RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2025

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/ members of	**RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PCC**		
On accounts for the year ended	**31ST DECEMBER 2025**	**Charity no (if any)**	
Set out on pages	**3 to 8**		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed:		**Date:**	29th JUNE 2026
Name:	DAVID CHARLTON		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA		
Address:	DRUMBANNON, 121A WYRE HILL, BEWDLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE DY12 2UQ		

RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Note	General Fund (unrestricted) £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2025 £	2024
INCOMING RESOURCES						
Voluntary income (direct giving)	2a	82,825.00	101.00		82,926.00	81,882.00
Other voluntary income & grants	2b	7,649.00	47610.08		55,259.08	231,545.00
Gross income from events and activities	2c	23,104.00			23,104.00	18,677.00
Other ordinary income	2d	0.00			0.00	2,753.00
Income from trading	2e	6,360.00			6,360.00	5,675.00
Income from investment	2f	3,395.00		2,873.00	6,268.00	5,032.00
Sale of Assets	2g	0.00			0.00	139,900.00
(a) TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		**123,333.00**	**47,711.08**	**2,873.00**	173,917.08	**485,464.00**
RESOURCES USED						
Grants and donations	3a	896.00			896.00	2,215.00
Directly relating to work of the Church	3c	95,410.03	128,406.80		223,816.83	287,182.00
Church management & administration	3d	4,304.50	1,221.50		5,526.00	4,422.00
(b) TOTAL RESOURCES USED		**100,610.53**	**129,628.30**		230,238.83	**293,819.00**
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS (a) - (b)						
(c) TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS						
NET INCOMING (OUTGOING) RESOURCES (a) - (b) + (c)		22,722.47	(81,917.22)	2,873.00	(56,321.75)	191,645.00
GAINS AND LOSSES ON INVESTMENTS						
- realised					*0.00*	*0.00*
- unrealised		(4,096.64)			(4,096.64)	3,943.00
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		**18,625.83**	**(81,917.22)**	**2,873.00**	**(60,418.39)**	**195,588.00**
Balance b/f at 1st January 2025		**556,965.05**	**(275,453.73)**	**131,322.25**	**412,833.57**	**217,245.57**
Balance c/f at 31st December 2025		**575,590.88**	**(357,370.95)**	**134,195.25**	**352,415.18**	**412,833.57**

RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2. INCOMING RESOURCES	General Fund (unrestricted)	Restricted Funds						Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2025	2024
		Bellringers	St.Leonard's	St Andrew Churchyards	St.Anne's Fabric	Collections for charity				
2(a) Voluntary income (direct giving)										
Planned giving including Tax Refunds:	80000.00								80000.00	78189.00
Collections at services/Boxes/Foodbank	2825.00								2825.00	3568.00
Subscriptions		101.00							101.00	125.00
	82825.00	**101.00**							**82926.00**	**81882.00**
2(b) Other voluntary income										
Grants				380.00					380.00	500.00
Grants-Warm spaces	1500.00								1500.00	1500.00
Grants-PCC General Fund	1000.00								1000.00	4250.00
Grants-St Anne's External Renovation					42523.00				42523.00	194699.00
Grants-St Anne's Community Hub	0.00								0.00	24500.00
Grants-St Leonards	1000.00		2811						3811.00	
Donations and appeals	2175.00	635.08	679.00	101.00		481.00			4071.08	5690.00
Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme	1974.00								1974.00	406.00
	7649.00	**635.08**	**3490.00**	**481.00**	**42523.00**	**481.00**			**55259.08**	**231545.00**
2(c) Gross income from events and activities										
Fees for weddings and funerals	16485.00								16485.00	17370.00
Other events	6619.00								6619.00	1256.00
Printing & photocopying									0.00	51.00
	23104.00								**23104.00**	**18677.00**
2(d) Other ordinary income										
Other income									0.00	15.00
Insurance Claim									0.00	2738.00
	0.00								**0.00**	**2753.00**
2(e) Income from trading										
Hire of St.Anne's	4377.00								4377.00	4126.00
St.Anne's Centre, sales & donations	1983.00								1983.00	1549.00
	6360.00								**6360.00**	**5675.00**
2(f) Income from investment (interest & dividends)										
C.B.F.Deposit Accounts	263								263.00	309.00
Bank Accounts	3132.00								3132.00	1917.00
Harris Bequest Fund								2804.00	2804.00	2738.00
Dowles Parish Fund								69.00	69.00	68.00
	3395.00							**2873.00**	**6268.00**	**5032.00**
2(g) Sale of St Andrews										139900.00
										139900.00
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	**123333.00**	**736.08**	**3490.00**	**0.00** **481.00**	**42523.00**	**481.00**	**0.00**	**0.00** **2873.00**	**173917.08**	**485464.00**

RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

3. RESOURCES USED

	General Fund (unrestricted)	Restricted Funds							TOTAL FUNDS	
		Bellringers	St.Leonard's	Churchyards	St.Anne's Fabric	Collections for charity			2025	2024
3(a) Grants & donations										
Charitable payments to:										
Church Overseas Relief Agencies									0.00	447.00
Church Charities									0.00	343.00
Gifts									0.00	1,044.00
Secular charities	896.00								896.00	381.00
	896.00	0.00							896.00	2,215.00
3(b) Support costs										
Education & training	0.00								0.00	0.00
Courses, retreats & outings	0.00								0.00	0.00
	0.00								0.00	0.00
3(c) Directly relating to the work of the Church										
Ministry: Parish Share	58,526.00								58,526.00	57,889.00
Clergy expenses	930.00								930.00	761.00
	59,456.00								59,456.00	58,650.00
Church buildings:										
Utilities	7,761.00								7,761.00	5,567.00
Insurance	5,462.00								5,462.00	6,099.00
Cleaning	780.00								780.00	624.00
Sound & Vision Equipment	83.00								83.00	60.00
Maintenance paid from Covid Grant									0.00	0.00
Repairs & Maintenance	5,143.00		1,445.80	6,041.00	5,805.00				18,434.80	24,200.00
St Annes External Renovation						109,160.00			109,160.00	155,400.00
St Anne's Community Hub						5850			5,850.00	13,070.00
	19,229.00		1,445.80	6,041.00	5,805.00	115,010.00			147,539.80	205,020.00
Other running expenses:										
Wedding/funeral fees	2,962.00								2,962.00	2,872.00
Wedding/funeral fees assigned to Diocese	4,397.00								4,397.00	9,231.00
Cost of other events, activities & sales	656.00								656.00	881.00
Services: organists, music & other	4,590.03								4,590.03	9,377.00
Children's work	516.00								516.00	416.00
Travelling expenses-Weddings & Funerals	24.00								24.00	236.00
	13,145.03		0.00	0.00					13,145.03	26,022.00
Printing: Paper & printing consumables	264.00								264.00	254.00
Photocopying charges/Planned Giving Envelopes	898.00								898.00	906.00
	1,162.00								1,162.00	1,160.00
St.Anne's Church Centre:										
Telephone	836.00								836.00	1,134.00
Equipment & Fittings < £1000	403.00								403.00	1,055.00
Cards and other purchased items	1,179.00								1,179.00	576.00
St Leonards SIM Card (for PayAz machine)				105					105.00	
	2,418.00			105.00					2,628.00	2,565.00
Total costs relating to work of the church	95,410.03	0.00	1,445.80	6,146.00	5,805.00	115,010.00			223,921.83	297,417.00
3(d) Church management and administration										
Licences, fees, bank charges, admin, sponsorship, miscellaneous	4,184.50		1,221.50						5,406.00	4,187.00
Planned giving Envelopes & expenses	120.00								120.00	0.00
	4,304.50	0.00	1,221.50						5,526.00	4,187.00
TOTAL RESOURCES USED	100810.53	0.00	2667.30	6146.00	5805.00	115010.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	230343.83	293819.00

RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES

	Note	2025	2024
FIXED ASSETS			
Inventory assets	4	3540.00	3540.00
Investments	5	136311.24	140407.80
		139851.24	143947.80
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	6	255.50	13024.70
CBF Deposit Funds		3374.36	3374.36
Cash at Bank & In Hand		221265.09	259638.92
		224894.95	276037.98
LIABILITIES: amounts falling due within one year	7	12331.01	7152.77
NET CURRENT ASSETS		212563.94	268885.21
NET ASSETS		352415.18	412833.01
FUNDS			
Unrestricted		244458.86	300521.74
Restricted:			
Bellringers		2378.59	2863.43
St.Andrew's		212.99	212.99
St.Leonard's		145.53	145.52
Churchyards		715.14	715.14
Endowment Funds		104504.07	108374.19
		352415.18	412833.01

RIBBESFORD WITH BEWDLEY AND DOWLES PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

