

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St. Petroc's Church South Brent**

**A Parish in the Dart and Avon Mission Community
In the Deanery of Totnes in the Diocese of Exeter**

Registered Charity Number 1211219

*Address for correspondence:
The Vicarage, Hillside, South Brent TQ10 9AN*

Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31st December 2025

Team Rector

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Bankers

NatWest, Paignton (B) Branch, 15 Victoria Street, Paignton TQ4 5DE

Independent Examiner

Mr Robert Barclay
Yonder Cross
South Brent
TQ10 9DR

Our website

www.stpetrocsandstmarys.org.uk

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Petroc's Church South Brent

Annual Report

For the Year Ended 31st December 2025

Aims and Purposes

St. Petroc's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church; pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the well-being of the church finances and the upkeep and maintenance of the church and church room buildings. Both buildings are located in Wellington Square, South Brent TQ10 9AQ.

Current Situation

The parish is part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community in which the Rev Prebendary Professor Gina Radford is Team Rector. In May we were delighted to welcome Rev Alexandra Holmes as our new Team Vicar at a service conducted by Bishop James. Alex serves across the whole Mission Community, with particular pastoral responsibility for Buckfastleigh. She has quickly settled into her new role and is proving to be a real asset – thank you Alex!

Both Gina and Alex are part-time; Gina is officially on duty on Wednesdays, Fridays & Sundays and Alex on Tuesdays, Fridays & Sundays, but they do amend their timetables to fit in with weddings and funerals particularly. Gina lives in the Vicarage in South Brent and Alex lives in Buckfastleigh.

Gina and Alex are supported by a wonderful and very committed Ministry team of an LLM (David Harwood) and retired clergy (George Day and Peter Taylor). Our faithful and long serving LLM, Jenny Houghton, retired from this role, and we are enormously grateful to her for all she has offered in her ministry, and all she continues to do. The Team meets monthly and serve throughout the Mission Community. We are very blessed to have such a supportive, energetic and faithful Ministry Team – thank you all for your tireless and inspiring service in the name of Christ.

Mission Community Update

As a Mission Community we have developed an exciting vision for our future direction with staffing, to enable us to grow as disciples and to explore new ways of being a church, in particular by connecting with our communities more effectively, particularly in Buckfastleigh, where the local church runs a Foodbank.

In 2025, with Alex's appointment and the commissioning of lay worship leaders, we have begun the first steps in achieving our vision. In 2026 we hope to develop our vision further, particularly in the area of pioneering.

This is an exciting time for us as a Mission Community. However, we also face the realities of maintaining our churches, many of which have significant maintenance and fabric issues; and continuing to grow as disciples of Christ whilst recognising the demographic changes and challenges with regards to attendance in some of our churches. We are blessed to have wonderful and very supportive Churchwardens and PCCs, who give so much to the churches and communities they serve. We thank God for all they and so many others in our congregation do.

We are working together more closely as a Mission Community and this is proving to offer some wonderful opportunities for growing together, such as:-

- There are **regular Joint meetings** of our Churchwardens, Treasurers, Pastoral Visitors and Safeguarding Leads in their particular groups which allows for support, sharing of ideas and getting to know each other better. In addition, we held 2 Joint PCCs meetings during the year which were very well attended, and allowed people to share in fellowship, and think more strategically.
- We **worship together** as a United Mission Community on the 5th Sunday of the month, with the service moving around the different churches, so we can experience each other's churches.
- When churches do not have a service on a Sunday, members are encouraged to **attend other churches**. It is good to see more people doing this, as it offers different fellowship opportunities, and encouragement to those churches visited.
- We have had a focus on **growing as disciples** of Christ, and as such have held study courses on Prayer as well as our traditional Lent courses, both of which are Mission Community-wide.
- One key aspect of growing as disciples has been on how we can encourage and develop lay leaders. This year we had the delight of appointing and commissioning **8 Lay Worship Leaders** who led worship across the Mission Community.
- We held our first ever **Mission Community Party in January** (I know it's not strictly in the right year – but it's worth celebrating!). Over 50 people from across the Mission Community came to share a meal, fun and fellowship.

Objectives and Activities

When planning our activities, the PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, and in particular the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The PCC remains committed to the community of South Brent, enabling as many people as possible to worship in the parish church, taking the message of the Gospel to the wider village, and supporting and serving the wider community, as well as growing disciples and the whole body of Christ in this place. St Petroc's is a church for the whole parish, whether they are regular worshippers or not.

