

# ST PAUL'S CHURCH



# REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2025



## THE VICAR'S REPORT



2025 was the beginning of a new chapter in the life of St Paul's as I was licensed as Team Vicar by the Bishop of Kingston in a wonderfully uplifting service on 6 October. It was very encouraging to be welcomed warmly by so many members of the Church and local community in a service which felt full of the Holy Spirit.

### God is at work!

Since starting as Vicar, I have loved getting to know the Church and the local community, and celebrating Christmas and Easter with you all. The number of people regularly coming for worship on Sundays is increasing, and it has been encouraging to see how God is prompting local people to step through the doors of St Paul's for the first time, or the first time in a while.

The Church family offers generous hospitality and a friendly welcome, and this is so important. There is also a desire for many to go deeper in prayer, discipleship and bible study, and a very real sense of God working in the lives of our community. All this sits alongside excellent pastoral care - in the form of home communions and visits - which is quietly and humbly offered by our team. St Paul's is a Church in which members care deeply for those in need, and offer their time and talents willingly and regularly, and I am grateful to God for each one of you.

### Interregnum

Before my licensing in October, the Church continued to be served incredibly well by Rev Carolyn Lucas, who went above and beyond to care for the spiritual life of our Church through her preaching, leading of services, pastoral care and discipleship. We give thanks to God for Carolyn and the way she continues to support St Paul's in her role as licensed minister across THiS team.

It was impressive that during the final year of the vacancy, the Church continued to work on new initiatives: a series of music concerts to encourage the local community into the Church building; developing our all-age worship on the first Sunday of each month; and inviting new Reception parents into Church for a School Welcome Sunday.

### A sad farewell to Ian Reid

The Church gathered to mourn the sad loss of Ian Reid, who died in October. Ian was a devoted member of St Paul's, faithfully serving as Reader for 50 years. I was grateful to meet Ian during my first week at the Church, where we spoke about our vision for Church life. It was encouraging to discover our shared understanding of the role St Paul's plays in the local community and the mission opportunities that arise when members are actively engaged beyond the Church building.



We give thanks to God for Ian's long and faithful ministry at St Paul's, and hold Mary, and all who mourn and miss Ian, in our prayers.

### Mission

Reaching out to our local community with the good news of Jesus Christ is central to our calling as Christians. We continue to build on our excellent relationship with St Paul's C of E primary school, and welcomed parents to join us for refreshments following a Christmas service held in Church for the whole school on the last day of the Autumn term. The Church year offered valuable opportunities for outreach and mission.

At All Souls, we held a Remembering and Thanking service, giving thanks to God for the lives of those we love but no longer see. On Remembrance Sunday, we welcomed local uniformed organisations to join us in worship.



Christmas provided a great chance to connect with the community, and a festive leaflet was delivered to every home and business in the parish. Many thanks to all who took to the streets to make this possible: it had a real impact with our Christmas services very well attended. We all enjoyed seeing Churchwarden Alison dressed up as a giant Christingle at the crib service – above and beyond the call of duty!

### Safeguarding

Ensuring that our Church is a safe place for all is of utmost importance. I have been impressed with how well safeguarding has been managed by Sue Russell and Natalie Loible, our Parish Safeguarding Officers. A new Safeguarding team was set up in early November to support their work, with members drawn from different areas of Church life to ensure that we are considering safeguarding from every angle.

### Generous giving

We are immensely thankful to Claire Jones, much-loved member of the St Paul's congregation for her very generous legacy totalling over £245,000; we received the final instalment in Spring 2025. Gifts like these secure our financial position and offer new opportunities for mission and outreach. The PCC is prayerfully discerning how Claire's legacy can best be used and we will keep the Church informed. I would be grateful if you could consider including a gift to St Paul's in your will: legacies make a significant difference to our work and ministry.

### Thank you

I have felt a deep and genuine sense of God's calling to this place and this role, and I am thankful to God and to you all that this has remained strong during my first months at St Paul's. I would like to extend a big thank you to Churchwardens, Simon and Alison, who have been so helpful and proactive in their support of me; and to you all for your kindness to me and my family, your encouragement and your prayers.

Someone recently asked me what my vision was for St Paul's. I am looking forward to working collaboratively with the PCC and the wider Church over the coming year to shape a vision and a Mission Action Plan for how we want to move forward together as a Church.

But, instinctively, I answered by saying that I want St Paul's to feel like home for all who walk through our doors. St Augustine wrote that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God. My hope is that those who are restless and searching will come here and feel immediately that they belong - that this is a place they can call home. And that this sense of belonging is not dependent on having anything materially in common with others in Church, but on sharing in the life of Christ, being part of a Church family and being loved by the same Heavenly Father. We are called - in all our rich diversity - to be the Body of Christ. I pray that becoming part of our Church will be the missing piece for those seeking relationship and connection. I hope you feel as excited as I do about offering that invitation and welcome to our local community.