DETAILED ASSETS & LIABILITIES

	St.Anne's & St.Leonard's General Fund	Restricted Funds						Endowment Funds	2025	2024
		Bellringers	St.Andrew's	St.Leonard's	Churchyards	St.Anne's Fabric	Collection for charity			
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS										
Inventory assets (safe)	3,540.00								3,540.00	3,540.00
Investments										
CBF Investment Fund								99,270.80	99,270.80	103,404.72
CBF Deposit Fund								1,517.14	1,517.14	1,455.92
Charinco Investment Units								3,716.13	3,716.13	3,513.55
CBF Acc Investment Fund	29,653.25								29,653.25	30,003.77
CBF Acc Fixed Interest Fund	2,153.92								2,153.92	2,029.84
	35,347.17							104,504.07	139,851.24	143,947.80
CURRENT ASSETS										
Debtors	255.50								255.50	13,024.70
CBF Deposit Accounts	3,374.36								3,374.36	3,374.36
Current Bank Accounts	21,688.21	997.32							22,685.53	22,811.98
Deposit Bank Accounts	196,124.64	1,381.27	212.99	145.52	715.14				198,579.56	236,826.94
	221,442.71	2,378.59	212.99	145.52	715.14				224,894.95	276,037.98
CURRENT LIABILITIES										
Parish Fees	4,397.00								4,397.00	6,231.03
Other creditors	7,934.01								7,934.01	921.74
	12,331.01								12,331.01	7,152.77
FUND BALANCE	244,458.87	2,378.59	212.99	145.52	715.14	0.00	0.00	104,504.07	352,415.18	412,833.01

4. FIXED ASSETS

		FOR USE BY PCC Equipment, fixtures & fittings	INALIENABLE ASSETS Inventory assets (pipeless organ, sound system)
Gross Book Value	As at 1st Jan 2025	13547.17	26170.59
	As at 31st December 2025	13547.17	26170.59
Depreciation	As at 1st Jan 2025	10007.17	26170.59
	As at 31st December 2025	10007.17	26170.59
Net Book Value	At 31st December 2025	3540.00	0.00

5. INVESTMENTS

Endowment	Custodian Trustees	Purpose of endowment	Invested in	Units	Mkt Value 31.12.25 £	Mkt Value 31.12.24 £	Movement in year £
Harris bequest	WDBF	Church maintenance	CBF Investment Fund	4013	89081.74	92791.40	-3709.66
	WDBF	Upkeep Ribbesford Churchyard	CBF Investment Fund	251	5571.77	5803.80	-232.03
	WDBF	Sunday school teaching	CBF Investment Fund	100	2219.83	2312.27	-92.44
Dowles Parish Fund	WDBF	Charitable work in the parish	CBF Investment Fund	108	2397.42	2497.25	-99.83
					99270.76	103404.72	-4133.96
Dowles Parish	WDBF	General Church Purposes	CBF Deposit Account		1413.14	1351.96	61.18
Dowles Parish	WDBF	General Church Purposes	CBF Deposit Account		104.00	104.00	0.00
					1517.14	1455.96	61.18
Dowles Parish (Black Rock)	WDBF	Furthering religious and charitable work in the parish	Charinco Investment Fund	76.08	3716.13	3513.55	202.58
CBF Acc Investment Fund					29853.25	30003.77	-350.52
CBF Acc Fixed Interest Fund					2153.92	2029.84	124.08
					31807.17	32033.61	-226.44
				TOTAL	136311.20	140407.84	-4096.64

6. DEBTORS

	2025	2024
Funeral, memorial fees & collections	255.50	13010.00
Utilities	0.00	14.70
	255.50	13024.70

7. CREDITORS Due in less than 1 year

	2025	2024
Fees assigned to diocese	4397.00	6231.03
JMS Roofing & Steve Allard & Son	6875.30	0.00
Other creditors	1258.71	921.74
	12331.01	7152.77

2026 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Ribbesford with Bewdley and Dowles

Rector: Revd Melissa Beynon

Inspired by Christ's love we worship God,
welcome all, serve the community and work for justice

This document reports on 1st January to 31st December 2025.

It was approved by the Parochial Church Council on 11th May 2026.



Reverend Melissa Beynon

Rector of the Parish of Ribbesford with Bewdley and Dowles

11th May 2026

2026 Report and Accounts for the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Ribbesford with Bewdley and Dowles

Rector: Revd Melissa Beynon

Inspired by Christ's love we worship God,
welcome all, serve the community and work for justice

This document reports on the year 2025 and was approved by the PCC in May 2026.
On 11th May 2026, the electoral roll contained the names of 100 parishioners, 76 of whom reside in the parish.

Aims and purposes

Our central aim, in common with all Anglican churches is:

- to co-operate with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, thereby promoting the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

In November 2019, the PCC adopted three additional aims. The PCC aims to:

- make our buildings fit for purpose
- develop our engagement with children, young people and families
- develop our engagement with the wider community

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St Anne's Church, Load Street, Bewdley and St Leonard's Church and churchyard, Ribbesford. It also has responsibility for the maintenance of Dowles churchyard.

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. When planning or arranging activities, we are conscious of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We are also conscious of our role as a charity for the advancement of religion and aim to put faith into practice as Kingdom People through:

- worship and prayer, developing and learning within a Christian community
- provision of pastoral care
- ecumenical relationships
- engagement with children, young people and families and engagement with the wider community

To facilitate this, we need to keep the fabric of our churches in good order.

An objective from November 2019 was the creation of plans to: make our buildings fit for purpose; develop our engagement with children, young people and families; develop our engagement with the wider community.

Achievements and performance.

Worship and prayer

The **pattern of Sunday worship**, established following the arrival of Revd Melissa Beynon in June 2024, continued throughout the year. At St Anne's Holy Communion was offered on the first, second and fourth Sundays of every month and a Service of the Word on the third Sunday.

At St Leonard's, Holy Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday of the month and Matins on all other Sundays. In those months with a fifth Sunday the churches across the benefice took turns to host a single service of Holy Communion. This established pattern, alongside the pattern at All Saints, ensured that the requirement for a service of Holy Communion in the incumbency every Sunday was met. In 2025, Sunday service attendances across the two churches in our parish rose to an average of seventy, an increase of some ten percent on the previous year.

The PCC is hugely grateful to **retired clergy** (Revd Prebendary Simon Thorburn, Revd Canon Wyn Beynon and Revd Heather Flack) and our **Lay Ministry team** (Licensed Lay Ministers Barbara Fauset and Robert Barbour, Authorised Lay Ministers Janet Adey, Elaine Barbour, Caroline Hall and Diane Taylor, with support from Pat Prosser and Jim Ineson) for all their contributions to worship.

At St Leonard's we continue to embrace the tradition of using the **Book of Common Prayer**. This is beginning to bear fruit, with a trickle of new visitors seeking prayer book services. On 12th April 2025 a sung service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer was held, attended by members of the Prayer Book Society.

St Anne's **Wednesday Morning Prayer** services continued throughout 2025. A Holy Communion service for the Mothers' Union, led by the Rector, was held on the first Wednesday of each month. Attendance for this service ranged from twenty to twenty-five. Morning Prayer services, held on the second and subsequent Wednesdays, were led by members of the Lay Ministry team. Average attendance for this service was around eight in church and two on Zoom. The service liturgy was changed and adapted according to the season, and each new version was emailed out for the benefit of those at home who join via Zoom.

Throughout the year the Rector has continued to offer **online Morning Prayer** on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This has a small but regular attendance. She plans to expand online prayer activities in the coming year.

A service of Holy Communion with Ashing was held on **Ash Wednesday** and a special benefice Annunciation Holy Communion was held on 25th March, followed by lunch. During **Lent** an ecumenical service on the theme of 'A Lenten Soundtrack', took place each Sunday evening in the churches of the town, with St Anne's hosting on the fifth Sunday. These services were well attended, and the intention was to repeat a series of services in 2026.

During **Holy Week**, the whole benefice was encouraged to attend an act of worship daily. On Monday, some of us joined in the Cathedral Chrism Eucharist. Holy Communion was celebrated at St Leonard's on Tuesday with the theme of the Cleansing of the Temple. The Holy Week theme continued on Wednesday morning at St Anne's when the Holy Communion service concentrated on The Betrayal. On Maundy Thursday, the benefice service was held at All Saints Wribbenhall with foot washing, stripping of the altar and a Watch held into the evening.

On **Good Friday**, after Stations of the Cross at Holy Family, an ecumenical service took place in Bewdley Baptist Church (relocated from Jubilee Gardens because of inclement weather) after which worshippers walked to the crosses on Crundalls Hill for a short ecumenical service.

On **Easter Day** about twenty-eight participants attended the dawn service at St Leonard's, led by Elaine Barbour. As always this was a joyous event with the Easter fire and candles. We listened to a version of Mary Magdalene's experience of the Resurrection, as the light grew and the birds

accompanied our celebration with their singing. Afterwards we were treated to hot cross buns and coffee.

