



Parish of Witney APCM Reports 10 May 2026

4.2.1 Proceedings of the PCC

Since the last APCM in May 2025 the PCC has held four full meetings.

In the last 12 months

- The Church Representation Rules Scheme has been updated to recognise the role of Windrush Church within the Benefice.
- DAC approval and faculty applications were submitted for repairs to the bell at Holy Trinity, and repairs to the stone crosses at Hailey. The PCC supported the Witney Ringing Society in faculty applications to install a peals board in St Mary's bell tower, and for the refurbishment and augmentation of the bells from 8 to 10 bells.
- The PCC has established a stewardship group to work towards more sustainable financial giving.
- The Health & Safety Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Fire Safety Policy; Complaints Procedure; Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure; Standing Committee Terms of Reference; and Witney Ringing Society Rules have been reviewed. All policies are available on the Benefice website.
- The PCC has monitored the financial position of the parish and each DCC; agreed the budget; and supported a parish appeal.
- New volunteers helping with activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults have been recruited through the Church of England Safer Recruitment process.
- The PCC has received regular reports from our Safeguarding Officer, and has monitored the Safeguarding Action Plan, and risk assessments for church buildings and activities.
- The PCC has approved the appointment of Eucharistic Assistants and welcomers in all the churches
- The PCC has received regular updates on the buildings and activities of each church; the work of our Youth Chaplain; our Schools Chaplain; Social and Climate Justice and more.

Kate Lockwood, Witney PCC Secretary

4.2.2 Safeguarding Report

Over the last year the parish has continued to develop and review its safeguarding policies and practices for both in person and online events.

The Diocese encourages anyone who wants to, to undertake basic level training, this - along with foundation and domestic abuse level- is compulsory for PCC/DCC members, children's workers and other roles.

We use the Parish Dashboard system to record much of this work.

Following an issue with our previous provider, the Diocese recommended we change our DBS provider to *Verifile*, this was done early this year.

Concerns have continued to be reported and dealt with as needed.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Alison Spicer, Parish Safeguarding Officer

4.2.3 Fabric Report

St Mary's Fabric Report

Last year was relatively quiet in terms of major works to the fabric of St Mary's. However, we remain extremely grateful for large team of volunteers who attend regularly to clean and maintain the church month by month; special thanks go to David Taft and Keith Holmes for all the various small building and improvement projects that they have completed, as well as to our verger, Chris Ward.

We have now received the completed quinquennial inspection report, which will allow us to develop a maintenance programme to preserve the fabric of the building, subject to the major challenge in terms of fund raising to progress this work. The recommendations of the 'Plan to net Zero' project, once confirmed, will need to be reflected into this overall maintenance plan, as will the impact on the doors project, which is awaiting final approval from the DAC and which will be financed, in part, from the restricted funds held in the St Mary's Appeal account.

Jeremy Lasman, Churchwarden

Holy Trinity Fabric Report

Final work has been completed, pertaining to the roof, when a specialist repaired and decorated the walls in the vestry following a damaging leak whilst the vestry roof was being re-slatted. The cost was met by Everest Roofing.

The rainwater drain to the foul sewer on the New Yatt Road is a pressing need, with significant expense attached to it.

Whites of Appleton have repaired and replaced parts of the bell which ceased to function a few years ago. This was made possible by some generous donations for which we are most grateful.

The new downpipes are in place but one is partially obscuring the air vent. Peter Preston has asked Everest to reposition. There are another couple of very minor things which need attention before the work can be signed off.

The organ maintenance continues with twice yearly tuning. Significant work is required to the instrument but at considerable cost. This remains in our minds.

Steven Clapton (R L Clapton Ltd) has been engaged to correct electrical faults, initially investigated by Lowe and Oliver. L&O's quotes to investigate the problem, not repair it, were prohibitive. All lights are now working again and surge protection installed where the supply comes into the church. Faults with Rako equipment have occurred over time. These have caused much inconvenience and expense as Rako is based in Kent. On the recommendation of Steve Clapton, Jay Watson was engaged to manage the lighting controls with Loxon replacing Rako. A temporary key pad is in place whilst Jay and Chris DJ are in discussion over scenes to be programmed.

The safe door/hinges, in vestry, were fettled by Jay Watson enabling the door to hang true.

Servicing of heaters, boiler, fire extinguishers and PAT testing of appliances are done as required.

