The Lee Old Church Trust

Chair's Report for 2025

2025 was a busy year for the Trust, with 7 events well-spaced. It began with a Spring Clean working party in March. This is always a convivial affair, and many useful tasks of maintenance were completed in and outdoors. It was repeated in the Autumn, and I am grateful to those who give their time to carry out essential maintenance such as clearing leaves, cleaning the interior up to the rafters etc.

The AGM on 23rd March was well-attended, with the lure of some refreshments and a talk by the Trustees' Chair, telling something of the building's story over 800 years, plus the work of the Trust. Soon after, on 5th April, with a great talk on the 'journey' of the Puddingstone Distillery from Wilstone near Tring, World Champions at a recent global Martini competition! G & Ts were offered, and a spirit which has played an important role in our country's history was brought to life.

On 1st June we had an "Open Afternoon" to offer access to the building and information about the Trust's work to people who may not have appreciated the jewel in the heart of The Lee. It was very well attended.

Our first musical event (5th July) came in the form of "Summer Strings". A wonderful combination of violin and cello, this talented duo of Charlotte Edwards and Ann-Isobel Mayer played some wonderful music for a summer's evening, This was very popular, and showcased some wonderful music progressing through the centuries, from Scarlatti, via Mozart, Corelli and reaching Hermann.

Anne-Isobel Mayer returned for a 'warm-up' to prepare for the Edinburgh Festival. She played numbers 3 and 5 from the J S Bach Cello Suites. This was a moving experience for the audience, and extraordinary to see the physical effort involved in playing such music. We hope Anne-Isobel will return to play more of the Suites.

For something completely different, 2 television stars in Sara Thornton and John Hammond gave us a terrific insight into the world of meteorology and predicting weather, in the context of climate change.

As ever, the introduction to the festive period was provided by the Fayrfax Consort led by David Ireson, with their usual collection of carols, readings and sublime choral music on 7th

December. A packed audience revelled in the performances, and went home happily anticipating their Christmases.

Financially, again, thanks to the excellent work by our Treasurer, our reserves are well-maintained and we try to obtain the maximum returns available from them. Despite increasing electricity costs, we have found ways to mitigate the extra costs.

My grateful thanks to all my fellow Trustees, and we welcomed Helen Buckley and Ann Toettcher as new appointments in 2025.

There has been important works on the fabric; the utilities building required re-roofing, and work began on the repairs to the wall between the Old Church and Church Farm. Plans have been approved by the Diocese to allow us to bring the West doors into operation as a 3rd exit and entrance to the building, returning it as an access point after many years.

Finally, the building continues to provide a wonderful venue as a consecrated church, with weddings, and other services, including the 1st and 3rd Sunday 08:00 Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer.

We have a full program planned for 2026, starting with a quiz on 7th February and then the AGM on 29.3.26, Palm Sunday (the start of British Summer Time this year).

We look forward to welcoming existing, and new members to the Trust, and to attracting new interest in the historic building and the Trust.

Jon Swain

Chair of the Trustees

The Lee Old Church – Treasurer's Report

General overview

At last year's AGM, I reported that I expected us to make a loss in 2025, partially due to the reduction in interest rates and partially due to increased expenditure on one-off maintenance and improvement costs.

The final position at the end of 2025 was a loss for the year of £635.43, far less than anticipated, after accounting for one off costs of £5,334.11. These costs were for repair and renovation of the toilet and kitchen block, plus an interim payment towards repair of the boundary wall between the Old Church and Church Farm.

We had a net increase of 11 households in the number of Friends of the Old Church, which was reflected in an additional £200 of subscription income compared to 2024. 2025 was also a good year for fundraising events, with increased income of just over £500 compared to 2024. We endeavour to keep running expenses as low as is feasible and, had it not been for the one-off capital expenditure which is our core purpose, would have generated a revenue surplus.

Our finances are secure, with the cash balances at end of year totalling £156,237.96.

Looking forward to 2026 we have the remaining costs for repairs to the boundary wall, which we are sharing with the owners of Church Farm House. We also have permission to remove the rear cupboard in order to reopen the doors at the western entrance to the church below the belfry, so as this becomes a usable entrance for the first time in very many years.

We have recently identified some damp in the Old Church, almost certainly due to the very wet winter. Although previously we had made the decision to only heat the building when in use due to the sizeable increase in electricity costs following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, in fact we have had the heating on for the past two months in order to keep the damp at bay.

Despite one of the three heaters not currently working, the cost of heating with two heaters in the past couple of months was over £9/day + VAT and, it is assumed, would be in the region of £13-14/day + VAT with all three heaters functioning properly. Whilst obviously the Trust has considerable reserves, the Trustees feel that heating costs should be paid out of income as revenue costs, leaving the reserves for major items of capital expenditure.

Ignoring any future price increases caused by war in the Middle East, were the church to be heated from November – March, this would increase running costs by in excess of £2,100 per year.

Although we very much hope that 2026 will be as successful financially as 2025, which would allow the heating to be funded from income, none of our income is guaranteed. At our next meeting, the trustees will consider improving heating efficiency, as well as options for funding of the additional heating costs. Suggestions so far include:

- An increase in the number of fund raising events
- A further increase in ticket prices
- Inviting local businesses and/or individuals to sponsor a month's heating costs
- An increase in the suggested minimum annual subscription
- Funding from reserves

The Lee Old Church Trust

(Registered Charity Number 1182744)

Income and Expenditure Account for the Period Ending December 31, 2025

Income			**2025**		**2024**
Friends' Subscriptions			2,125.00		1,925.00
Old Church Boxes			47.25		16.00
Donations			80.00		272.00
Reclaim of Tax on covenants and Gift Aid			434.47		407.03
Fund Raising Events - Gross Income	4,115.00			4,090.10	
- Less Associated Expenses	-1,565.57		2,549.43	-2,079.14	2,010.96
Interest on Building Society and Savings Accounts			3,055.40		5,560.24
Total Receipts			8,291.55		10,191.23
Expenditure					
Lighting & Heating			555.77		630.27
Structure & Fabric			762.00		118.80
Equipment			40.99		157.08
Postage, Printing, & Stationery			285.29		13.82
Bank Charges			0.00		0.19
Insurance			914.76		904.51
Churchyard Expenses			1,034.06		836.49
Major Repairs (one off)[1]			5,334.11		-
Total Payments			8,926.98		2,661.16
Surplus / Deficit of Income over Expenditure			-635.43		7,530.07

Balance Sheet as at December 31, 2025

Assets	**2025**	**2024**
Current Account	350.15	1,746.31
Deposit Accounts	155,887.81	155,127.08
Silverware	1,250.00	1,250.00
	157,487.96	158,123.39
Represented by Accumulated Fund		
Balance at 1st January	158,123.39	149,343.32
Surplus / Deficit of Income over Expenditure	-635.43	7,530.07
Silverware not included in start of year balance	-	1,250.00
	157,487.96	158,123.39

R.A. Fowler Treasurer
Date 27 January, 2026

Notes:

[1] Toilet/kitchen block roof repairs and repainting, interim payment for repairs to boundary wall