St Anne's hosted a **Diocesan Racial Justice Service** in February 2025. Bishop Martin preached, the Rector presided and the service was put together by Robert and Elaine Barbour with Margaret Chimani from Inkberrow. The service was well-attended and received.

Other **services with a particular theme** were held in 2025, including Taizé in August and a Service of the Word in June with a particular theme of Creation and Lament to mark Sustfest Wyre Forest (a local festival that celebrates sustainability).

St Anne's hosted a Flower Festival in July, produced by Bewdley Floral Art Club, and a special service was held to mark the occasion and to honour St Anne – A Floral Family. This patronal service was attended by the Deputy Mayor. In August a Dementia Day Songs of Praise was held. In October we celebrated Harvest and Bible Sunday. Harvest food donations were taken to the Black Country Food Bank. In November we marked Safeguarding Sunday with a special service.

Members of our congregation attended the Deanery service at St Andrew's Ombersley in June.

The **All Souls' service** held at St Leonard's on 3rd November was attended by about thirty people, all of whom found the service moving and helpful in their grieving process. On **Remembrance Sunday** the Rector led the annual Civic Service at the War Memorial and in St Anne's church.

A service of **Lessons and Carols** was held for the whole town on 14th December. Members of the community, including the staff of St Anne's school, took part in the service.

The children from **St Anne's school** visited and took part in a number of Sunday services in 2025, sometimes as a choir but they participated in other ways too. Year 6 attended their leaving service, and services were held for Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year. We were also pleased to welcome Bewdley Primary school and The Bewdley School for services during the year.

Zoom continued for services at St Anne's to allow members of our worshipping community to join in worship in their own homes if their circumstances prevented their attendance in person. The Zoom congregation averages three people each week.

Margaret Ashmore and Elaine Barbour continued to share a Service of the Word with the residents of Hernes Nest House care home (now known as **Golden Horizons Care Home**) on the first Tuesday of the month throughout 2025. This is an established part of their programme and much enjoyed by residents and staff alike. We have a very simple liturgy, with a bible reading or story, maybe feely bags, visual aids, candles and flowers, prayers and hymns. Janet Adey joins Margaret and Elaine for the Holy Communion service at **Summerdyne Nursing Home** each month on the following Tuesday. This is more traditional but with some age and ability appropriate worship along with the simplified Communion liturgy. We visit residents in their rooms if they cannot make it down to the lounge. Numbers in both homes vary but it is usually around ten to twelve residents and one or two carers, with family members on occasion. We held a special short carol service at Hernes Nest, helped by choir members and friends, and sang carols at Summerdyne. Singing carols resonates hugely with these old people. Despite dementia issues, the sense of worship at our services is tangible, with all of us deeply aware of "God with us."

Several small groups meet regularly. The **Saturday Morning Group** meets each Saturday via Zoom at 8.30am for worship and prayer. It follows Iona liturgy and each week the needs of the church are a focus for prayer. The house group, based in Sabrina Drive, which met fortnightly for worship and prayer, led by Robert Barbour, was discontinued following the death of Bill Wear in August 2025. During its five years it was particularly appreciated by the housebound.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals

In addition to regular worship, we aim to enable our wider community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of their journey through life.

After several years with few Baptisms, eleven **Baptisms** took place in the parish in 2025, six of which were at St Anne's. Two of the Baptisms were of adults, and one was of a pupil in year 5 at St Anne's school. The Rector held some preparation sessions with these candidates. The remainder were babies whose parents were visited by the Rector and Baptism Co-ordinator Mary Thorburn to get to know them and to talk about the Baptism service and what it all means. A new leaflet has been produced which is easy to follow for Baptisms that do not take place as part of a regular service. Thanks to Elaine Barbour, we now also have a leaflet of songs and hymns selected from 'Hymns Old and New', so that the families can select two songs. This helps them to become involved and makes the service more meaningful for them.

We celebrated four church **weddings** in 2025 (the same number as in 2024), one in St Anne's and three at St Leonard's.

A total of forty-nine **funerals, burials and memorial services** took place in the parish in 2025 (fifty-two in 2024). Four funerals and two memorial services took place at St Anne's, ten funeral services at St Leonard's, twelve funeral services at Wyre Forest Crematorium and two at Stourbridge Crematorium. (In 2024, nineteen funeral and memorial services were held in our churches and seventeen at the crematorium.) Nineteen burials took place in St Leonard's churchyard: four of bodies in existing graves and fifteen of cremated remains. Of the burial of cremated remains, nine were in new plots. (In 2024, twenty burials took place, three of bodies in existing graves and seventeen of cremated remains, ten of which were in new plots.) The churchyard no longer has space for new plots for the burial of bodies but has sufficient space for the burial of cremated remains to meet the likely needs of the parish in the short term. In addition, the parish ministry team officiated at nine committals at Wyre Forest Crematorium.

Funeral ministry and support of the bereaved remain a strong part of our parish ministry and mission. In this, the Rector is joined by Lay Funeral Ministers Barbara Fauset and Elaine Barbour and by retired clergy, Simon Thorburn and Wyn Beynon. These ministers also conducted funerals and burials within the benefice at All Saints' church. The PCC is very grateful for the commitment of lay and non-stipendiary ministers to funeral ministry.

These life events remain important avenues for our Christian outreach and the PCC is grateful to those whose administrative efforts support this work. Much of this work has now been passed over to Sarah Taylor, our Mission Support Administrator.

Worship support

The PCC is grateful to the groups and individuals who support worship in our churches:

Music: The PCC thanks James Hickson and the St Anne's choir for its musical contribution to worship at services. The choir also sang for two services in St Leonard's: A Prayer Book Society

service in April and Choral Evensong in June. The choir adopts a low profile, sitting at the back of the church, and its aim is to support the congregation in singing hymns musically and enthusiastically and to provide occasional anthems which enhance the Anglican liturgy. The choir has been pleased to welcome two new members in recent months. The PCC is also grateful to the St Anne's music group for their contribution to music in worship. The group usually plays during our monthly Services of the Word, adding a more contemporary element to our traditional music programme, with songs from composers such as Graham Kendrick and Bernadette Farrell, but also including flavours of Iona and Taizé.

Flowers: Thanks go the team of flower arrangers at both St Anne's and St Leonard's who decorate our churches, especially at the major Christian festivals, and for their creativity when supporting the Rector with themes of worship throughout the year. The PCC is also grateful for their response to the General Synod resolution on Sustainable Church Flowers. The team has worked hard to avoid the use of oasis and its equivalents, and to use sustainable flowers and materials.

Bellringing: The PCC is grateful to the Bellringers for their weekly ringing for Sunday services at St Anne's as well as for ringing for civic events and other special occasions.

Communications: Our weekly Network newssheet continues to be a key part of parish communications, and the PCC is very grateful to Peter Kirk for his work in producing it, week in and week out. The use of our Church Near You website and social media are important means of reaching out beyond our regular worshipping community. In 2025 the Rector was an active Facebook contributor, and, with the arrival of our Mission Support Administrator, we hope to see our presence improved even further in 2026.

The PCC continues to be grateful to Elaine Barbour for producing service sheets and to the small team who operate the sound desk and Zoom sessions from St Anne's. These facilities allow those who are unable to come to church to join in worship.

Development and learning

During the year a variety of opportunities outside of regular services were offered for study and reflection. The PCC is grateful to clergy, lay ministers and others for their leadership of these activities.

A **Bible Reading Fellowship** group continues to meet monthly. This house group of five uses the New Daylight course of readings and reflections to prompt discussion.

Wyn Beynon arranged a day workshop and six evening sessions on **Centering Prayer**. Following this, there were weekly meetings during Lent to develop the practice. Weekly Zoom meetings now take place on Wednesday evening.

The 2025 Wednesday lunchtime **Lent course** was about hearing God's voice through Pictures, Collage and Nature, with a different perspective in each of the three benefice churches.

'Our Lenten Soundtrack' was an ecumenical series of Sunday evening services and reflections each at a different church in the town. On Palm Sunday, St Anne's hosted with a theme based on the song 'The Porter's gate – Wood and Nails.'

During 2025 we continued as a parish to concentrate on **Mission**, beginning with its widest sense, as given in the Anglican five marks of mission (developed by the Anglican Consultative Council in 1984):

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

From this basis we began to think specifically about what our mission in Bewdley and Ribbesford might look like. What is our specific God-given reason for being? We opened this question to the whole parish at the 2025 Annual Parish Church Meeting and continued the process culminating in a very well attended away day in August. From this emerged our Parish Vision and Values. The vision statement is at the top of this report. We adopted five values at the same time, which put into words *how* we want to worship, welcome, serve and work together. They will shape our everyday lives: Compassion, Kindness, Love, Respect, Honesty.