*Rev Jen Houghton, Vicar*





## **THiS Team Matters**

*Trusting in the Father, Honouring the Son,  
Serving in the Spirit*

### **TOLWORTH, HOOK AND SURBITON TEAM**

2025 was a year of change and consolidation for the THiS team. I came into post in October 2024 and inherited vacancies in both St Paul's and St George's. We currently have three full time incumbent level posts in the team. This meant St George's moved from having a Curate, to having a Team Vicar. Rev Nicholas Lebey made this transition and was licensed as Team Vicar in April. I cannot say thank you enough to Rev Carolyn Lucas for all the work she did at St Paul's during the interregnum. She remains licensed to the whole team. Rev Jen Houghton was appointed Team Vicar of St Paul's and was licensed in October.

On a sadder note we bid farewell to Ian Reid, long time Lay Reader at St Paul's who died in October. Ian had first been licensed as a Reader in 1976 and had recently taken the title of Reader Emeritus. His long and dedicated service to St Paul's will endure in memory for a long time. He had been unwell in the months before his death and our love goes to Mary and his family.

Becky Whiting, who is licensed to the team as a Lay Reader, requested to make St Matthew's her main focus of ministry and after conversations with the Diocese and between the parishes this has been agreed.

With a full complement of clergy from the autumn, time had come to consider how the team would work together going forward. In 2025 there were a couple of joint services, notably on Palm Sunday and at Pentecost. There is ongoing conversation about how to facilitate team events going forward. One of the places which has seen a good deal of work is in the area of Youth. Our Year 6-9 Youth Group has seen a revival. Fuel, as it is known, is now meeting twice a month and all the Team clergy are helping to lead.

We would like to have a group for older young folk as well but we have to hand Fuel back to lay leaders before we can do that. Volunteers are always welcome. Speak to your parish clergy.

We have three full time clergy posts. This means all the churches have to be moving towards paying a full parish support fund payment because otherwise when one of us leaves it is unlikely we will be replaced by another full-time post. We have to think long term.

The 2026 Parish Support Fund payment is nearly £95,000. This covers the cost of your clergy and Diocesan costs. The percentage increase which the Diocese asks for is not on your current giving, it is on this full amount. With increasing financial pressures on the Diocese as a team we have to take our giving seriously. This is not something which gets fixed overnight but we have to aim in the right direction. We were given the extra post because the Bishop believes we can grow.

This might seem like a negative thing to bring up but we need to have two things in our heads. The first is a growth mindset and this means that across the Churches we have to be willing to be flexible and consider new ways of doing things. We have to look around us and notice our communities and their needs. We have to worship in ways which both honour our tradition and invite people in.

To do this we have to find our stability in God. This means that we each take time to grow our relationship with God. We pray, we study, we live as invitational communities. We are disciples and evangelists. The days of hunkering down and hoping the storm will pass are over in the Church of England. We have to become outward looking and people loving.

What goals can we set as a team for the next 5 years? What should we be doing in our local community? How do we deal with our differences and still remain faithful to the Gospel mandate to share the Good News? Each of our parishes has its own challenges but we also all have a lot of opportunities. I hope we will learn to explore those together.

*Rev Caroline Kramer, Team Rector*

## CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT



What a momentous year! For the first nine months, we were still in vacancy and are extremely grateful to Rev Carolyn Lucas for everything she did for us during that period.

Then, in October we welcomed our new incumbent, Rev Jen Houghton, and our feet have barely touched the ground since then (in a good way!).

The wardens wish to place on record their thanks for everyone who continued to step up during the “second year” of our Vacancy: whether helping with services, the outdoor working party day or organising events such as the music concerts and study groups. In particular our thanks go to Laurel, who stood down as warden in April after three years sterling service, including a time as the sole warden.



We also wish to put on record our thanks to Diane Tink, our longstanding Verger (1999 – 2025), who was presented in September with an engraved vase to thank her for her years of service, including on the PCC.



## Church Buildings

The decision had already been made by the Diocese in 2024 that the vicarage would not be re-built; instead, the land would be sold for re-development and the revenue used to fund a new vicarage. (In addition, the bungalow on Hook Road would also be sold).

Archdeacon John Kiddle met with the PCC in January and answered questions about the next steps in the process. The Diocese had agreed that small pockets of land would be retained to provide an outdoor area for the Children's Group (taken from the Vicarage garden) and additional parking spaces (taken from the bungalow garden). The PCC having agreed the Deed of Easement for the land transfer, Diocesan contractors duly moved fencelines in both gardens and undertook work to grass the children's area and dig out and tarmac the land for the parking spaces. The land was sold over the summer, but at time of writing we are not aware of plans/timescales for any development.



Throughout 2025 the overall condition of the church remained generally good. There continued to be issues with leakage from the flat roof of the St Paul's Centre, but it was difficult to pinpoint the source.

It was agreed that we should organise our 2026 Quinquennial Inspection for as early as possible in 2026 (this subsequently took place on 6 January and will be reported in next year's report).

The heating system (sited on the roof of the Mary Wise room) also proved temperamental and problematic, with frequent trips up to the roof by brave souls to re-set and turn it on when the heating cut out. [This was subsequently resolved by the installation of a new heater motor in February 2026]. We continued to investigate options for new heating systems, including solar panels, but the PCC agreed to wait until the new incumbent arrived before making any big decisions.