Charlotte Tremain, Deputy Warden

Hailey Fabric Report

A new stonemason has been appointed to replace the Chancel Cross and also to look at the West End gable cross. This has been a longer than expected process due to work on site requiring warmer weather and we hope that work will start soon.

Unfortunately, we have experienced storm damage which has caused loss of guttering from the North side of the church and also the bell tower mechanism. There are plans for a short-term fix of the guttering before a long-term appeal to fix the guttering around the whole church as recommended by the Quinquennial inspection. The crack in the pulpit has been monitored and has not shown any significant movement.

Recent electrical works have replaced and repaired the spotlights in the Chancel.

The churchyard continues to be maintained by a group of committed local volunteers who make it a wonderful haven for wildlife and wildflowers.

Kirsty Morgan, Deputy Warden

Curbridge Fabric Report

St John's is facing challenges as its congregation ages. We are aware of the poor condition of the church path and the non-functioning church bell. The electrical system will need some work soon. The quinquennial is due before the end of the year and the cost of this will be a major burden. Otherwise, the church's fabric seems fairly good, with the roof secure and the stonework mainly sound. The churchyard is well maintained.

The congregation is undertaking a review of its activities in the light of its age profile and small numbers, and the ill health suffered by several members.

We regret there has been no external charitable activity in the last year.

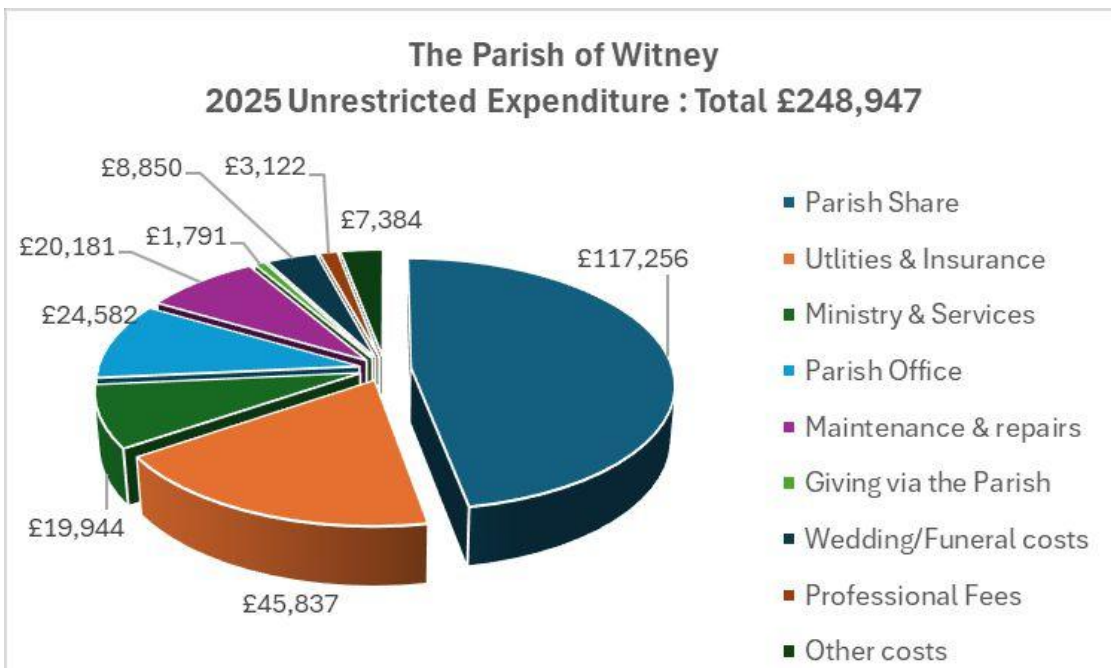
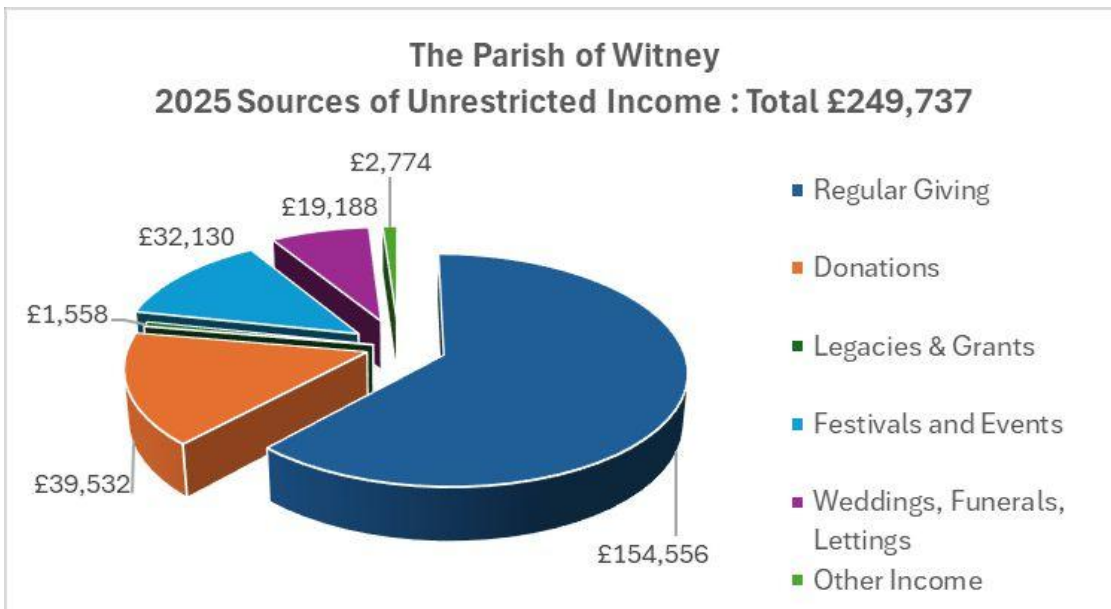
Ian Galletley, Deputy Warden