During **Black History Month** in October a group studied the book 'Black Voices on Britain', edited by Haki Adi. The book is an anthology of memoirs, recounting the experiences of black visitors to Britain from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. This was very powerful and thought-provoking, making us question many of our assumptions. Twelve people attended the group over three sessions.

Our **Advent lunches** took the theme of Sanctuary using material from USPG 'Hospitality and Sanctuary for All'. It is hoped that St Anne's will become a sanctuary church based on this model. Themed services were held in the latter part of the year, and this has continued into 2026. Sanctuary is often a central theme of sermons.

Mothers' Union continues to meet monthly for a communion service, with the occasional speaker and sometimes for a deeper reflection as took place in Lent. Prayer and worship are keystones of Mothers' Union members. During the year we were joined by one new member and two returning members. In June, Mothers' Union held a Quiet Day, led by the Rector and open to all, at Unclys farm in the forest. Mel encouraged those present to appreciate the spirituality of trees with guided worship, time for contemplation in the forest and an art activity using a variety of media and natural resources to express spiritual themes.

The Mothers' Union annual Advent Service was well supported by members and non-members alike and included a visit from our President Jill Crofton. Following an appeal to the church community during Advent, we were able to send several bags and suitcases of small gifts to the women's refuge in Dudley. We raise money for overseas projects, particularly for health and literacy programmes, using money raised at our annual tea party for The Summer of Hope.

Future plans include a special service in St Anne's in August 2026 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Mothers' Union.

Provision of pastoral care

The Pastoral Group, a group of eight lay members and the Rector, co-ordinates, where appropriate, those who visit the sick, needy, elderly and housebound of our parish and community. The group met formally three times in 2025 to update each other on the individuals on our list of concerns, a list also used for prayer. Emails are used to share significant news between meetings. Many others not in the group look after church folk and their neighbours offering a wide variety of help. Housebound people are visited with home communion or a

Service of the Word, though there are fewer of these now. Simon Thorburn also supports this ministry.

The PCC is very grateful for the commitment of the Pastoral Group to their sensitive and prayerful ministry.

St Anne's Coffee Bar is open to visitors from 10.00am to 2.00pm each Friday and from 11.00am to 1.00pm on Saturdays. This facility, which operates in the Narthex at the rear of the church, is located in the heart of the town and attracts members of the congregation and the public alike. Thursdays are promoted as the 4Cs; a place for Coffee, Cake, Company and Conversation between 10.00 and 12.30. We host the Litter Pick on the first Thursday of the month, with an early start at 9.30am, with coffee and cake after the litter picking is done. On Fridays, Bewdley Chess Club meets there alongside any visitors that day. The church offers an active welcome to visitors, whether for a hot drink, a walk around the building or some quiet time in prayer. The PCC is grateful to the team led by Sue Perrin which includes members of the wider community. Additional volunteers to help with this element of our ministry would always be warmly welcomed.

Development of our mission of outreach to visitors to **St Leonard's churchyard** continues. Throughout 2025, the churchyard benefitted from the dedicated services of our two gardeners, Jared Humphries and Mark Fraser, and two scything visits from the team at Caring for God's Acre. Mark Fraser retired at the end of the season, and we thank him sincerely for his work keeping the top churchyard beautiful and user friendly. Volunteer working parties have been a huge help with keeping the more rampant weeds from encroaching, as well as tidying away inappropriate or decaying tributes.

The wildflower area flourishes under its regime for biodiversity, and we hope the three hedgehogs settled there will continue to let us know they are enjoying their habitat. The local community loves this place, and we have experimented with various initiatives to develop a mission of prayer and peace for all visitors.

In preparation for Holy Week, a team delivered a **card and palm cross** to 120 households in the church community. Delivery was often accompanied by a visit. The message included an Easter reflection from Mel and news of Holy Week and Easter services, a postcard with an image and reflection from Meister Eckhart, and a hand-sized palm cross. The giving and receiving of a tangible symbol of God's love were appreciated.

Ecumenical relationships

The annual **Bewdley Passion** is a product of Bewdley Churches Together – an ecumenical grouping of all the churches in Bewdley (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Elim and Quakers). Each year since 2013, the churches have organised joint programmes to celebrate and bring to the townspeople the events leading up to Easter. Page 2 includes a report of these activities.

St Anne's C of E Primary School

The relationship with St Annes' C of E Primary School has continued to grow, with a programme of church and school activities and visits. The PCC is very grateful for the firm commitment of Headteacher Jo Harvey to the school's relationship with church. Early in the year, the Rector and Headteacher attended Diocesan training about Church/school partnerships. Throughout the year they have been amassing evidence for the Church and School Partnership Award.

The Rector has now become a part of the community at St Anne's school. This has led to some baptisms and to wedding enquiries. She regularly leads Collective Worship and goes to school regularly to chat with parents and carers at home time.

News from the school is shared in Network and the school is a regular PCC agenda item. Church members write for the school newsletter.

During the year, there have been numerous **school visits** to church, and various school services. Members of the school choir joined specially prepared Sunday morning services in St Anne's church in 2025. The church building is now more familiar to the pupils. Parents and families have come to support their children and have been given a warm welcome by the congregation. The PCC is particularly grateful to the Lay Ministry team for their leadership and to Jim Ineson who has been visiting the school regularly with his guitar to teach worship songs to the children which are then used in their special services in church. The school came to join in the Wednesday morning service at St Anne's on 5th February and to the World Day of Prayer Service on 7th March.

During the year, the whole school and staff, accompanied by parent helpers, walked down to St Anne's Church for a special service at **Easter, Harvest and Christmas**. These services are an inspiration and much enjoyed by children, staff, congregation members and those parents who attend. The children particularly enjoy singing together in such a large space, accompanied by James on the organ and Jim on his guitar. The **Faith Crew**, a group of ten to twelve older pupils with a particular interest in Christianity, took a leading role in the Easter service, telling the story in an engaging and participative way.

Just before Easter we had a whole day at school called **Easter Experience**. This involved an Easter trail for the children to follow around school experiencing different parts of the story of Holy Week, from the washing of feet to the resurrection. Each year group followed the story in order. The Faith Crew helped to lead at each of the trail stations. The day ended with a short outdoor service for children, parents and staff.

On 10th June 2025 we held our first **Forest Church** day at school. The theme was Spiritual Flourishing: Awe and Wonder, and the Bible story was the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The children arrived at Forest Church one class at a time from Reception to Yr 6, eight groups in all. Each session lasted about 40 minutes and included: a participative gathering prayer and introduction; an activity using senses to experience the world in smells, textures, sounds, and sights; sharing together of findings and feelings; large scale artwork using carefully prepared mud, charcoal, leaves, twigs and feathers; and a song to finish.

In July, Year 6 visited St Anne's to experience a **Pilgrimage** around the church led by LLM Barbara Fauset and ALM Diane Taylor. The Pilgrimage reflected their state of transition from Primary to Secondary school and their current stage in the journey through life. It gave them space to reflect on their lives so far and to consider what the future might bring.

In December, we enjoyed a creative and only slightly chaotic afternoon with the whole school making **Christingles** with materials provided by church (oranges at a discount from Bewdley Farm Shop). We had a lovely service in the school hall, led by the Rector with help from the Faith Crew and Jim to lead the singing. The Faith Crew again excelled towards the end of term, leading a wonderful Christmas service in church for the whole school. The highlight of this was the 'wise men's rap'! Feedback about these special events from children and staff has been very positive.

We were able to respond to the Headteacher's request for support by providing Christmas hampers for families experiencing financial hardship. The hampers were funded and put together by members of the church and distributed by the Headteacher They contained the ingredients for a celebration meal and other seasonal treats, and were well appreciated.

Diana Sutherland leads **Collective Worship** in St Anne's School Nursery with a weekly reflection for the older nursery children based on the school values. This worship, supported by members of the Faith Crew, usually contains a story or visual illustration, Bible references, a song and a prayer.

Each Wednesday morning, more than 200 children at St Anne's school wait in anticipation to hear a Bible story from a group of **Open the Book** storytellers from St Anne's church. Over the year, they hear stories from both the Old and New Testaments. Working in small groups, eighteen volunteers from the church take part in this activity. Unfortunately, last September we had to say farewell to our team from the Baptist church. Each group presents the story in their own way and over the year, the children look forward to creative designs in scenery, props and costumes. Often the whole school is asked to join in the retelling with actions or sounds and there is never a shortage of volunteers who wish to play a small acting part. The story ends with a short reflection and prayer. Staff and pupil feedback is positive and shows that this activity is valued as a way of sharing Bible stories and our faith.