## Repair and Maintenance

With thanks to Stuart Thompson for organising, over the course of the year the following work was undertaken in the Church: water heater in the Vestry repaired and then replaced, EICR electrical review completed, and new distribution box installed by UK Power; and in the Churchyard: the four wooden memorial benches were cleaned and treated, corrugated asbestos roof sheets (from the Shed) removed offsite by a regulated contractor, and ivy removed at their base from trees providing the boundary to back of churchyard.



We had a very successful working morning in the middle of June, with many volunteers weeding, pruning, cutting back and generally making the Churchyard and flower beds look tidy and well cared-for.

We also continue to be grateful to the members of the Southborough School Young Leaders' scheme who came on a regular basis to help weed and tidy up the Churchyard.

Following a review of health and safety, the PCC approved the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (face masks, gloves) for those using the garden equipment. The hearing loop in the Church failed, so the PCC approved a replacement.

St Paul's Hook Church is the freeholder for the Hook Swimming Pool across the road next to St Paul's Primary School. In 2024 the then leaseholder's business proved unviable and the leaseholder sought to sell the lease. This was a protracted process, and a sale finally went through in November 2025. We hope that this will mean that the school will benefit from swimming lessons re-starting soon.

*Simon Mettrick and Alison Stevenson*

## Announcement to St Paul's congregation - Sunday 13th April 2025

We are delighted to announce that, in consultation with the Team Rector, parish representatives and Patron, the Bishop of Southwark has appointed the Rev Jen Houghton to be Team Vicar of St Paul's Hook, in the Tolworth, Hook and Surbiton Team, subject to the usual legal formalities. Jen's appointment follows informal meetings with the Team Rector, PCC representatives and a formal interview with the Team Patronage Board. Prior to this there was a consultation with the PCC.

Jen was ordained in Southwark Diocese in 2022, and is serving her curacy at St Andrew's Church in Ham. She completed her theological training at St Mellitus College, and her Church placement during training was at St Matthew's in Surbiton. Prior to ordination, Jen had a career in the charity sector for nearly 20 years working in fundraising, marketing and volunteer management. Jen is married to Pete and they have three children: Daniel (15), Sophie (13) and Jess (10). The whole family will be worshipping at St Paul's, and are looking forward to being involved in Church life.

Jen says she is delighted to be appointed as Team Vicar, and is excited to start in the role: She says, "I am so impressed with how St Paul's is 'being Church' together and serving the local community during the vacancy. I can't wait to work with you all to build the Kingdom and serve God faithfully in this place. I have been praying for you all - reflecting, in particular, on Paul's words at the beginning of Philippians - and you will continue to be in my prayers over the coming months".

The intention is that Jen and the family will continue living in their own property in Surbiton which is only a short drive from St Paul's. This does, of course, mean that the purchase of a new vicarage does not need to be rushed and that the right vicarage for St Paul's can be identified and secured. Jen's appointment does not in any way alter the commitment to buy a new vicarage. Jen is committed to remaining in her curacy in Ham while her incumbent is on sabbatical. It is anticipated, therefore, that Jen will be licensed at St Paul's at the start of October.

## TREASURER'S REPORT 2025

We are so grateful to Claire Jones for leaving such a generous legacy to our church. There has been much discussion as to how we should put it to good use. Not for the everyday running of the church but for structural development and the necessary improvements for heating, modernising and making the best use of the space that we have.

This year we have raised over £9,500 from our concerts, our winter fair, the sales table, Thursday raffle and Sunday refreshments plus many generous donations.

We have collected and donated to KCAH, The Children's Society, Food Bank, Water Aid and the Bishop's Fund.

I am ever grateful to those of you who give regularly to our church by whatever method and, as our Gift Aid claims are dealt with promptly now, our regular income is steadier.

Our cash collections have increased considerably this year and I should like to thank those who don't wish their contributions to be recorded and would rather give quietly.

The card machine at the back of the church brings in extra contributions from those who would rather give with a payment card but it is rather under used. Please ask for help if you are unsure how to use it.

If you are eligible to claim Gift Aid on your giving, this increases the amount by 25% at no extra cost to the giver.

*Jane Greenfield, PCC Treasurer*

## SERVERS' REPORT

As servers, we are called to serve at all the Communion services. Our main duties are on Thursday and Sunday mornings. Then there are Christmas, Easter and CHAT services to keep us busy. This year, with the help and support of Carolyn, we have managed to negotiate our long interregnum and prepare for the licensing of Jen in October, which has brought us a lot of excitement to support her in her vision to take St Paul's forward in the love of God.



At Christmas, Jane stepped down from her role as server at St Paul's. I would like to thank her for all she has done here at St Paul's and, after ten years of working together, I will miss her but wish her well knowing God has a plan for her wherever she goes.

There are two members of the congregation who have showed an interest in becoming a server, but there is always room for more, which lightens the load for all. So, if you feel becoming a server may be your calling, please let me know and I will be more than happy to talk you through the server role.



