

**The Diocese of  
St Edmundsbury and Ipswich  
Annual Account and Reports  
of the  
Parochial Church Council  
of  
St. Gregory's, SUDBURY  
Parish of St. Gregory  
with St. Peter & Chilton  
for the year ending  
31st December 2025**



## General Information

Church: St. Gregory's Church, Gregory Street, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2BJ

Priest-in-Charge: Reverend Andrew Doarks

Address: The Rectory, Christopher Lane, Sudbury, CO10 2AS

Telephone: 07970 495654

Parish Administrator: Claire Walker, Address: c/o The Rectory *as above*

Telephone: 07776955306 / [parishsecretary@stgregspcc.uk](mailto:parishsecretary@stgregspcc.uk)

Bank account: Lloyds Bank plc, Address: 30 Market Hill, Sudbury, CO10 2EL

Examiner Name: J. Ian Steel FCA, Address: Flint Cottage, 25 High Rougham, Rougham, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9LN Telephone: 01359 270377

## Church Return

	2025	2024
Electoral Roll Resident	67	113
Electoral Roll Non-Resident	18	31
Typical Sunday Attendance over 16	55	57
Typical Sunday Attendance under 16	6	3

## PCC Membership Information

The method and appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

### Current Members:

Reverend Andrew Doarks (Chair) (ex officio)

Sue Ayres (Vice Chair) (Lay Elder) (Deanery Synod Representative) (*elected*)

Tony Brightwell (Deputy Church Warden) (*elected*)

Avis Bull (ex officio) (Church Warden)

Pauline Brown (ex officio) (Church Warden)

Mandy Turner (Treasurer)

Claire Walker (Secretary) (*elected*)

Mark Gibbons (*elected*)

Andrew Crumpton (*elected*)

Graham Gilbert (*elected*)

Laurette Bruce (*elected*)

Sue Joyce (*elected*)

Vacancy x 4

At the 2026 APCM the following vacancies are available:

Deanery Synod: x1 vacancy (Sue Ayres will not be standing)

PCC Members: x4 vacancies (Tony Brightwell will not be standing)

## **Incumbent's Benefice Report**

2025 saw the historic appointment of Sarah Mullaly as the first female Archbishop of Canterbury and The Right Revd Dr Joanne Woolway Grenfell became our new diocesan bishop. Ingrid Morelli was licensed as reader to Great Waldingfield and Acton; Revd Graham Naylor was installed in Bungay and Major Diane Watson to the Salvation Army.

APCMs were 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April at STG and AS respectively. AS Churchwardens Jane Penson and David Webb stepped down with no one standing; Avis Bull and Pauline Brown agreed to continue for another year. Thank you so much for the considerable dedication shown by you all.

Caitlin Bull was confirmed 4 May by Bishop Knowles at Bury Cathedral. Many congratulations to her. 6 Sept the wedding took place between Sean Cahill and Alannah Hill. There were no baptisms and 11 funerals. Most notably were the deaths of Dorothy Gilks, Merline Elliott's husband Martin and Elizabeth Wiles, whose memorial service was attended by the current mayor, Andy Walsh, and appreciated by the family. STG legacies were gratefully received from the estates of: Michael Harding-Payne, Una Faithful, Jo and Ian Fitzlyon; from All Saints were: Mrs Staske and Dorothy Gilks. Memorial benches were installed for June Smith's nephew and Jo Fitzlyon. *Light Up A Life* was once again designed and delivered by St Nicholas Hospice and was well attended.

There was a helpful discussion at The Rectory about grief called 'Death by Coffee' which included insights from a palliative nurse who reminded us that life expectancy for a woman in 1900 was a mere 48!

St Joseph's residential home monthly communions proceeded in their usual lively and appreciative manner and William Wood House extended an invitation to us for similar which was taken up. Thanks to Sue Attride, Colin Deeks, Jane Lloyd, Andy Jowitt, Sue Ayres and others who support the elderly in our care homes.

Several of us met throughout the year to allocate and monitor Beacon Finance. We have jumped through many hoops to 'reverse engineer' a project with deadlines and phased grants outside of our control and at times in tension with the faculty process. Particular thanks goes to our DAC superhero Andrew Crumpton for tenaciously dotting every 'i' and crossing every 't'.

End of term school festival services were well supported by carers, parents and grandparents. The new AV system at St Greys really helped boost the atmosphere and save on paper. Thank you everyone for persevering and accepting the new screens and cameras amongst your number.