Caroline Hall and Richard Rundell represent the church on the **Board of Governors** along with the Rector. Their 'Foundation' role involves oversight of the school's delivery of the RE curriculum and the way in which the school shows evidence of its Christian ethos, spirit and values. However, as Governors they have wider responsibilities: Caroline on the Curriculum, Achievement and Progress Committee and Richard on the Business (Finance) Committee. The Foundation Governors continue to be delighted with the flourishing of the RE curriculum and with the enthusiasm of the children for the subject.

Termly meetings with the Curriculum Leader for RE have given the Foundation Governors a thorough insight into how the curriculum and staff training are being led expertly and with deep commitment. The monitoring visits are an inspiration and a pleasure, and confirm that the curriculum and its professional delivery foster the religious education of every child and gives every child an understanding of the meaning of faith and of living in faith. Displays throughout the school are creative and vibrant evidence of how both classroom teaching, individual conversations and whole school activities, including assemblies, promote the Christian ethos and values of the school community.

A report from the Foundation Governors:

The school has flourished during the year, under the indefatigable leadership of the Head Teacher, Jo Harvey. During the year, two statutory inspections were undertaken, both in June 2025. The first, a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) reported strong Christian values throughout the school, praising the RE lead and describing her as "dedicated and passionate". The Inspector wrote that the school "is loving and nurturing" She said that the school's Christian vision, "You are the light of the world" drives daily action. "The core Christian values of respect, commitment, courage, forgiveness, honesty and wisdom are actively lived throughout school life".

The Ofsted report was equally complimentary; it opened with these words, "Pupils are safe and happy at this welcoming and nurturing school. The school's motto, 'You are the light of

the world' shines through every aspect of school life". All aspects of the school were rated "Good".

The school very much appreciates the close involvement of the church congregation, which it refers to as "our Church family". From the Rector's weekly services in school, to the contribution of roughly a third of the entire congregation in various activities such as regular worship, both in school and in church, Open the Book, Forest Church, supporting reading, sewing groups and helping with school trips, there is a close and caring relationship. This year the Easter workshops in school, for all years, and the summer pilgrimage to church, for the leavers, were particular highlights.

The SIAMS report made reference to this close relationship, saying, "Meaningful and purposeful partnerships reflect the school's vision and commitment to the community. The partnership with the church is particularly strong, allowing adults and pupils to flourish through shared worship, activities and support".

The PCC is grateful to those members of the church community who are engaged in pursuing our mission to the school and to the school leadership and staff who actively encourage this.

Church care and maintenance

During the year, we continued to carry out all necessary **regular maintenance** in our two church buildings. This work included regular planned safety maintenance covering fire extinguisher testing, portable electrical appliance testing, roof maintenance and lightning conductor testing at St Anne's and St Leonard's, and boiler maintenance at St Anne's.

In 2025 we spent £5,143 on routine fabric maintenance at St Anne's (£2,611 in 2024). We spent £4,240 on routine maintenance work in St Leonard's church (£7,647 in 2024). Of the combined total the sum of £2,280 was for Architects' fees for the Quinquennial Inspections (the five yearly inspections required by the diocese).

The **Quinquennial Inspections** have identified a number of significant defects at both St Anne's and St Leonard's which the Property Group are considering. These repairs, plus repairs to the north roof elevation at St Leonard's and problems with one of the St Anne's boilers, mean that the parish is likely to be faced with considerable repair spending over the coming years.

The sale of **St Andrew's church** was completed in December 2024. The net proceeds amounted to some £135,000. The PCC has determined that these funds should be held on deposit, reserved for spending on capital projects in the parish.

Dowles churchyard is disused but remains the responsibility of the PCC. A volunteer working group, largely comprising members of the Civic Society, continue to undertake regular general tidying work. The PCC is looking at ways in which the churchyard might be formally closed for burials.

The care of **St Leonard's churchyard** is reported in more detail under the heading of Pastoral Care on page 7. We have continued with work by professional churchyard gardeners supplemented by scything done by the 'Caring for God's Acre' organisation and the efforts of volunteer working parties. In 2025 we spent £5,805 on churchyard maintenance (£5,457 in 2024, which included £3,000 on repairs to the boundary wall). £726 was spent in 2025 on the provision of a portable toilet which was funded by a grant from the Town Council.

We continue to keep a close eye on **energy usage** in both our churches. All our electricity is from renewable sources.

Use of our church buildings

In 2025 we continued to encourage community engagement in St Anne's. The central position of St Anne's provides an easily accessible location in which community events can take place. The regular use of St Anne's coffee bar and narthex is reported on page 6. The PCC's long-term aim to re-order the interior of St Anne's is discussed elsewhere in this report, but central to that re-ordering will be the need to improve the usability of the building for these and other community events.

St Anne's church building has the major asset of possessing a very good acoustic. Tony Redstall and Heather and Alan Fairs worked together in 2025 to provide short **Saturday midday concerts**. These aim to give local musicians and students opportunities to perform, to attract people into St Anne's who are not regular worshippers and to collect donations for church funds. Our youngest performer was a gifted pianist ten years of age from St Anne's School, and there have been several teenagers from The Bewdley School. Attendances have ranged from 20 to 50. A total of eleven Saturday Midday concerts were run with retiring collections raising approximately £2,000 for church funds.

The PCC continued its support of the use of St Anne's as a venue for **'Music for Sanctuary'**, raising funds for homeless people under the leadership of Anna Downes. Alan and Heather are actively engaged in running these sessions. Music for Sanctuary provides concerts given by established professionals, all of whom gave their services free of charge. Besides pianists playing our restored Broadwood grand, we have heard organists, trumpet and trombone players, a clarinettist, string players, and a community orchestra from Hagley. As well as supportive members of our congregation, audiences have consisted of friends, relatives and 'fans' of the players and some visitors with no particular connection to either the performers, or to St Anne's church. The concerts are free with a retiring collection. Through the seven concerts in 2025 and associated activities, over £2,500 was donated to The Basement Project. Margaret Ashmore creates posters and makes a photographic record of these events.

In July, Bewdley Floral Art Club were invited to stage a **Flower Festival** in St Anne's Church. The festival extended over four days from the 25th until the 28th of July to coincide with the Patronal celebrations, marking St Anne's day. The church was full of beautiful displays on the theme of A Floral Family to honour St Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary. The church was open all day, refreshments were served and the takings given to church funds. Once again, the sponsoring of pew end decorations proved popular and eighty were made. The evening Valentines concert was very successful and the church was full. All money raised from the Memory Tree exhibit was passed direct to Kemp Hospice and a further donation of £1300 was given to church funds. Members of the club joined us on Sunday morning for the Patronal Service which honoured St Anne and continued the floral family theme. The PCC is very grateful to the members of Bewdley Floral Art Club for their generosity and dedication to this wonderful festival.

St Anne's proved an excellent venue for our **Harvest Fair** and as part of the town **Christmas Lights Switch-on.** At Harvest the building provided a venue for stalls selling locally produced goods and the focus at Christmas was local charity organisations. These are real team events. Members of the congregation decorated the church, rallied round setting up and taking down the boards, baked cakes and served behind the Narthex counter. Activities were organised for children including a surprise visit from a Green Father Christmas.

The Bewdley Dementia Support Group, established by Sharon Harvey, now meets regularly in St Anne's on the third Wednesday of each month in the narthex Warm Space.

The **Citizen's Advice Bureau** operated from St Anne's on three occasions in early 2025.

In 2025 St Anne's again provided a regular **rehearsal and concert venue** for Bewdley Choral Society. The church was also used as a venue by Kidderminster Choral Society Young Voices and Bewdley Festival.

For two nights in December 2025, St Anne's hosted a new Christmas musical **'Prophecy'**: a musical re-telling of the nativity story from a very different perspective exploring the emotional journey behind Joseph's response to Mary's astonishing news. The show was written by St Anne's parishioner Jim Ineson and included several members of our church and school family in the cast and chorus.

St Anne's remains popular as a venue for **Bewdley's schools** to hold special events. Both St Anne's and Bewdley Primary schools came to St. Anne's church for Easter, Harvest and Christmas services and end of term celebrations. Bewdley Primary visited St Anne's as part of their RE learning. The Bewdley School held its annual awards evening at St Anne's, welcomed and blessed by the Rector. The report on St. Anne's Primary School on page 7 includes more detail of the school's visits to church.

St Leonard's is open to visitors every day from dawn to dusk via the time-controlled lock. Visitors include those who wish to find peace and tranquillity for private prayer, those who wish to admire this historic building, walkers passing by on the Worcestershire Way and those visiting the churchyard.