4.2.4 Finance and statement of accounts

- Income for the year ended 31st December 2025 totalled £297,124, with total expenditure of £296,170. These totals include Restricted/Designated and Unrestricted Funds.
- Unrestricted income totalled £249,737, while costs amounted to £248,947, resulting in an operating surplus of £790.
- This result reflects the continued generosity of our congregations both in terms of regular giving and also in response to an appeal for one off donations to enable the Parish to meet its operating budget. This is the fifth year that such an appeal has had to be launched; donor fatigue resulted in a reduction in the amounts given (2025 £33,052 down from a peak of £56,004 in 2020).
- Total Congregational Giving (Regular Giving, Loose Plate Collections plus Gift Aid, but not Donations/Appeals) covers 62% of our running costs, up 3.7% on 2024. This reflects a steady

improvement in regular giving from our congregations (up 3% from 2024) as well as reduced costs (see below).

- 2025 income benefitted from a number of highly successful festivals and events, but was lower than 2024 largely because we did not run an Open Gardens event (normally biannual) and we chose not to run an Oktoberfest event during the Witney Feast last year.
- Our operating costs decreased by 5% in 2025, despite the increase in our Parish Share allocation from 2024. This is as a result of a reduction in many cost categories, and in particular reflects renegotiated energy tariffs.
- Restricted income and costs were both substantially lower than 2024, reflecting the completion of the Holy Trinity roof project and the end of grant funding and salary costs for Laverne Williams, our full time Youth worker.



4.2.5 Electoral Roll

Electoral Roll on 26th April 2026

St. Mary's:	98	(from 90 in 2025)
Holy Trinity:	47	(from 48 in 2025)
Hailey:	32	(from 31 in 2025)
Curbridge:	7	(from 7 in 2025)
Total:	184	(from 176 in 2025)

Michelle Bailey-Wells, Electoral Roll Officer

4.2.6 Rector's report

Firstly, I wish to thank most warmly all members of the Ministry Team, for a year of generous and committed service to the Benefice, and ongoing welcome and support to myself and Andy. A particular thanks is due to our Parish Wardens, Jeremy Lasman and Kate Banks, who have continued to serve the Benefice with great love, care and devotion. Jeremy, who has furthermore served as Warden and Treasurer in recent years, will step down at this APCM as Parish Warden. I wish to thank him wholeheartedly for his comprehensive generosity; I am delighted that he will continue to serve as Treasurer, even as he steps back as Warden.

Every PCC needs a committed PCC Secretary, and the Parish and Rector are truly blessed in Kate Lockwood, whose generous attention to detail and rigour is exemplary. My thanks also to Chris Dingwall-Jones, whose work as Associate Vicar encompasses liturgical expertise and beauty, creative flair, academic rigour and pastoral sensitivity; we await his forthcoming academic book with anticipation; to our kind Associate Priests, Mark Thomas and Mark Bezeera Speeks, alongside Joanna Collicutt and Tina Rollings, who have continued to minister with generosity across the Benefice; and to Jackie Bone, Ecumenical Partner, whose energetic and creative oversight of the Windrush Community brings it from strength to strength.