The PCC has an overview of worship and is very supportive of the ministry team by supporting existing services and offering constructive feedback and practical help.

The worshipping community at St Petroc's works hard to enable all people of whatever background to discover, establish and grow their faith through worship, prayer and exploring our faith together. We seek to learn and grow in our knowledge and trust in Jesus.

The provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish and outreach work remain a priority. Our Pastoral Visiting Group supports members among the church community and beyond. This includes monthly services in our two Nursing Homes. These are led by the Rector, supported by members.

We seek to be the generous people of God, and to look beyond our own community to offer support. We donate to a number of charitable and other causes, and see this wider giving as an essential part of our life together. The PCC has agreed a policy of giving away 10% of its unrestricted income to charitable causes.

In addition, the Churchwardens are members of South Brent Feoffees, which the Rector chairs. This group supports both individuals and groups within the village, with a particular concern for those in greatest need.

Achievements and Performance

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

St. Petroc's is a growing church, and numbers have increased in this past year. We have had a number of new people join us, including at our Family Service which now welcomes an average of some 70 adults and 12 children each month. Further encouragement was seen in our Christmas attendance, which was higher than pre-pandemic – 684 compared to 657 in 2019.

We hold weekly 9.30am services at St. Petroc's. Our main services follow the pattern of a Family Service on the 1st Sunday of each month, a Village Eucharist on the 2nd and 4th Sundays and Service of the Word on the 3rd Sunday. In months where there is a 5th Sunday, we join with the rest of the Mission Community for a joint service. We also have an 8.00am service of Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer on the 3rd Sunday.

Services are filmed and placed on the website, which enables those not able to attend in person to worship. We are aware from feedback that this is much appreciated, and worshippers from overseas and different parts of the country who have contacted us say how grateful they are to be able to join us in this way. Many thanks to David Brett who does the weekly filming so faithfully.

We have coffee and fellowship after the service in the adjacent church room. This is very well attended, and coffee and fellowship time can sometimes be as long as the service!

Weekday Morning Prayer takes place twice-weekly and is regularly attended by an average of 11 people, both in person and by Zoom.

A weekly Thought for the Week study group meets virtually to discuss matters arising from the Sunday sermon.

We have a number of active bible study and prayer groups, which meet on a regular basis. We also hold occasional study courses where we look at specific issues to help deepen and grow us as disciples. These are open to the whole Mission Community. Recently we held a course on Prayer, which was very well attended.

A celebration of World Day of Prayer takes place annually. In addition, Lent courses are held jointly with the Methodist church.

We have a large and flourishing band of bell ringers, who have regularly won awards.

There is a small but growing branch of the Mothers' Union, who meet each month, with the exception of August. Their activities support Exeter Diocesan Mothers' Union.

Our Civic Service of Remembrance was very well attended. Our Christmas services were very well attended and a truly joyful time – especially our Carol Service and our Christingle with a full church on both occasions.

In addition to our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate, mark and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. We see Life Events services as a very important part of our mission. At baptism we thank God for the gift of life, in marriage public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through the funeral service family and friends express their grief and give thanks for the life that is now complete in this world and commend the person to God's keeping. We have celebrated 3 baptisms this year, 2 weddings and 17 funerals, including crematorium services.

In addition to our two highly talented organists, we have an excellent choir who together support us at our 9.30am services. We also have a band which plays at Family Worship and on other special occasions, and an enthusiastic group of young actors who bring bible and other stories to life for the congregation.

All are most welcome at our services. At present, there are 108 parishioners on the Electoral Roll.

Deanery Synod

We have two Deanery Synod representatives.

The Church Building

We want our Church to be open to our community for private prayer. It is open from about 9.30am until the late afternoon every day.

The interior of the Church is cared for by a dedicated group of cleaning volunteers and the appearance of the Church is wonderfully enhanced by the work of our very active team of flower arrangers.

In 2025, following a protracted approvals process, we were finally able to install the new infrared heating system, which not only provides an improved ambience in the church during the colder months for services and community events, but also helps contain the considerable cost of heating the church. This was made possible by the generosity of church members in conjunction with significant grants from the CoE 'Give to go Green' initiative and the South Brent Community Energy Scheme (SBCES). We are very grateful to all who contributed.