Making our buildings fit for purpose

This year saw progress in working towards our goal of adapting and changing our buildings to align with our mission needs. The following lists the progress made against the future plans which we set out in last year's Annual Report:

St Anne's 2025

- Develop a feasibility plan for St Anne's interior re-ordering – COMPLETE – having presented their ideas to the congregation and the wider public in 2024, our architects refined their proposals which were approved by the PCC in 2025 as the basis for a faculty application.
- Start the Faculty application process. – IN PROGRESS – We and our architects undertook a pre-faculty consultation meeting with the Diocesan Buildings Officer and statutory consultees. The need for change was recognised by all parties, though there were questions about how the heritage of the building and the presence of pews might be reflected in the new design. Further consultation with the Highways Authority will be required as part of the Local Authority planning application.
- Continue with grant applications – IN PROGRESS- We have submitted an 'Expressions of Interest' to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we are engaged in discussions with them. In the meantime, we have put further work on the scheme by our architects on hold pending possible grants towards those costs being made available.

St Leonard's 2025

- Start the Faculty Application process for the installation of toilets and kitchenette – IN PROGRESS – We held a very constructive meeting with our recently appointed church

architect, Stephen Oliver, and Mark Carter the Diocesan Buildings Officer. A revised layout with toilet/s in the Southwest corner of the nave has been agreed in principle. A full digital survey of St Leonard's has recently been completed and Olivers have been commissioned to produce detailed design drawings ready for Faculty application.

The PCC is very grateful for the skills and commitment of members of the property group in helping us to achieve our aims.

Engagement with children, young people and families

A report on engagement with the children at **St Anne's C of E Primary School** is on page 7, including activities of the **Open the Book** team. During 2025, the church took further small steps in its connection with the town's other schools. Some details about this fledgling engagement are included on page 12 in the report about use of our buildings.

Sunday Gang: Children are always welcome at Sunday services although numbers are very low. In St Anne's, a well-equipped toy and activity corner is available. During 2025, the Sunday Gang helpers have continued to ensure that there is something for young children to do, such as colouring or a simple activity. A role description and activity risk assessment are in place (updated January 2026). There is a rota, so that there is always somebody on the 'lookout' for children. The Sunday Gang helpers feel that it is important that any children attending will feel welcome and that this will continue during 2026.

A report about **Baptisms** is on page 3. Communication with the Baptism families occurs at Advent and Easter, and they are all asked if they would like to receive the weekly Network and they usually say yes to this. The families are also invited to services if the school is involved. Children who have been Baptised receive a card from the Church until they are five. Linda Adams has kindly taken over the role from Josette Pearn of sending out the cards on the anniversary of the children's baptism. Other volunteers to support Baptism ministry will be sought when needed.

We did not hold our 'Special Sunday' event in 2025. The feeling was that it only seemed to reach a few families and there might be a better way to engage the Baptism and Nursery families. No alternative has been thought of yet. We hope and pray that Baptisms continue to increase as it is a good way to reach out to families and to share our faith.

For over 30 years, St Anne's Church has held a very popular traditional nativity service on Christmas Eve for the wider community. The 2025 service was attended by 105 adults and 43 children.

Following its trial in 2024, the 2025 **Bewdley Nativity Trail** went well. Hundreds of booklets were handed out via St Anne's and Bewdley Primary Schools and participating shops and businesses in the town centre gave out stickers representing a character in the Nativity story to children who followed the trail. The booklet, produced by Wyn Beynon, told the Christmas story and included pictures to colour in. It helped to highlight the real story of Christmas at such a commercialised time.

Engagement with the wider community

Some activities that engage with the wider community are included in the use of the buildings report on page 11.

The PCC once again applied to Wyre Forest District Council for a grant to support the use of St Anne's Narthex as a **'Warm Space'**. Under this scheme we were able to continue promoting St Anne's coffee bar as a place of warmth and welcome for all. A grant of £500 was received as a contribution towards the energy costs and some promotional activity. The coffee bar operates on the mornings/lunchtimes of Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week, with volunteers co-ordinated by Sue Perrrin. Daily attendance was from 13 to 21 people each session. In the period April 2025 to March 2026 there were **1,646 visits** to our Warm Space – an increase of 5% on the previous year.

In partnership with the District Council, St Anne's hosted a **Community Groups Showcase** on 13th March 2025, attended by approximately 140 people. Whilst restricted by the pews many local groups were able to network, sign up new people and become better known in town. A total of 33 groups were represented. The event was most successful. £180 was taken in donations for refreshments.

With ongoing promotional support from WFDC, the regular monthly **Community Litter Pick** was initiated. Volunteers were recruited, given a short health and safety briefing and, equipped with high-vis jackets, gloves, litter pickers and a sack, picked litter around the town for about an hour. On their return to the church, volunteers were always greeted by the Narthex team and given a hot drink and cake. It has proved to be good fun and a further opportunity for social contact as well as helping the environment. On average eight to ten people turn out each month for this ongoing activity.

The flood defence contractors, Jacksons, sponsored a **Community Noticeboard** located in the coffee bar area of the church to advertise community events. The purpose is to widen participation in these events, thereby aiming to improve mental health and target loneliness.

A further development during 2025 has been the series of folk concerts organised by the ShireFolk social enterprise. This organisation has secured funds from the Arts Council to support emerging artists and develop new folk venues in Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire. Seven concerts were held through the year with attendances numbering between 25 and 65. A second season of concerts is planned for 2026.

Remembrance Sunday was again a very significant, well attended and moving event for the town, with an act of remembrance outside St Anne's followed by a Civic Remembrance Sunday Service in a packed church. All ages were represented with the youngest being three years old and the oldest 93. Other poignant acts of remembrance led by the Mayor and the Rector included the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ day.

We continue to support the **Black Country Food Bank** in Stourbridge. Although our visits are less frequent, we have donated large quantities of food and household goods, such as duvets and cooking equipment. Household items are increasingly required. The need is growing as more families and individuals lose their means of earning, lose their homes and are unable to provide for their families. Some of the clients are in work but are unable to make ends meet on what they earn. Many of our congregation continue to support the Food Bank with regular financial donations, both by direct debit and with cash. The volunteers at the Food Bank are always very appreciative of everything we donate; we have developed good relationships with them over the years.

The **Climate Justice Group** made the district SustFest its main focus of activity. This local festival of sustainable living covered the month of June. St Anne's devoted a Sunday service, and an afternoon river-focussed march and open-air service in Bewdley's Jubilee Gardens. The march and open-air service were under the auspices of CARP (Campaign against river pollution). They were both striking events and well attended. The Rector played a major role. St Anne's also hosted a repeat of 'How Green is my Bible' and a new resource 'Invest, disinvest or boycott?' These were thinly attended.

Several meetings were held on Thursday afternoons: Liz Courtney spoke about the vegetable scheme at Hay Farm, Chris Redstall explained his work in Nepal and Clare Fauset reflected on a lifetime of eco-activism. These were all well attended and took place in the St Anne's narthex.

Communication with the wider community continues to grow but is an area for development. The **Parish Facebook page** is administered by Janet Adey and keeps the community abreast of current and upcoming services and events. During Advent and Lent, daily content from the Diocese, a mix of poems, readings and stories, was posted. The number of followers has slowly increased over the last two years. Whilst the Parish FB Page continues to be the main page for church use, there is also the St Anne's Makeover page, which is used for public facing news about the building and the Community Hub plans, and to publicise St Anne's big events and services. The **Bridge Community Magazine** began as a monthly magazine produced by the parish. It is now an independent social enterprise and continues to be delivered to every house in Bewdley and Wribbenhall. St Anne's and St Leonard's share a page promoting services and events for the month.

Once again, more than forty people from St Anne's and St Leonard's took part in the project to deliver a professionally printed **Christmas card** to more than 4,500 houses and businesses in Bewdley and Wribbenhall. This year the card was designed by a pupil from St Anne's School and included a Christmas greeting from our benefice churches with information about the various Christmas services that took place. The card was well received.

The **Stumblers walking group**, which is rooted in church life but has an open membership, organised eight walks on Saturdays during 2025. Two of the walks were in the Wyre Forest There were trips further afield with the walks varying in length from about four and up to about eight miles, including Bromyard/Stanford Bishop, Grimley and River Severn, Cleobury and the Rea Valley, Dudmaston, Severn Valley Country Park and the river and lastly, in November, from Chelmarsh reservoir. The e-mailing list contacts about 40 people although the number present on any given walk varied from half a dozen on a couple of occasions into the high teens on others. Walkers try to car share as much as possible. Planning and leading of the walks was shared between seven people and thanks are due to them. Walks are advertised well in advance together with a brief description of the likely ups and downs and usually included in Network.