*Susan Hodgson and Jane Greenfield*

## BAPTISMS AND CONFIRMATIONS



During 2025 we were delighted to welcome into baptism: Poppie Harrison; Lennie Harrison; Ella Hodgson; Anna Simonovic; Roman Williams; Jacob Huggins; Seve Riches; Cassandra Hance and Lincoln Hance. Natalie Loible was also confirmed at a Deanery service at St Paul's Kingston Hill in March. We pray for God's blessing on those who have been baptised and confirmed. If you would like to find out more about being baptised or confirmed or having your child baptised, please speak to our Vicar Jen.

## ST PAUL'S CHURCH CHILDREN'S GROUP

The Children's Group still continues to thrive and we have had several new children join us over the past 12 months. We are delighted that we have plenty of older children that can encourage our younger members to participate in the activities and we thank them for acting as excellent role models.

In the past, it has been a challenge to plan weekly activities to satisfy our diverse age range. We still encourage our children to share any news they have about things that they have done over their week and moving forward, we are now using 'Roots', a programme of prayers, readings and activities that follows the Church Lectionary. This provides the leaders with a range of ideas, which are age-compatible for the children we have.

Over the past year, we have learnt and created things based on a wide range of bible stories, Mother's Day card making, Harvest crowns, wreaths for Remembrance Sunday and making Christmas decorations. We were pleased to support the Winter Fair with our tree decorations and card making stand, which proved very popular again.

For the first time, we were able to organise and perform a Nativity play in church, which was extremely well received. Our thanks go to all the children for their acting and writing skills, together with their abundant enthusiasm! As always, I couldn't run the group without the help and encouragement of a wonderful bunch of volunteers: Karen, Paula, Julie, Sarah and Angie - thank you all so much. We also look forward to welcoming new volunteers Jenny and Andrea and we thank them for their time. We appreciate everyone's love and support of our group, particularly Jen for her words of wisdom and encouragement. Please pray for us all as we support our amazing young people at St Paul's.

*Alison Forrester*

## **FUEL YOUTH GROUP**

Fuel is our Team group for young people in years 6-9 which has been running since 2019 on a monthly basis. Running on a Sunday afternoon at St Matthew's Church for about 75 minutes, it includes a variety of activities, video clips, games and discussions, usually around a theme or idea which is designed to help them both question and grow in faith. There are a consistent number of young people that attend.



At the start of 2026 we decided to try and run this group twice a month (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays) with the support of existing and new volunteers and hands on support from all the clergy across the team. We are currently using material based on the Sermon on the Mount and exploring ideas such as identity, materialism and forgiveness and reconciliation.

Our longer term goals would be to have sufficient lay volunteers for the clergy to be able to act in a supportive role only; to ensure consistency for the young people and to grow the group organically.

*Rev Carolyn Lucas, Minister across THIS Team*

## ELECTORAL ROLL

Under Church Representation Rules every Parish must have an electoral roll on which the names of lay persons are entered. A person is entitled to be named on the roll of this parish if they are baptised, aged 16 or over, are resident in the parish and/or if outside the parish boundaries have attended public worship habitually in the last six months, unless prevented from doing so by illness or infirmity.

Being on the electoral roll of St. Paul's is a statement of intent to be a fully participating member of this church through regular worship and support across the range of church and parish life.

In 2025 a New Roll was completed and the final total of application forms was **89**.

Since the last APCM there have been **7** deletions.

Much loved, and long standing members of the church family, Ian Reid and Angela Yule, have passed away in the last year. We also remember Joan Nash and Margaret Furner.

Another 3 church members have moved nearer their families, Marion Puttck, Linda Weston and Elaine Lawson.

This report goes to print before this year's revision of the Electoral roll, which currently stands at **82**. Any additions to the 2026 role will be published from 3rd May and announced at the APCM on 17th May.

I would like to thank Julie Mason, the Parish Administrator, for her ongoing help in preparing the Electoral Roll.

*Sue Russell, Church Electoral Roll Officer*

## SAFEGUARDING

The Parochial Church Council of St Paul's takes very seriously its duty of care for the safety of those who attend or use its church premises.

PCC members, Children's Group Leaders and members of the Pastoral team have completed or are undertaking online safeguarding training appropriate to their roles. DBS clearance is also obtained as necessary to the role(s) undertaken.

A current version of 'A Safe Church' can be found on the Southwark Diocesan website:

<https://southwark.anglican.org/safeguarding/diocesan-policies-and-procedures>

A link to this guidance can also be found via the Parish website.

The parish has two safeguarding officers, Sue Russell and Natalie Loible who can be contacted by email:

[safeguarding@stpaulschurchhook.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stpaulschurchhook.org.uk)

They are also available at most Sunday services, and their mobile numbers are displayed on the Safeguarding posters in church. Any queries or concerns you may have will be dealt with in confidence, but advice and guidance may be sought from the Safeguarding team at Southwark Diocese. Details of national and local support agencies are also displayed within the church.

The PCC therefore declares that it has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

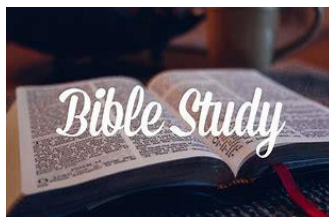
Promoting A Safer Church Safeguarding policy statement for children, young people and adults can be accessed on the link below:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>

*Sue Russell and Natalie Loible, Parish Safeguarding Officers*

## READING THE BIBLE TOGETHER

These sessions usually take place on Monday mornings at Ann's Bungalow meeting at 10.30am with coffee and chat, then at 11am a time of prayer asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We take turns to read a passage, pause to reflect, then discuss meaning and message for us today.