Our St Mary's Director of Music Francis Rumsey has been offering music of the highest quality for fifteen years; he has made the decision to adjust his service at the end of this summer. We hope that he will remain as one of our Organists, and we thank him for the exceptionally rich musical provision which he has given us over these years. We are grateful to Paul Francis who continues as Holy Trinity's Director of Music, and to all who enhance our worship by playing the organ and singing in the choirs.

Alongside the generous work of the Ministry Team, Michelle, our administrator, continues to give invaluable support and oversight of our systems; and the PCC and several DCCs have also continued to guide the Benefice and support upkeep of our churches with care and wisdom. Our curate James Elward, having taken time on shared parental leave from January-September, was due to undertake a placement outside the Benefice for developmental work, from which to complete his curacy, but this has been delayed. We wish James well when he moves forward in his curacy training. We continue to pray for Dave Pizzey and Rebecca Coatsworth, both undertaking training for ordained ministry, and for Kate Banks, who has recently been approved to explore and begin some training for locally deployed ordained ministry, from next autumn. Kate has kindly agreed to stand for re-election as Parish Warden, in the shorter term. But our wardens would not be able to serve as they do without invaluable support by a team of deputies, who are in many cases supporting the daily work and

smooth functioning of churches across the Benefice. Andy Brown is stepping back from St Mary's with our warm thanks; Ash is happy to stand for another year and I thank him for his service. Charlotte Tremain continues to serve Holy Trinity with dedication, good humour, generosity and competence, and Kirsty Morgan, combines serving Hailey faithfully and effectively with her ongoing Schools Chaplain role. I am delighted she has agreed to stand for election to succeed Jeremy as Parish Warden. Ian has also kindly agreed to stand for re-election in Curbridge and we are very grateful to him here as well, as we begin to discern how the Spirit may be directing us in St John's. Grateful thanks also go to Linda Taft and Sue Hodges who are stepping back after years of generous service on Deanery Synod and the PCC. Linda has done sterling work on the volunteer rota at SMV as well. And alongside Wardens and Deputies, our Safeguarding officers, Alison Spicer and Sarah-Jane Ebanja, supported by Kate Lockwood, perform a crucial and valued service in working with myself and the PCC to make our churches safe and welcoming places, and my thanks goes to Alison, Sarah-Jane and Kate for this generous service too.

Meanwhile, Kirsty Morgan and Andy Sparkes have been undertaking training for authorised preaching, and Jeremy continues to offer preaching as well. Richard Young has stepped back from the PCC but continues to bless the Benefice in many ways, not only in preaching and officiating, but also assisting us with many aspects of our IT coverage, essential for increasingly complex modes of communication across the Benefice, and most recently, with the writing and publication of a new and excellent guide and history to St Mary's (available for the very reasonable sum of £5 for parish funds).

Following a Ministry Team awayday in July 2025, we have been building on an adjusted sense of Benefice priorities, while also cementing focus established previously on our Values and Pillars: we recommitted to Daily Prayer, Eucharist, Hospitality and Inclusiveness as central to our ministry in the Benefice of Witney, and we discussed different ways of taking these forward. One of our ongoing priorities, especially following the departure of our Youth Worker after four years of paid service in the Benefice, was to find ways of further taking forward ministry among children and young people. This ministry aligns with a diocesan and national church priority, and I have been asked by the Bishop to take part in a national programme of training in these areas across the year. Currently, engagement in this area falls into several different areas, one, developing ministry and presence in Benefice schools. Kirsty Morgan kindly agreed to take oversight of this forward, alongside ordained and other colleagues also serving in this ministry. Existing links have been supported, and in many cases renewed and strengthened; new areas of ministry have also opened up, both in new schools (for example, in Tower Hill) and in new areas (for example, Prayer Space ministry both in school contexts and in SMV). These have proved popular and beneficial. We have also continued to support weekly Junior Church ministry in SMV, thanks to a generous team. This needs further support to enable busy parents to receive and worship more frequently, rather than to serve, as often as currently they do. A Breakfast Church initiative in Windrush Church has been developed, with Jacky and Chris leading, and this has proved popular and a source of welcome growth. Alongside the Windrush Choir initiative, this has also contributed to the development of a group undertaking an Alpha course. Alongside these areas, and also her ongoing ministry in the College, and new ministry in Henry Box School, Dianne Augustine has also developed a weekly Youth Café initiative in the Winchester Room, currently supported by funding from different grant sources, among them, Witney Town Council. This has been well attended and having run as a Pilot scheme during the Spring term,