In conjunction with our church architect, Jeremy Chadburn, we continue to engage with the Diocesan Advisory Committee to establish a long-term solution to the water ingress problem in the church tower. Our new architect is working positively with the PCC to achieve this and we have recently involved the Chair of the Church Buildings Council to work with us to help find the correct solution.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care in the parish by the Rector and members of the congregation is a very high priority. Holy Communion and other services take place monthly in the Willows and Windward residential homes. Home communions for housebound members of the congregation take place regularly, together with other pastoral visiting. In addition, there is the regular visiting for funerals, baptisms, weddings and other pastoral matters. The Pastoral Visiting Group coordinates work in this area.

Work with Children and Young People

We continue to have a number of committed and energetic teams which work with children and young people in the parish:

People with under Fives (PUFFS)

Puffs' reputation seems to have spread by word of mouth over the last year, as we now have children and carers from as far away as Totnes, Harbertonford and Avonwick.

The average attendance each week is about twelve, sometimes including siblings. This makes for quite a lively and noisy room. On quieter mornings with maybe half that number, it's possible to get everyone listening to a story, before the "musical instruments" come out for singing and dancing on a floor cleared of toys. The seven helpers, spread between two teams, agree that it is a very enjoyable and rewarding activity.

We mark the children's birthdays with cards and small gifts, and on festivals we have a visit from Jan, who used to run Puffs before the MU took over, bringing her finger puppets and an appropriate seasonal story.

Sunday Morning Services

Young people are always welcomed at our Sunday morning services, with a Family Service on the 1st Sunday of every month. There is a Sunday Activity Club which has children attending on the majority of Sundays, when they take part in Christian based activities, the results of which can be viewed at the back of the church.

During the Family Service we seek to involve the children by taking part, and have a group of about 20 children and young people who variously attend. It is wonderful to see the younger members growing in confidence as they take part in reading, plays and various activities as part of our worship. The age range is very broad, from babies to teenagers.

Summer Holiday Club

In the school summer holidays activities were offered to 11-16 year olds on three afternoons. These were held at Palstone Park (Recreation Ground) with 17 young people attending. The activities offered were pottery, cooking and board games.

Primary School

We have a state Primary School in the village, with which the Church has established links. The Rector takes regular assemblies. In addition, the school is welcomed to church for all the major festivals. The church has a very positive relationship with the school.

South Brent youth Club (previously The Bridge Project)

We were delighted to have been awarded a Diocesan Grant to develop this work in 2024. This has seen the transformation from the Bus, which was very much a drop in opportunity for young people, to become more of a Youth Group to enable the Christian message to be introduced to attendees. Led by Ivybridge youth for Christ (IYFC) and supported by volunteers, the club has been established in the Rec, and attracts an increasing number of young people.

Safeguarding

There have been no safeguarding concerns brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer during 2025, although our Safeguarding Officer has given notice that she will be standing down at the 2027 APCM.

One face to face training session has been held, which was attended by 19 people. A further session for those who need to do their basic and foundation training will be arranged in 2026.

The Diocesan safeguarding team sends regular newsletters with any changes in requirements and it has been noted that the safeguarding and DBS requirements have changed for several voluntary posts. We have also had one notification of a possible visit of a person with safeguarding needs.

We have been advised that the Diocese has changed the safeguarding training and DBS needs for the Parish Safeguarding Reps and our Safeguarding Officer will be attending extra safeguarding training in 2026 and applying for a basic DBS check.

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

Mission and Evangelism

Mission is key to what we do as a church, both within our regular worship, and in engaging with our wider community.

We hold a monthly Family Service, which has proved very effective for enabling people who may not be used to church an opportunity to experience a more informal and accessible service. The children help take the service, doing dramas, reading, doing the prayers and playing in the band.

We held our annual Good Friday village walk. A cross is carried to the top of Brent Hill, where the Rector leads a short service. It was a wonderful occasion with well over 100 people and various well-behaved dogs making the pilgrimage. We are very grateful to the landowner who kindly allows us to access the hill.

We have developed a very accessible and attractive website thanks to the expertise of David Brett, a member of the church. It has superseded our use of 'A Church near you' which we found was not the best fit for our needs. It is aimed not only at our regular members, but also at anyone who may be looking in interest. We have pages with prayer resources, worship resources, young people's resources, as well as information about our activities and services. The Rector writes a weekly "Dear Friends" letter with a homily on the Sunday's readings, together with prayers, notices and a diary for the week ahead. This is emailed to everyone in our email group, and is available on the website and the Church notice board for the general public to read.