Future plans

Parish Vision:
Inspired by Christ's love we worship God,
welcome all, serve the community and work for justice

Support for Mission and Ministry

- Expand and improve communications, particularly use of social media and A Church Near You website, with the help of the new administrator
- Engage with other churches in the town to collaborate in outreach to our community

Worship and prayer

- Develop more opportunities to pray together for our parish, our mission and ministry
- Continue to provide opportunity to deepen our engagement with scripture and to relate this to faith and life, concentrating on themes which relate to our Parish Vision such as becoming a Church of Sanctuary and issues such as climate and racial justice
- Plan to look into outreach opportunities to serve the Button Oak and Pound Green community
- Re-establish regular Taizé services and invite other churches to attend and take part, with the aim of eventually holding them in the worship spaces of other denominations
- Review and develop forms and patterns of worship, in particular an All Age Service at a time to suit families
- Build upon our foundation of Book of Common Prayer worship by publicising BCP services, arranging regular evensong and exploring the history and spirituality of the BCP

Making our buildings fit for purpose

St Anne's

- Pursue our application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund
- Refine the new entrance design and submit a Local Authority Planning Application
- Refine the interior design in light of feedback from the statutory consultees
- Submit a Faculty Application
- Develop a funding strategy and continue with grant applications

Realising our ambitions for the building is a longer-term aim

St Leonard's

- Complete the detailed design for the toilets and kitchenette
- Complete the Faculty Application process
- Obtain specification and quotes for the north elevation roof repairs
- Explore grant funding opportunities
- Develop detailed design specification and obtain competitive tenders
- Make a start on the toilet and kitchenette project

Developing our engagement with children, young people and families

Baptism:

- Provide a warm welcome

- Continue to keep in touch after the Baptism, including invitations to special services

Open the Book:

- Continue Open the Book
- Continue to recruit new participants, so that the offering can be expanded to include Bewdley Primary School

St Anne's School:

- Continue to provide opportunity to celebrate Christian festivals and other events with the church family
- Continue the popular Forest Church days at school
- Continue to host a July Pilgrimage event for Years 6
- Contribute articles regularly to the school's newsletter, advertising particular church events
- Continue to invite staff and pupils, including the school choir, to take part in church services
- Include representatives from the parish in diocesan training for collective worship
- Following on from iSing POP, the school music and worship project sponsored by the Diocese, launch POP UP Church at school from September
- Start an exchange of prayers and prayer requests between church and school
- Continue to support the school Faith Crew in leading worship at school and in church.
- Continue to plan and work with St Annes' school to achieve bronze, silver and gold Church School Partnership Awards
- Involve some children from the School Council in Courageous Advocacy as part of the Christian distinctiveness of the school e.g. advocating for more recycling bins in Bewdley

The Bewdley School:

- Build on the fledgling relationship with The Bewdley School (11-18) by beginning a lunchtime chaplaincy drop in

Developing our engagement with the wider community

- Encourage support for the Black Country Foodbank
- Work on actions needed to achieve Gold EcoChurch standard for St Anne's
- Develop long-term plans for activities at St Leonard's, such as school and community eco activities, bereavement support and activities for the churchyard community, so that full use of the building can be made on completion of the proposed installation of toilets and kitchenette
- Develop plans to use St Leonard's for activities for the wider community that can take place without the new proposed facilities
- Continue to develop the successful Town Nativity Trail, piloted in 2024 and expanded in 2025
- Continue to encourage the community use of our buildings
- Continue with the plan to improve biodiversity in St Leonard's churchyard
- Develop our mission to visitors to the churchyard by spending time there, in particular at weekends, to talk to people

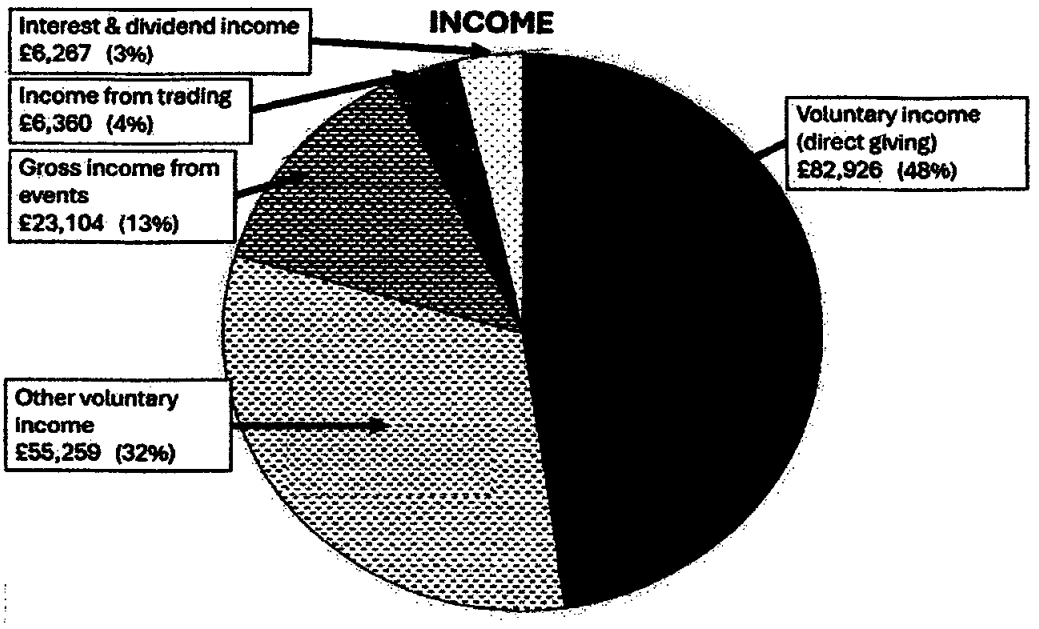
- Develop our mission to the bereaved by providing further opportunities for acts of remembrance of those who have died
- Become a 'Church of Sanctuary' by taking the following steps at a pace which embeds learning and change, building on the progress made in 2025 and working together intentionally to:
  i. explore resources about Sanctuary from *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*
  ii. learn about real life stories of refugees and people seeking sanctuary, and engage with others to discern fact from fiction
  iii. embed the values of welcome, hospitality and safety as part of our church family. Support and include refugees and people seeking sanctuary
  iv. share our vision and values with our wider community

Financial Review

Total income for 2025 was £173,917 and the expenditure was £232,368. However, this deficit of £58,451 follows a surplus the previous year and is caused by large cash movements as a result of the St Anne's stonework project and sale of St Andrews.