the hope is that funding may be found to support it in the future as well; we would welcome suggestions or offers as to how this might be supported. Plans are also in motion for application to fund a Youth Choir director, to be deployed across the Benefice. This choir would support a group of young people, meeting initially on a Sunday afternoon or perhaps evening, and their families, and offer training in Anglican music and liturgy of different kinds, as well potentially creating a new community/congregation.

Reaching out in new ways to those currently under-represented in our Sunday services, also connects with the wide work of outreach, which plays a significant part in our Benefice ministry and supports our values of Hospitality and Inclusiveness. We reach out in very many different ways, but Festivals continue to play an important part, Beer and Food and Drink particularly; last year, we contributed a presence to the Witney Pride witness and will this year add a time of prayer and reflection to this witness on the Leys. Playing a part in the Witney Feast continues also to figure, despite poor weather this year; also, sharing in civic events (among them Remembrance Day, VJ Day, Citizen of the Year, Annual Council Meeting, Mayor's Carol Service) and shared services with local charities, (such as this year, One Wish Dog Foundation etc). Our outreach is also enriched by extensive links with local Care Homes, overseen by our Anna Chaplain team. After some years of giving much time and skilled care to this, Julia Bee has decided not to renew her license at the end of July, but to continue with her authorised funeral ministry. We are enormously grateful to her for all she has brought to this important work. We are glad that Dave Pizzey, when he is ordained Distinctive Deacon in July, will reengage with this work as a part of his curacy ministry.

Alongside a commitment to youth and children's ministry, other priorities of course obtain. Stewardship continues to be a demanding aspect of our lives in the Parish both of our giving – towards our Parish Share – and towards upkeep of our church buildings, several of which have received a Quinquennial report which indicates the need for increased fabric spending and attention. I therefore invited a stewardship group to consider ways of covering running costs in a more sustainable way, chaired by Andy Sparkes. This group has made a number of initiatives with this end in view, and continues to address the need for our running costs to be met by worshipping communities within the Parish. Of course, fund raising for DCC fabric work also continues across the Parish. In St Mary's, Eileen and Jenny have offered another wonderful year of events with this in view, including concerts, most recently, the Schools Concert, which was a magnificent and joyful event. Holy Trinity has similarly coordinated some equally fruitful and enjoyable initiatives for fabric support, coffee mornings among them. Alongside this, a group is being formed to respond to the objectives of the Quinquennial report for SMV, for which considerable and separate fund raising will be needed in the next few years.

Environmental engagement continues to be an important focus and strand of our witness and ministry. I am grateful to the Benefice Environment Group for its ongoing work, engagement, prayer and teaching. A monthly Vigil for the Earth has been held in SMV, alongside a vigil to mark Earth Overshoot Day; a month of creation-oriented preaching and liturgy was offered in SMV in September to mark this season; and alongside this, new groups have sprung up in HT and continued in Hailey to engage with the challenge of climate crisis. This is a welcome development, and the example set by the BEG has been inspiring. Across the year, arduous work has also been put into the question of Net Zero by Kate and Jeremy, and consideration given to what could be done with heating and insulation in SMV; advice was received and the DCC continues to reflect on possible ways forward.