Facebook posts for weekly services and associated events are posted every week and reach between 200 and 700 people.

A Christmas card was sent to every house in the parish with the times of the Christmas services. Our Parish Magazine (The South Brent Messenger) continued quarterly and was distributed to almost every household in the parish and Rattery, without charge.

St. Petroc's Lending Library of Christian-based books continues to be used by a small number of readers. Books especially relevant to the time of year in the Church's calendar are available.

We held a variety of events to engage with our community, including a monthly Coffee in the Car Park, a monthly Parish Breakfast before our Family service, a monthly Parish Lunch and a very well attended Christmas Grotto in the church to which lots of families who wouldn't otherwise come to church and enjoyed the activities, fun and warm hospitality.

We are blessed in having a very active Hospitality Team, who see their gifts in this area as a real opportunity for mission.

Our members also support a range of activities in the wider community, including Compassionate Café (which the church co-founded), lunch clubs and coffee mornings in the Old School Centre.

Ecumenical Relationships

We have been very successful in establishing close relationships with the other churches in the parish in recent years. Combined services are held at the annual Covenant Service at the Methodist Church in early January and on Remembrance Sunday at the Parish Church. There is a combined Service of Light at the Roman Catholic Church on the first Thursday in December. Anglicans take an active part in this service. Personal relationships with members of the other churches are very strong. The World Day of Prayer takes place each year, the venue rotating around the three churches. We hold our annual Lent Group and Lent Lunch in the Methodist Hall as a mark of our ecumenism, and is jointly led by the Rector and the Methodist Minister.

Churchyards

St. Petroc's has three churchyards in its care: the historic graveyard around the church building; the 1910 Cemetery in Station Approach, which takes its name from the year it was opened; and the adjoining Millennium Cemetery, opened in the year 2000. St. Petroc's churchyard contains three Grade II listed mediaeval tomb chests, and the stone wall facing the car park and roadway is also listed, as is the small lych gate and the base of the mediaeval stone cross outside the main lych gate.

The lower third of St. Petroc's Churchyard is earmarked as a wildflower meadow, and as an improved wildlife habitat for birds, butterflies, insects and bees. The grass here is allowed to grow long in the Spring and Summer and mown in the Autumn.

St. Petroc's Churchyard and the 1910 Cemetery are both closed to new burials and interments, unless these take place in family plots. The Millennium Cemetery is open for burials, or interment of ashes, for any resident of South Brent, regardless of their faith. We see the cemetery as very much an amenity for the whole parish and we are grateful to the Parish Council, who make a contribution of 50 per cent towards the cost of grass cutting in the 1910 and Millennium Cemeteries.

We keep watch on unauthorised items placed on graves and continue to remove these, hopefully in a sensitive way. All three churchyards remain areas for quiet contemplation and also as havens for wildlife.

The churchyard and 1910 cemeteries are officially signed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to indicate the presence of such graves.

We are grateful to the chair of our Churchyard Committee for his ongoing stewardship of the churchyards.

Financial Review

2025 was a year of much activity (some planned and some unplanned!).

When setting the Budget for the General Church Account for 2025, it was expected that expenditure would exceed income and the PCC accepted a budget deficit of £1,900. The actual figures show a deficit for the year of very nearly £8,000. This was the largest deficit so far experienced by St. Petroc's.

Whilst general expenditure on energy and the provision of services was almost £1,700 more than last year, we also incurred unplanned expenditure of £3,300 to replace the church room stair lift, which had ceased to work properly and had become economically unviable. We also faced an increase in common fund requirement of £1,750 to £40,299 which, once again, was paid in full. Despite these constraints our charitable giving was maintained at 10% of income.

Sadly, our income level dropped from 2024's level by some £3,400; the overall result being that our general reserves of £14,091 at the start of the year have fallen to £6,127 going forward into 2026.

St. Petroc's was both fortunate and grateful to receive grant funding totalling £10,000 in order to continue the work with Ivybridge Youth for Christ, which includes the provision of a youth club and café, wellbeing support and a summer camp. It is anticipated that these ring-fenced funds will cover 3 years support.