We decide beforehand which book to study. During 2025 we completed studying St Luke's Gospel, then read Acts and Hebrews before attempting Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. Leading up to Christmas we started looking again at the Gospel of Matthew.

No preparation or previous knowledge required. Everyone is welcome. Contact Ann 020 8397 5954 / [fernihough443@btinternet.com](mailto:fernihough443@btinternet.com)

*Ann Fernihough*

## ST PAUL'S HOOK MOTHERS' UNION

St Paul's Hook Mothers' Union meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 10.30 to 12 noon in the Mary Wise Room at the church with coffee served from 10am, for a 10.30am start.



Being part of a Christian worldwide movement concerned with supporting marriage and families of all kinds. We always start our meetings with a prayer. During 2025 we have had speakers from the Refugee Council and Staywell. The Rev Carolyn Lucas shared her life story earlier in the year then later in the year our Rector the Rev Caroline Kramer shared hers. We have been involved in other events both in the Deanery and at the Cathedral.

We hosted VE day at an evening meeting in May for friends and family then in the Autumn the Rev Lindiwe Masek from St John the Evangelist spent the evening with us sharing her experiences of a visit to Matabeleland, linked to Kingston Episcopal Area.



All are welcome to our meetings. The programme for the year is on the noticeboard in the Mary Wise Room.

*Ann Fernihough,  
MU Branch Leader*

### **PASTORAL TEAM**

The Pastoral Team aim to getting know of those having difficulty getting to church and offering a phone call or visit for a chat or Home Communion. We meet quarterly to report back, reviewing how well we are caring for members of our church and parish. We are pleased that Jen has joined us and visited several house bound members, which has been much appreciated. All this is shared in complete confidence.

Once again, last year we were able, for both for Easter and Christmas, to deliver cards to housebound and lapsed members with greetings from St Paul's to show them they were not forgotten. We are very grateful to Julie for producing these cards.

If members know of anyone needing a visit or phone call, please let me or the Vicar know.

*Ann Fernihough SPA*

## PRAYER CHAIN

The Prayer Chain is a group of church members who undertake to pray regularly for people who have asked for prayer. If you have any prayer requests, or would like to join the Prayer Chain, please contact [mary@maryreid.org.uk](mailto:mary@maryreid.org.uk)

*Mary Reid*

## SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS

Our Sunday morning refreshment team continue to do a wonderful job, serving a variety of homemade cakes, cookies, coffee and cuppas at the end of the service, especially welcome at that time of year when the cold and wet seem endless. Everyone is very welcome to come and join us in the Mary Wise room for fellowship and conversation.

Thank you team, for stepping up to help with baking cakes for Jen's licensing service and for producing an amazing variety of Lemon Drizzle cakes for Ian's funeral, his favourite.

A further thank you to Madeline and David who sourced and donated new filters for our cafetieres (still going after 18 years!), much appreciated.

Finally, we are very pleased to welcome John Emanuel who has joined our team. Thank you, John. If anyone else would like to join our happy band, please do come and talk to any of us. It would be a great help, as sometimes rotas overlap and those in the kitchen find themselves on welcoming duty, serving, or helping with the children's group.

*Ian and Jane Jarman, Pam Ingram & Maggie Dowd*

## SHARING & EATING TOGETHER AS A CHURCH FAMILY

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025 we had the pleasure of welcoming Jen and her family to their first Harvest Lunch at St Paul's. This was held in the Parish Hall with a selection of hot dishes, including chicken curry, cottage pie, a pasta dish and chicken drumsticks and salad, followed by apple crumbles and trifles.



On the first Saturday of December, after decorating the church for Christmas, many gathered together for a soup lunch, held in memory of Ian Reid. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 2026 lunch was again held at Church after the Patronal Festival. This time we tried something different with 'one pot' main courses of beef, chicken, sausage and vegetable casseroles. Followed, of course by lots of calorie laden desserts.

All of the above would not be possible without the very generous support of those who volunteer time and again to provide food, help set up the tables, serve, clear up and do the washing up. Thanks also to those who join in the various meals and donate so generously. We look forward to further times of communal socialising where all ages come together to share homemade food.

*Catering Team*

## ST PAUL'S WEBSITE

Our Church website [www.stpaulschurchhook.org.uk](http://www.stpaulschurchhook.org.uk) continues to provide information about the church's activities, mainly for visitors. It now offers details and online booking for the series of concerts we are planning, under the music@st paul's section. Do contact me if you would like to include anything new on the website: [mary@maryreid.org.uk](mailto:mary@maryreid.org.uk)

*Mary Reid*

## SOCIAL MEDIA AT ST PAUL'S

St Paul's social media presence has continued to grow this year, with active Facebook and Instagram accounts used to publicise events and celebrate aspects of church life, as well as the Church's Youtube page (which enables access to live-streamed services). Engagement with all these forms of social media has grown steadily over the year, with followers on Facebook having grown from 493 to 530, and Instagram (which was a relatively new account last year) from 26 to 87 followers; views of streamed services on Youtube are now between 30 - 60 per service.

