

The Parish of St Mary's Church, Rattery, Devon

Address for correspondence

Mrs Linda Jopson
PCC General Secretary
Ashbourne Farm
Rattery
South Brent TQ10 9JZ

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS Of the Parochial Church Council

For the year ended 31st December 2025

Team Rector:

Reverend Prebendary Professor Gina Radford

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank, Totnes

Independent Examiner:

Ian Fraser
Rupp & Fraser
7 St. Paul's Road
Newton Abbot
TQ12 2HP

Web site:

www.stpetrocsandstmarys.org.uk

The Parochial Church Council is an Excepted Charity

2

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's church, Rattery, Devon
Part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community

Aims and purpose

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) is aware of its responsibilities of promotion of the whole mission of the church within its locale, of caring appropriately for the Grade I listed building and the intangible heritage it represents, and of ensuring integrity and value for money in its financial dealings.

The parish is part of the Dart and Avon Mission Community in which Rev Preb'd 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. Both Gina and Alex are part time Gina is officially on duty on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, and Alex on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday 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 meet monthly and serve throughout the Mission Community. We are very blessed to have such a supportive, energetic and faithful Ministry Team.

Objectives and Activities.

St Mary's Parochial Church Council has continued to carry out its duties of stewardship of its Grade one, 12th Century listed church so continuing the ability to provide regular services of Christian worship and other community based uses of St Mary's. It has also made sure that the church remains available for the conduct of weddings, baptisms and funerals. However, it has also recognised the need to demonstrate, to the wider Parish community, the worth of the Church as a multi activity facility. To that end the Church became a focus for historic displays and wonderful flower arrangements celebrating both VE and VJ day. In addition, St Mary's hosted two concerts involving members of the Lyric Orchestra as well as a choral evening with the Big Skirts Choir. The church's unique acoustics continue to be recognised by all who perform at St. Mary's. At Christmas St Mary's also provided a facility for people to remember those special to them via a bauble on the Christmas tree initiative.

2

We continue to make available to the evolving Bidwell Walk project the opportunity of using St Mary's as an environmental information centre. The church also has a rich heritage to share and we have been able to continue to ensure that this can be enjoyed by visitors on a seven day a week basis. In addition, we continue to explore with the local history archive ways in which our story can be shared with a wider audience.

Our biggest long term challenge remains the state of the fabric of the building and in particular the degrading effect on our walls of damp and the impact this continues to have on our unique wall decoration Sgraffito. To begin to address this challenge we have begun to implement the recommendations of our Conservator's report on the state of the Sgraffito. A key recommendation from this was to initiate a trial removal of three sections of the external wall cladding to see if such a process would ultimately result in drier walls on the inside of the church. With considerable help from both Churchcare and the Diocesan Buildings Department we are now well on the way to securing both funding and appropriate permission for this project.

In addition, during the year, the grant funded work aimed at reducing the amount of water reaching and being retained in the walls when heavy rain occurs, together with some roof repairs, was successfully completed. For the longer term development of facilities such as the building of a toilet, a servery, the installation of a form of electric based central heating and a better lighting system we continue to be in dialogue with our village partners namely the Parish Council, the Rattery Village Hall and the Church House Inn to try and chart a way forward with the long term ambition of being to mount a bid for a Heritage Lottery or other source of funding to finance these important developments.

Our Christmas Carol service was attended by 88 people, a record for St Mary's, and this demonstrated the importance of St Mary's to the life of the Parish of Rattery. However, it also underscores the challenge we face that in trying to find ways of involving the wider community in our continuing effort to maintain the church as a key part of life in Rattery when finance generated via our services is insufficient to pay for the upkeep of the building.

To that end St Mary's is indebted to efforts led by Jane Lush, Linda Jopson and others who have helped to raise funds to bolster the Church's fabric fund. Without their assistance running repairs on our over 800 year old building would be extremely difficult.

The bells of St Mary's carry their joyous sound to the Village of Rattery at the start of every service. In December we had the pleasure of hearing the South Brent ringing team use all our bells to give us all the joy of wonderful symphony of sound. However, their head bell ringer alerted us to the need for maintenance work

4

on the bells if they are to continue to be used regularly. So for 2026 we have a further funding challenge to address as we continue to try and keep the traditions of St Mary's alive and so sustain its historic role at the centre of Rattery.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is committed to holding worship regularly but as seems appropriate to the community. We discuss and review services and service patterns for forthcoming seasons to re-assess what we do rather than assuming that what happened last year at the same time should be repeated. Our current service pattern is two services a month, with occasional extra services for special occasions and festivals (see below), and we encourage members to join with St Petroc's and other churches in the Mission Community either in person or virtually for the other 2 weeks. We also join with the whole Mission Community on the 5th Sunday of a month for worship in our various churches on a rotating basis.

Our regular congregation are not great in number (6 – 20) but are enormously supportive and adaptable, having become accustomed to a variety of service leaders, liturgies and styles of preaching. Our congregation increases very considerably for festivals, particularly at Christmas – our Carol service this year welcomed 88 people, compared with 55 in 2024. Our services most usually follow the Common Worship pattern, with occasional BCP Holy Communion. We are led by clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers or lay-persons (Church Wardens and others). Members of the congregation read scripture and lead intercessions, and all-age worship is often a chance for many to get involved in various imaginative ways. We have a Pastoral care team jointly with St Petroc's. Home Communion is offered to house-bound individuals and is conducted at two of the Care Homes in South Brent on a monthly basis. Home visiting is also undertaken for those not well or house-bound. Posters on noticeboards around the church inform and encourage members of the community to seek pastoral visits for themselves or those they know.