The installation of a new "state of the art" heating system finally went ahead in the autumn, following DAC approval for the scheme. The installation, however, necessitated the provision of a 3-phase supply meter.

Unfortunately, due to serious water ingress we had to de-commission the system within 2 – 3 weeks of its installation as the water running down the inside of the tower had found its way into the electrical system. Further expense was incurred in rectifying this issue in order for the heating system to be operated.

The bells in St. Petroc's were last rehung in 1937, when all new ringing fittings and a new cast iron and steel bellframe were provided. Although the bell installation has lasted very well indeed, there has been considerable rusting of the wall facing main foundation steel girders that support the bellframe castings and trimmer beams. The rusting is considered to have accelerated in recent years due to water ingress throughout the tower and through the stonework.

Given that the heating project is now behind us, it is time to turn our attention to the repair of the bellframe, which has been closely monitored over the past few years. A fundraising campaign has commenced, and a professional fundraiser has been engaged to enhance the fundraising activity. Two quotations have been obtained, both from highly reputable bellfounders, and it is hoped that this project will be started by the summer of 2026.

Following the successful Heating Project Appeal in 2024 our overall income exceeded £100,000 for the first time. Unfortunately, this triggered the introduction of charges from Natwest, who only offered free banking to not-for-profit organisations whose annual turnover doesn't exceed £100,000. As we had exceeded this figure, we were no longer eligible for the free banking we had enjoyed for the previous 17 years, and would start to incur charges with effect from 1st November.

The PCC took the view that the proposed charges were unacceptably high and asked the Hon. Treasurer to investigate alternative "suppliers". This was duly achieved and with effect from January 2026 St. Petroc's will be banking with The Co-operative Bank who currently offer their banking services free of charges.

Budgets and forecasts for income and expenditure for 2026 have been prepared and reviewed by the PCC, together with available reserves and, despite the challenges which lie ahead, the PCC is confident that we can meet those challenges in 2026. However, with the prospect of increasing costs going forward, it is clear that an increase in income will be needed for 2027 and beyond.

Reserves Policy

It is PCC policy to ensure that sufficient funds are available prior to the commencement of any particular project. In addition to grant funding when appropriate, we have been fortunate in the past to have benefited from the generous support of parishioners and villagers.

Volunteers

The members of the PCC would like to sincerely thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council manages the activities of St. Petroc's. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

Following registration with the Charity Commission of England and Wales of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Petroc's South Brent, each PCC member is now automatically a Trustee of the Charity. The Hon. Treasurer has been authorised to act as the main contact and administrator.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956 and the Church Representation Rules 2022) and is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. The Charity Registration number is 1211219.

At St. Petroc's the membership of the PCC currently comprises our Team Rector, two churchwardens, two Deanery Synod representatives and others elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the Church. All members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the Church, including deciding on how the funds are to be spent.

The full PCC met 6 times during the year with an average attendance level of 74%.

Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has a number of sub-committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. In addition to the Standing Committee, comprising the Team Rector, Churchwardens and Treasurer, there are committees for Fabric, Churchyard and Church Room, together with a Pastoral Committee and a Social Committee. All are responsible to the PCC and report back to it with the results of their deliberations as necessary.

St. Petroc's has a Health & Safety Officer and a Safeguarding Officer, who each report to a Churchwarden. Both the Health & Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy are reviewed annually. The Health & Safety Officer conducts annual risk and fire risk assessments and the recommendations are reviewed and implemented by the Fabric Committee.

Administrative Information

St. Petroc's Church is situated in Wellington Square, South Brent, Devon TQ10 9AQ. It is a member of the Dart and Avon Mission Community within the Deanery of Totnes in the Diocese of Exeter within the Church of England.

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2025 until the date this report was approved are:

Chair:

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Churchwardens:

Mr. Rob Brighthouse

Mrs Susan Jozsa (also Hon. Secretary)

Elected members:

Mr. Geoff Addy - Hon. Treasurer

Mrs. Christina Cross

Mrs. Shirley Eatwell

Mrs. Stella Gillingham – Deanery Synod Representative

Mrs. Emma McCulloch

Mrs. Sarah Smith

Mrs Diana Tyler

Mr. Greg Wall – Deanery Synod Representative

Mrs Alaine Willis

Approved by the PCC on 25th February 2026 and signed on their behalf by

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford (Chair)

Mr. Rob Brighthouse (Vice Chair)