As well as sharing information, all our accounts represent another means of interaction between the Church and the community. Enabling access to services via YouTube offers those outside of the Church the chance to see what a service involves, as well as offering opportunities to participate remotely to those unable to travel to Church. On Facebook and Instagram we are regularly tagged in posts relating to, for instance, Southborough Young Leaders or KCAH, and can in return tag these and other organisations in our posts. On average, there are at least ten posts per month on the Facebook page, and many now receive around 50 "likes", a significant number of which come from people who are not members of the regular congregation.



Over the year, our social media has included regular posts showcasing the efforts of the children in their groups, photos of Church work or gardening days and of the church and churchyard in the changing seasons, posts from the Mother's Union and the Men's Group, and photos from the concerts held at St Paul's this year.

Events and services have included the Deanery Confirmation service, the Unlock Walk in central London, the various Christmas services and, of course, Jen's licensing service.

On both platforms, algorithms calculate how prominently to display posts according to the "traffic" (likes and comments) on the post. It's really appreciated when people respond to posts, as this boosts the prominence of the post to the wider community. Although many are rightly cautious of social media, when used positively to build community it has a value both to the church and to the local area. It is often the main source of local information for families. You can use the QR codes below to access our pages.

St Paul's Facebook



St Paul's Instagram



St Paul's YouTube



## **TECHNOLOGY**

We now have two people operating the equipment on a Sunday. One person operates the PowerPoint while the other person controls the sound and switches the cameras for the livestream. We've noticed, over the last months, that there are now more "views" on the "St Paul's, Hook" YouTube channel.

The AV system is working effectively. We are fortunate to have more musicians who are able to play in our services. We are needing to make sure we have the right mics etc. to support them as they enhance our worship.

Two new people have recently joined the group that put together the PowerPoints for the services, which is great. Over the next few months we'll also be training and facilitating some of the children and young people, who want to, to operate the equipment.

*Brian Dale*

## **PARISH OFFICE**

St Paul's Parish Office is open Tuesday to Thursday 9.00am to 12.30pm, *mostly* term time. The job is very varied and the queries and questions that come via phone or email are very different and keep me on my toes! I enjoy chatting to all the various groups that meet and regularly use the Mary Wise room and now know them all really well.

Although I have now been in the office for over two years, most of that has been an interregnum! I am tremendously thankful to Carolyn who looked after all of us at St Paul's, but was also my "boss" and my font of knowledge during that time. I now have a permanent "boss"! Jen started in October and things are working very well between us. Feel free to pop in on a Tues, Weds or Thurs morning to say hello, or ring or email with enquiries.

*Julie Mason, Parish Administrator*

## **CHURCHYARD AND GARDENS**

We are lucky to have people willing to give their time for the good of the Churchyard. The four lawnmower operatives for keeping the grass under control, the boys of Southborough High School for their help clearing the Autumn leaves and their work around the graves. The Bramley apple tree again produced a good crop for the chutney makers. The garden shed was given a new coat of preserve. My thanks to you all.

*David Freeman*

## **DEANERY SYNOD**

Deanery Synod meets 3 times a year; each meeting is hosted by a different church in the deanery. This year's meetings were held in St John the Baptist Old Malden (June 2025), Christ Church Surbiton (October 2025) and St Paul's Kingston (February 2026).

Meetings typically include an overview of the ministry of the hosting church, news from the parishes, and a presentation from an invited speaker. Feedback from Diocesan Synod is also shared. Presentations focused on Diocesan links with Zimbabwe and our deanery link with Matabeleland (June), the role of the Diocesan Environmental Officer in helping churches care for creation and work towards climate justice (October), and a welcome for Archdeacon Bridget Shepherd in February. A resolution was passed at Deanery Synod to seek greater support from the Diocese for block-purchasing of eco infrastructure, such as solar panels.

The current Triennium (3 year cycle of meetings) concluded in February 2026. Attending the meetings is a great way of building appreciation of the diversity of ministry across the deanery and of broadening understanding, fellowship and mutual support between churches.

*Angie Mettrick, Prue MacPherson and Ann Fernihough*

## JAMS AND PICKLES BASKET

Our produce continues to be displayed on a table in the Mary Wise Room, with an honesty pot for donations. The apple tree in the churchyard continues to crop heavily and some of the apples were used for Harvest crumbles, chutneys and shared with the congregation and local community.

Any help to make marmalade, jams, chutneys is always most welcome. We are also happy to receive 'spare produce' as the summer and autumn crops arrive. Thanks once again to the 'pickled onion' team, Madeline for her very popular jams, Mary W for her apple & chilli chutney and Ann for her chutneys and Seville orange marmalade. At the Winter Fair the jams and pickles stall raised £117.50.