A further aspect of our engagement continues, of course, to be Pastoral care. Among four groups set up within the Team, a Benefice wide Pastoral Care group was put together, chaired by Liz Johnson for much of the year, until she stepped back from Ministry Team responsibilities, to enjoy a little more well deserved relaxation. The group has met a number of times and established some priorities, not least the offering of a more regular Healing with Prayer within the SMV Eucharist. One such was offered subsequently and with considerable benefit experienced, such that it was agreed this would be repeated. Coordinating a pastoral representative across the Benefice in each church able to attend a regular meeting has proved more challenging, so this focus has been stepped down, with the ongoing meeting (no longer chaired by LJ) primarily attended by those involved with pastoral care in SMV. Here several new volunteers for pastoral ministry have offered themselves for service, which is much appreciated. This runs in tandem with Julia Bee, Anna Chaplain, making the decision not to renew her Anna Chaplain licence beyond July, but to remain in authorised funeral ministry. With the training of Rebecca Coatsworth and Dave Pizzey, the Anna Chaplain team has been less well supported in this last year. When Dave returns to undertake his curacy as a Designated Deacon in Witney Benefice, we hope that he will be able to reengage with this important area, but we register warm thanks to Julia for all she has given and undertaken (not least overseeing the Anna Chaplain team for a season) and we wish her well in her slightly less engaged 'retirement' from this particular ministry. We continue to offer regular Eucharists and Services of the Word in quite a number of Care Homes, and personal visits also continue alongside such.

One of the ongoing priorities in Witney Benefice continues to be a ministry of teaching and spirituality, as an arm of our welcome and hospitality. Since my arrival, a teaching and learning weekly session has been offered, initially specifically for asylum seekers. Many of these have become committed members of our community in SMV, even after they have left Witney for their more permanent abode. The teaching session then developed into a discussion group meeting across the autumn, focusing on different topics but Bible study among them; and then a Lent Group was offered, to explore the understanding of the Eucharist (with focus on Ritual, the Bible, Confession, Intercession, Sacrament, and other topics), led by Chris and Mark Bezeera Speeks alongside myself. These proved to be lively and informative sessions, where questions and uncertainties were explored alongside input on many areas. Latterly, this has replaced Talking Theology as a focus for such. As said, other opportunities for learning have been offered eg Windrush Alpha course, and also individual meetings for baptism or Confirmation preparation.

A benefice as busy as ours can only function because of the hard work and dedication of many people who work behind the scenes or more visibly, and my thanks go to everyone for contributing their time and talents.

Hester Jones, Rector of Witney & Vicar of Minster Lovell

4.2.7 Deanery Synod report

Meetings were held in July, November and March.

In July, Darren Stevens spoke on Evangelism and ways to start conversations with people by stirring curiosity.

The Deanery Priorities are Environmental Action, Children, Young People and Families, Addressing Poverty, Inequality and Loneliness.

In November, Imogen Onwuka from Safe Families talked about the different ways we can engage with families and safe practices

In March we discussed accessing External Fundraising.

Martin Gee spoke about how to present a good budget.

Jo Mitchell related the wisdom of good story telling.

Joshua Townsend discussed seeking generous personal givers.

David Tyler then mentioned the Diocese Development Fund, how it can be accessed and what the reporting mechanisms are. The fund aims to encourage parishes and deaneries in five areas: To become a more Christ-like church, to encourage discernment, to be missionally active, to learn together and the support initiatives that are sustainable.

Sue Hodges, Deanery Synod Member

4.4 Churchwardens' Report

Over the past year it has been wonderful to see the growth of the ministries of our Team Rector, Hester, and Team Vicar, Chris, both individually and also as they have worked together to support the continued flourishing of the Parish. We are hugely grateful for their energy, commitment, wisdom and prayerfulness as they have sought to develop and encourage the many initiatives that combine to make the Parish of Witney so vibrant, whether as a place for worship or contributing to the life of our town and its surroundings.

We continue to be thankful the work of the wider Ministry Team as well as the many volunteers, all of whom give their energy and time in support of the work of the Parish. The contents of this Annual Review provides a sense of the breadth and variety of the activities that have taken place over the past year, none of which would have been possible without the hard work of so many.

We are grateful for the work and leadership of our Deputy Wardens in each church. Andy Brown is standing down from St Mary's at the APCM as he has moved away from the area; we will miss Andy very much.

Linda Taft and Sue Hodges will be coming off the PCC as well because they are not be standing for re-election to Deanery Synod, which gave them an ex-officio place on the PCC. We are very grateful for all they have done to represent the Parish on the Deanery Synod. Linda's eye for detail has been a great asset to the PCC, and Sue's dedication to the PCC, and work on the fabric of Holy Trinity, has been immensely valuable.

After 8 years as Parish Warden, Jeremy Lasman is also standing down this year, although he will remain as Treasurer. Jeremy has been a dedicated and active Warden, and his wisdom and commitment have helped steer the Parish through faculties, vacancies, festivals and building works! On behalf of the whole community, thank you Jeremy.

Kate Banks & Jeremy Lasman, Witney Churchwardens