Annie Hawkes | 54. Maureen Hazell |
| 9. John Barton | 32. Ben Williams | 55. Caroline Gainey |
| 10. Tim Powell | 33. Margaret Templeton | 56. Wendy Treble |
| 11. Lucy Betts | 34. Jim Templeton | 57. Paul Treble |
| 12. Carol Andrews | 35. Beryl Davey | 58. James Ingram |
| 13. Ray Hart | 36. Roland Haywood | 59. Tim Garrett |
| 14. Brian Pritchard | 37. Judith Jenkins | 60. Doreen Dyer |
| 15. Sue Mann | 38. Julia Dowle | 61. David Gibson |
| 16. Maggie Sharpe | 39. Steve Dowle | 62. Lorraine Gibson |
| 17. John Sharpe | 40. Sue Bye | 63. David Horton |
| 18. Sue Blakey | 41. Zoe Homes | 64. Lucy Barbour |
| 19. Bill Blakey | 42. Allister Homes | 65. James Hall |
| 20. Jane Powell | 43. Kathryn Lea | 66. John Dyer |
| 21. Jo Scriven | 44. Ro Hunt | 67. Yvonne Penn |
| 22. Glenda Green | 45. Linda Hall | |
| 23. Alan Boorman | 46. Barbara Jordan | |

Apologies

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Natalie Garrett | 5. Julie Watson | 9. Julie Rice |
| 2. Kathleen Richer | 6. Nick Watson | 10. Mary Hughes |
| 3. Terry Richer | 7. Mal Shaw | 11. Lynne Bulley |
| 4. Lesley Sadler | 8. Julie Jolly | 12. Viv Stanley |