*Sue Russell*

## THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY



This year's Box Opening Day was held on Saturday 11th October 2025 at St Paul's Centre. The boxes were opened and totalled £1536.44, which was sent to The Children's Society. This total was down by almost £200 on last year's total. We have lost a number of Box Holders again for a number of different reasons. If you feel able to have a Box to collect your small change in, which will be opened annually, please speak to Graham or Jill Cocks, who will be delighted to give you one. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Centre, where refreshments and lunches were enjoyed along with plenty of chatter. In addition to the box opening money, a further £295 was sent to the Society from the refreshments, raffle and donations. Thank you all for your continued support and we'll look forward to seeing you all again in October 2026.

*Sarah (Earl), Vanessa (Kearns) & Nigel Ling*

## HOOK & SOUTHBOROUGH PARISH HALL



The Parish Hall is located 300 metres up the road from St Paul's Church. It is a large hall that is widely used during the week by many different groups within our community Hook Pre-School, FitSteps Dance, Guides, Tai Chi, Kumon, Line Dancing, Women's Institute, Games Club and St Paul's Players. At the weekends it is used mainly for children's parties and also for fundraising events by both St Paul's Church and other charities. We allow these charities to use the hall for free so the Church can 'give something back' to the community.

As in previous years, we have re-invested funds from the hire of the hall back into maintaining and improving the facilities. The Annexe works are now nearing completion with the floor having been repainted and a kitchenette is all that is now needed. As a trial, we have one of our regular Hirers using this facility and it had thrown up that the heating was inadequate. This has now been addressed.

During 2025 we completed the below works:

- Completion of roof drainage upgrade.
- Re-pointing elements of brickwork.
- General repairs that were needed.

We have a programme of improvements lined up, subject to funds:

- Toilet remodels (Aiming for Phase I Summer 2026).
- Complete Window replacements to kitchen & toilets (Booked for Easter 2026).
- Improved access for wheelchair / disabled people.
- Kitchen cooker & dishwasher to allow for larger hall functions.
- New flooring (long term goal).
- Photo Voltaic (Solar) Panels (Long term goal)

...the list goes on...If you have any ideas, you would like us to consider, please let the Parish Hall Committee know.

During 2025 we continued to micromanage our energy costs. Just having the heating on when required. An advantage of having regular hirers' is that this is relatively straight forward, with the weekends being the only variation and, of course, school holidays.

Kevin Connelly continues as the Parish Hall 'handyman' and is a great asset to the hall. We are hoping to have a 'hall workday' this year, so keep an eye out for the date – *many hands make light work*.

We sadly lost Ian Reid who passed away during 2025. Ian was an important member of the Hall Committee and was always there to help, support and guide us. His knowledge and experience will be greatly missed by us all.

The current committee members are Steve Griffiths, Sue Russell, Paula Thompson, Graham Cocks and Joanne Griffiths. The committee gives its time for free, and we still urgently need help to spread the workload, so if you would like to come and join the Parish Hall Committee please speak to/contact: Sue Russell, Paula Thompson, Graham Cocks, Joanne or Steve Griffiths.

If you would like to book the hall, our Lettings Clerk, Andrea Al-Alem, can be contacted at the Parish Office on 020 8391 2362 or email: [premises@stpaulschurchhook.org.uk](mailto:premises@stpaulschurchhook.org.uk). She works Wednesday (1pm-2.30pm) and Friday (1pm-3.30pm), term time only, if you would like to pop in and say 'hello'.

*Steve Griffiths, Parish Hall Committee*

## ST PAUL'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading was a big focus for our school during 2025. We developed a 'whole class reading' approach which has had a positive impact on pupils' reading fluency, comprehension of texts and acquisition of vocabulary. We also focused on creating a really active playground, with Year 6 pupils carrying out observation of playtimes and making recommendations for new equipment to be purchased to create an active environment. The positive impact of this was commented on during our Peer to Peer Review with two other schools.



We were delighted with our results in 2025. Our results for end of Reception and KS1 phonics remain above the national and Kingston averages and we saw a significant rise in our KS2 reading and Reading, Writing and Maths combined scores for pupils reaching at least the expected standard. These results along with our dedicated transition support for Year 6 pupil help us to ensure that our children are ready for the next stage of their education.

Whilst many local schools are seeing a drop in the number of pupils on their roll, we managed this year to work our way back up to a full roll (210 pupils) and continue to be oversubscribed for Reception places which we are incredibly proud of!

We were delighted when Jen joined our community and are really enjoying the way that the relationship between the church and school continues to develop. We will soon be visited by Ofsted for our inspection and are looking forward to being able to share with Ofsted the wonderful work that is taking place within our school.

*Emily Evans, Headteacher*

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PCC OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST PAUL'S HOOK**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Paul's Hook ("the Charity") for the year ended 31 December 2025.