The various Bible study and other courses and groups within the Mission Community, and particularly at South Brent, are open to our members to attend. We have 21 parishioners on our electoral role. We are enormously grateful to our volunteer organists for all their dedication and support. Our bells can be set to chime, and two members of our congregation frequently play the chimes for our regular Sunday and occasional pastoral services. Coffee after services continues to be very popular, with almost everyone staying to chat. We see this as an important part of our fellowship, and a wonderful way to welcome those visitors and new people who come to the service.

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 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 congregations do.

We are delighted to be part of a Mission Community which is working together more closely 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 lead worship across the Mission Community. John Dean was commissioned for Rattery.

6

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.

Families & all-age worship We hold various Family services during the year, including at Harvest and Christingle.

Baptisms. No baptisms

Weddings. 1 Wedding

Funerals 1 internment of Ashes

Life events services are seen very much as part of our mission, and the church members work hard to make sure the church looks and is as inviting and welcoming as possible.

Our services are promoted via the Mission Community Newsletter, our website, Facebook, hand bills, notices at the lychgate and inside church, and via the established village news email.

A combined Family Service for South Brent and Rattery children has continued during the year on the first Sunday of the month. St Mary's PCC are kept apprised of South Brent's youth outreach (South Brent Youth Club and Summer Holiday Club etc), which are open to children and young people from Rattery. A well supported Harvest Supper was held in the Village Hall, and was very much appreciated as an opportunity for the community to meet together.

Prayer Group

Members attend the weekly Wednesday Morning Prayer at St. Petroc's and the virtual Morning Prayer on Fridays, as well as the weekly Thought for the Week virtual discussion group.

A group of adult members meet every first Wednesday of the month as a house group. This New Way of Being Church involves prayer, scripture reading and sharing.

Deanery Synod

One member of PCC sits on the Deanery Synod with an occasional deputy.

Church Fabric

PCC remain committed to keeping the church unlocked during the day. The entries in the visitors' book confirm how much appreciated this is. We have second-hand replacement wooden altar candlesticks and a wooden altar cross thus the

7

main brassware, including the processional cross and church wardens' staves are locked in the vestry during the day.

Churchyard

Our churchyard continues to be wonderfully tended and maintained by our Associate Churchwarden Rob Needham, together with a small band of volunteers. It is a beautiful and sacred space, and much loved by the community. We encourage people to enjoy it and to engage with our re-wilding endeavours in part of the churchyard.

Financial Review

For the year ending 31st December 2025 the total balance of funds stands at £15,759. This is a deficit from the previous year of £1,933. Of the total balance the unrestricted General Fund stands at £13,766 and the total restricted funds £1,993.

The three restricted funds comprising Fabric, Bells and Churchyard showed a total deficit of £356 this year.

Total receipts on the General Fund were £6,266 and payments £7,844 leaving a deficit of £1,577. Although this is a most welcome reduction to last year's deficit of £4,798 and helped by a kind donation of £1,000 and a wonderful fundraising effort expenditure is still exceeding income.

Grants of £12,259 were gratefully received in 2025. £9,970.90 from the Diocese of Exeter Minor Repairs and Improvements fund for church roof repairs and associated drainage repairs. Two grants were received from the Listed Places of Worship VAT reclaim scheme £294 relating to the Report on the Condition of the Sgraffito in 2024 and £1994.18 relating to Williams and Burrows heritage Repair invoice for the roof repairs and drainage.

St Marys is continuing to meet its obligation to the Common Fund but only by using its rapidly depleting savings. Funding the building insurance (£3,200 in 2025) is another challenge to be overcome each year.

Reserves Policy

PCC is aware that it is prudent to maintain a level of 'special contingency funding'.

Sustainability

We are starting to consider our use of resources in order that our worship and building become more sustainable. These will also be aspects that the PCC will think about carefully as the building project progresses.

Safeguarding

Our PCC safeguarding representative is a member of the Mission Community Safeguarding Group. PCC continues to monitor training requirements and also to promote personal responsibility, helping to ensure that situations which might cause problems are avoided (such as children in church with a single adult, or lone working in the church during the week).

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

Volunteers

St Mary's continues to be so well supported by volunteers who clean, arrange flowers, maintain the churchyard, provide refreshments and play the organ, as well as those who take part in services (readers and intercessors). There are also those who take active part in fund-raising for the church. Our amazing group of volunteers have continued to support the church as and when it has been possible. The PCC is so grateful for their tireless work to support the church.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. The PCC comprises the Rector, Church Wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and other members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The PCC met 2 times during the year. The Ministry Team of the Mission Community meet monthly to plan services, and there are regular meetings of the Church Wardens from across the MC. The Mission Community treasurers also now meet twice a year.

Administrative Information

The Church is situated in the centre of Rattery village. There is no church office. Correspondence may be addressed to Mrs Linda Jopson, PCC General Secretary, Ashbourne Farm, Rattery, South Brent, TQ109JZ

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, and the Church Representation Rules 20) and a Charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission.

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

- Team Rector/ Chair: Revd Preb'd Prof Gina Radford
- Church Wardens: Dr John Dean
 Rt Hon Michael Jack, CBE
- Assistant Church Mr Rob Needham
 Warden
- General Secretary: Mrs Linda Jopson
- Deanery Synod rep: Mr Rob Needham
- Treasurer-bookkeeper: Mrs Elaine Barrington
- Elected members: Mr Arnold Barrow

Approved by the PCC on 24/05/26.....and signed on its behalf

By Gina Radford
.....

John Dean
.....
Dr John Dean (Vice Chair)

Revd Preb'd Prof Gina Radford (Chair)