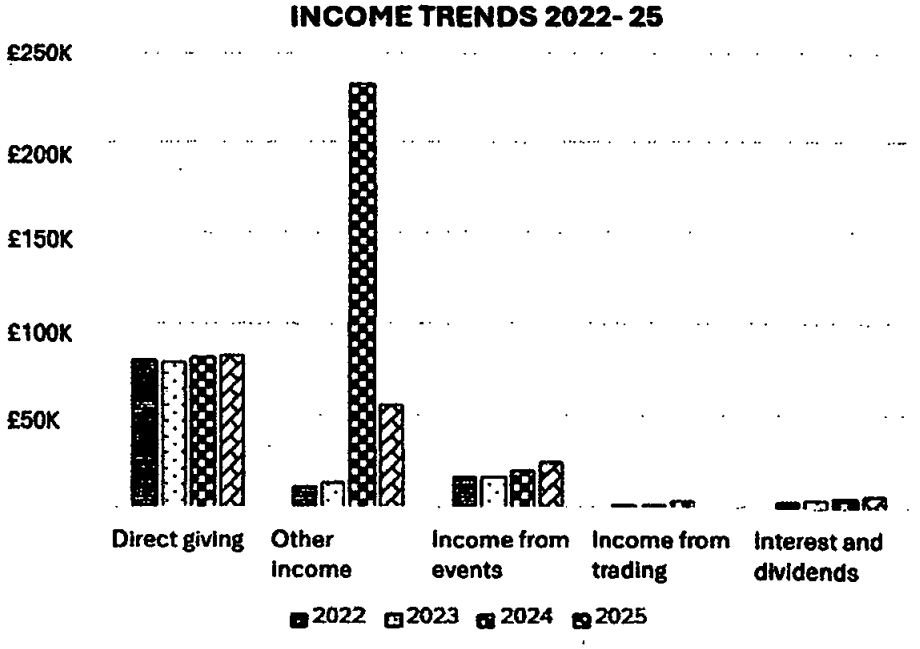
Income

The charts below show the breakdown of income for 2025



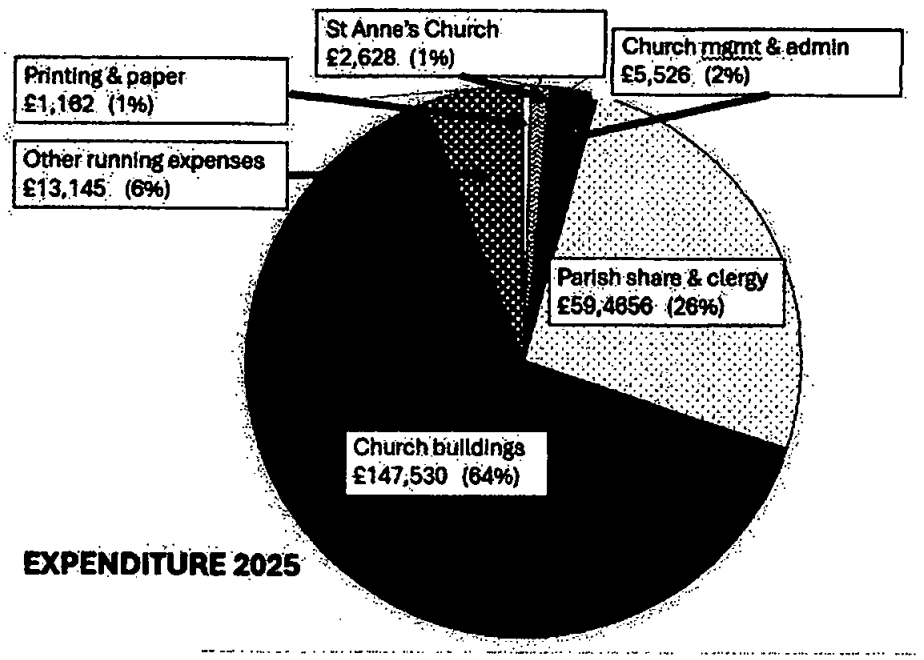
Points to note

- Voluntary income is stable with a slight upwards trend.
- Income from events and activities continues to grow overall. While income from funerals and weddings decreased by nearly £1,000 compared to 2024, this was offset by an increase of over £5,000 from other events.
- Income in 2024–2025 is significantly influenced by grants and contributions related to church building works, recorded under 'other voluntary income'.



Expenditure

The chart below shows the breakdown of expenditure for 2025



Points to note:

- Expenditure in 2024 and 2025 is largely driven by church building works.
- Although building-related spending decreased in 2025 compared to 2024, overall expenditure remains elevated due to ongoing project costs.
- Utility costs increased by over £2,000 in 2025, reflecting rising energy prices and increased church usage.

The PCC is grateful to Treasurer Ken Hadley and Bookkeeper Britta Flegg for their careful stewardship of the parish finances.

Reserves Policy

It has been the practice of the PCC to hold any surplus funds in a deposit account. During 2025, at least £15,000 of these funds were held in reserve. At the end of 2025, this reserve remained intact. The PCC plans to review the amount of funds held in reserve following the appointment in March 2025 of a part time employee, the benefice Mission Support Administrator.

Volunteers

The PCC would like to thank the many volunteers who work to promote the mission of the church in the parish. References have been made throughout this report to this work.

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with the requirements imposed by the code under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. PCCs are **to have due regard** to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on matters relating to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. The *Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measure 2021* made provision for this duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance to be replaced with a **duty to comply** with the requirements in a new Safeguarding Code. As guidance issued by the House of Bishops comes up for review, it is being replaced by new sections of the Safeguarding Code. Until then, the duty to have due regard to House of Bishop's guidance remains in force.

The PCC and Incumbent accept that safeguarding is a joint responsibility. Safeguarding & Safer Recruitment is a standing agenda item at each PCC.

In September 2025, the PCC fully accepted and implemented the Policy Statements of the Church of England – Promoting a Safer Church as the policy statement for this Parish. Signed copies of the policies are displayed in St Anne's Narthex, St Anne's Tower and St Leonard's. The Parish Safeguarding Handbook has now been withdrawn and is being replaced by a new Parish Safeguarding Toolkit and an online Safeguarding e-manual.

In August 2025, we were notified that ACPS, the organisation that carries out DBS checks on behalf of the diocese, had been subject to a *significant data breach. The data breach affected* applications made between 1 December 2024 to 9 May 2025. Two people within the parish were affected, and they have been supported by the diocese, clergy and church wardens. The diocese advised that all new DBS renewals should be on hold. Subsequently, the diocese has decided to use a new supplier, and the new process will be implemented in spring 2026.

Prior to the above notification, five DBS checks were carried out during 2025. There is currently (April 2026) a total of thirty parish volunteers requiring a DBS.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) has encouraged all volunteers to complete and renew the required safeguarding training. During 2025, nine volunteers have done the Foundation course. In October 2025, 24 volunteers attended the Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse training held at St Anne's. This included people who are required to do the training but also volunteers from the congregation who felt they would benefit from this course. A further four people have completed the online course.

The PSO regularly attends the PSO network meetings and, through that and through mailings from the Diocesan team, is being kept up to date about any changes to policies. The two PSOs in the benefice also work together to ensure there is a consistency across the benefice.

The Parish Dashboard is the tool used by the parishes and diocese to monitor compliance with Safeguarding policies. The Parish Dashboard is kept up to date by the PSO, while the

Incumbent, Churchwardens, Vice Chair and PCC Secretary have access to view and to check what items are outstanding. Church activities listed on the Dashboard are Pastoral Visiting, Open the Book and Sunday Gang. Role descriptions are kept up to date for volunteers for these activities.

No new volunteers were recruited during 2025 for roles with significant contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. It has not been necessary to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding team regarding individuals.

The Diocesan Website is a good source of safeguarding information: https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk.

The PCC is very grateful for the work done by Britta Flegg in her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Diocesan Synod

Three meetings were held. Finance continued to be a major concern. Synod monitored developments with the development plan and education. A Racial Justice Charter was approved.

Deanery Synod

Kidderminster and Stourport Deanery held two Synods in 2025.
In February in Astley Church the main speaker was Kim Brown who is the New Worshipping Communities Enabler. She works to build a discipleship journey for people who live in the community but don't come to church.

In July the meeting was at Rowberry's Garden Centre in Chaddesley Corbett. The main topic was "Sustainability in Churchyards". Unfortunately, the speaker was unable to attend so Canon Tim Williams led the discussion around making our churchyards more sustainable by reducing mowing, planting wildflowers, installing bird boxes, creating bug hotels, composting waste, planting native trees, managing hedges, and harvesting rainwater.
In Ribbesford Churchyard, we do nearly all of those things which is very pleasing. Also, at the meeting awards for outstanding efforts for sustainability and for contribution to church music were made.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity, number 1132968.

The appointment of PCC members is governed and set out in the Church Representation Rules. All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC. All members of the PCC are required to comply with the safeguarding requirements described in the Safeguarding section of this report and attend relevant training courses. All PCC members are trustees.

The PCC is responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish, including deciding how funds are to be spent. The PCC met 7 times in 2025: January, March, May, July, September and November and for a short meeting after May's Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM).

The PCC has a Standing Committee with membership and functions according to the Church Representation Rules, including agenda setting for PCC meetings. Other committees

responsible to the PCC are the Property Group and other groups set up from time to time for specific purposes.

Richard Rundell, Caroline Hall and the Rector are Foundation Governors on St Anne's CE Primary School Governing Body. As well as attending meetings of the Board of Governors and other committees of which they are members, Foundation Governors have a programme of twice termly activities in school. Foundation Governors have a particular responsibility in taking the lead in upholding and promoting the deeply Christian character of a Church school. A key responsibility is to regularly monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the school's Christian vision, values and ethos on the life and work of the school community. The PCC is grateful to the Foundation Governors for their commitment to meeting these obligations.

Six members of the PCC sat on the Deanery Synod in 2025, four elected for a three-year period at the 2023 APCM and two who also sit on the Diocesan Synod. Membership of these bodies provides the PCC with a valuable link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

Administrative information

The Parish of Ribbesford with Bewdley and Dowles is part of the Diocese of Worcester within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St Anne's Church, Load Street, Bewdley, Worcestershire DY12 2AE

PCC members who have served at any time since 1st January 2025 until the date this report was approved are:

1st January to 22nd May 2025
Vice Chair: Richard Rundell
Treasurer: Ken Hadley
Secretary: Gill Warnett

Ex officio:
Incumbent: Revd Melissa Beynon
Licensed Lay Minister: Barbara Fauset
Wardens: John Adey, Diane Taylor, John Iles, Paul Warnett
Deanery Synod: Ann Capell, Susan Price, Yvonne Rundell, Gill Warnett
Diocesan Synod: Robert Barbour

Elected Lay members:
Alan Fairs, Heather Fairs, Ken Hadley, Caroline Hall, Trevor Hockin, Richard Perrin, Richard Rundell,

22nd May 2025 to 21th May 2026
Vice Chair: Richard Rundell
Treasurer: Ken Hadley
Secretary: Gill Warnett

Ex officio:
Incumbent: Revd Melissa Beynon
Licensed Lay Minister: Barbara Fauset
Wardens: John Adey, Diane Taylor, John Iles, Paul Warnett,
Deanery Synod: Ann Capell, Susan Price (until 31.12.25) Yvonne Rundell, Gill Warnett,
Diocesan Synod: Robert Barbour, Diane Taylor

Elected Lay members:
Heather Fairs, Ken Hadley, Caroline Hall, Trevor Hockin, Richard Rundell, Diana Sutherland, Mark Hambling (from 24.11.25)