### **Responsibilities and Basis of Report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

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

### **Independent Examiner's Statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

### **Examiner's Details**

Name: **Charlotte Radcliffe-Crow**

Relevant professional qualification or membership (if any): **ACA**

Address: **126 Cotterill Road, Surbiton KT6 7UL**

Signed:



Date: **2 April 2026**

**Income and Expenditure Statement 2025**

**2025**

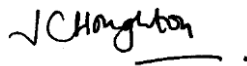
<b>Income</b>	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>Total</b>
Committed giving: Gift aid	34,460		34,460
Tax credit on committed giving	9,723		9,723
Other committed giving	3,336		3,336
Church collections	6,883		6,883
Donations for general funds	4,148		4,148
Linen fund		99	99
Donations in memory of Ian Reid	175		175
Winter fair, sales table, concerts, Thursday Raffle	3,921		3,921
Sunday refreshments	657		657
Weddings, baptisms, funerals, memorials	4,063		4,063
Parish hall mgmt fee	2,835		2,835
Centre lettings	1,136		1,136
Church collections for outside charities	1,485		1,485
Commonwealth war grave grant		30	30
Flower fund		260	260
Photocopying fee	16		16
C Jones legacy	2,946		2,946
Interest from investment account	11,054		11,054
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86,836</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>87,225</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Payments to Diocese: Parish share	49,412		49,412
Payments to Diocese: Funeral & wedding fees	1,625		1,625
Church expenses	2,647		2,647
Sacristy	390		390
Audio/visual expenses	1,799		1,799
Vicar's expenses	54		54
Grant for lay reader training expenses	300		300
Heat, light, water	3,658		3,658
Insurance and fire inspection	3,419		3,419
Organ tuning and repair	386		386
Churchyard	1,090		1,090
Outreach, Adverts and Pastoral Care	587		587
Salaries and Honoraria	11,319		11,319
Parish Office	1,534		1,534
Accountant's examination	792		792
Accountant's fees payroll	960		960
Streaming licences	721		721
Catering	223		223
2nd Hook Scouts	300		300
Payments to outside charities	1,503		1,503
Fundraising outgoings	46		46
Flower fund		140	140
Service sheet	135		135
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82,901</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>83,041</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>3,936</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>249</b>
			<b>4,185</b>

**TRUSTEES OF THE PCC OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST PAUL'S HOOK**  
**ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

**Balance sheet**

			2025		2024
<b>Bank</b>	Current		18,040		30,034
	Investment		<u>257,203</u>		<u>241,022</u>
			275,243		271,056
<b>Non-restricted funds</b>					
	b/f**	270,678		37,166	
	Balance of receipts over expenses	3,938		233,512	
			<u>274,616</u>		<u>270,678</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
	b/f				
	Legacy P Thacker	229		229	
	Church Linen Fund	188		89	
	Commonwealth War Graves Grant	90		60	
	Flower Fund	120		-	
			<u>627</u>		<u>378</u>
			<u>275,243</u>		<u>271,056</u>

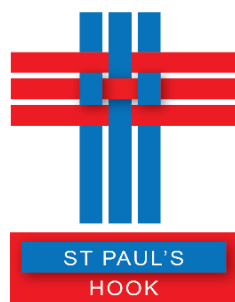
\*\* Note to account: our non-restricted funds includes legacy received from Claire Jones in 2024-5



Rev Jen Houghton  
 Vicar, St Paul's Hook  
 22-Apr-26



Alison Stevenson  
 Churchwarden  
 22-Apr-26



**HOOK WITH SOUTHBOROUGH PARISH HALL**

**Account Balance Sheet Year End 31st December 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
	£	£
<b><u>MONETARY ASSETTS</u></b>		
CAF BANK Cash	2637	4965
CAF BANK Savings	60580	38648
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<b><u>63217</u></b>	<b><u>43613</u></b>
INCOME	44515	
EXPENDITURE	-24911	
	<hr/>	
PROFIT/LOSS	19604	
	<hr/>	
	<b><u>63217</u></b>	



**HOOK WITH SOUTHBOROUGH PARISH HALL**

**Statement of Financial Activity for the year ended 31st December 2025**

**PARISH HALL ACCOUNT**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>
Lettings	43509	39165
Interest CAF Savings	932	928
Interest CAF Cash/CBF Fixed Interest	74	55
Key Deposit	0	60
Miscellaneous Deposit (Error by CAF)	0	60
	<b>44515</b>	<b>40268</b>
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Cleaning	-5823	-5454
Caretaker	-1231	-1478
Hire/Clearance of Refuse/Recycle Bin	-996	-1027
Water	-877	-928
Gas	-1761	-2470
Electricity (Main Building)	-1301	-2053
Electricity (Annexe)	-427	-260
PCC Admin Charges	-2835	-2700
CAF Bank Account Fees	-60	-60
Mobile Emergency Phone	-94	-90
FireCare Security Ltd / Fire Extinguishers	-492	-397
Cleaning Materials and Sundries	-1415	-992
Annual Boiler Service	-215	-499
Annual Insurance	-1675	-1625
Miscellaneous (Stamps/Ink Cartridges/Job Advert)	-72	-300
Building works/Maintenance	-2522	-11117
Annexe Upgrade	-1115	-419
Service Master Cleaning	-790	-562
Plumbing	0	-243
Electrical / 5 Year Certificate	-320	-6070
Drainage)	-830	-120
Miscellaneous Deposit (Error by CAF)	-60	0
	<b>-24911</b>	<b>-38864</b>
	<b><u>19604</u></b>	<b><u>1404</u></b>