Christmas Through The Keyhole included five schools and the versatile team overcame the challenges of timings and logistics in their usual unflappable manner. The Children's Light Party 30 October was huge fun and the church was decorated amazingly. Christingle was

well coordinated and attended; a job well done especially by Lynn Fish, Helen Perrott, Tom, Katrina and her craft group. Assemblies at Tudor and St Gregs CEVC went from strength to strength. Upon reflection we could run carol singing for the foodbank and a tabletop sale for the Shoebox appeal. The STG carol service was frustrating to some owing to its length and the need to remain seated to see the new screens. We learnt that book bag fliers going directly to parents are more effective than banners.

14 January was Alex Hope-Smith's first day at work for the benefice, and we met with Matt Levett (Youth enabler and recommender of BEMA podcast) and Laura Mumford (Diocesan Growing Younger Enabler) to review insights and initiatives within the national picture relating to children and youth ministry. Sadly, Alex was unable to fulfil his commitments as CFW role and had to resign after only three months. A further recruitment drive rendered an ideal candidate, but they had to withdraw their application for pastoral reasons at their existing church.

The diocesan plan to support a director of music, possibly shared across Sudbury, Boxford and Chadbrook benefices came to nothing, and the hope of a children's choir is currently only on our prayer list.

Evensong was a great treat at St Mary's, Chilton and the rural and nostalgic atmosphere there is enhanced by David Tibbett-Chaplain's skilful playing and incomparable decoration for festivals. Evensong continued at St Gregs throughout the colder winter months but was not sufficiently well attended to justify its continuance. My particular thanks to all our choir members and organists who bless us often with heartfelt worship.

Home groups continued to support members in prayer, fellowship and bible study and this included the popular *In the dust of the Rabbi* video series by Ray Van Der Laan. The Mill Hotel then Wetherspoons Sunday evening group was helpful and fun but ran its course and has now stopped. Key members have had to devote time to other family commitments. Alpha ran successfully in partnership with the then leader Patsy of the Salvation Army.

The Uganda Christmas Appeal raised a terrific £1300, and Alfred Wonyaka has reported that this will sustain four teachers for six months. £1200 from the charitable trusts founded by Thomas Carter and Alice Mary Brown was distributed locally. Andrew Mackie spoke passionately about the support given to Abi's Footprints and the Foodbank.

My sabbatical was 29 April – 25 July. With heartfelt thanks for running things in my absence to you all. I studied the two books of Christian theology: the bible and nature itself taking long walks and discovering the delights of circular walks such as that around Edwardstone. Therapeutically it was amazing to have a proper sort out around The Rectory having only moved here in 2022 it's surprising how quickly stuff accumulates and clutters.

I stayed at Tyndale House Cambridge for study leave exploring the Jewishness of Jesus. I had a personal retreat at Waverley Abbey in Dorset and attended the Cambridge Apologetics Conference late June focussing on creativity in theology.

5-8 May witnessed extensive VE Day celebrations followed by VJ Remembrance 15 August. The mayor's service was held 5 October and Remembrance Parade was 9 Nov being delayed slightly by an emergency call out by the fire brigade. A winter trickle of visitors to see Simon's head swelled to a steady stream by the summer culminating in the production of the Radio Four documentary called Don't lost your head! 24 August Rectory Garden Party. A huge thank you to my amazing wife Kate who did a wonderful job of coordinating decorating and enlivening the whole event with panache and grace (the swan's legs were quite busy under the water). Ride and Stride 13 September took place the day after my seizure, so I have no idea how it went. With immense gratitude to everyone for picking up the pieces especially to Claire for marking CANCELLED in much of my diary the following week! Claire has navigated yet another year of multifaceted challenges with her effervescent and joyful disposition – a real treasure mined from the hills of Halstead!

My indebtedness always goes to both our treasurers, Mandy and Robert without whom the wheels would come off the cart. We continue to increase forensic scrutiny of expenses and endeavour to set budgets to ensure that Parish Share is an agreed proportion of income less expenses.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the collapse of The Bridge Project and with it the end of their lease at St Peter's. The human cost to this is largely unseen but must surely have had a direct and daily impact on those who found employment and fellowship through its valuable work for the most vulnerable. Furthermore, it was deeply frustrating that having received written commitment from CCT that we would have at least three years of St Peter's Day Patronal festivals, this was then retracted. (It was not cancelled owing to illness or holiday as some have thought). We pray on for the Christian considerable presence in the town to be better represented at 'The Arts Centre'.

Many people expressed sadness at a difficult year with a sense of illness death and decline. My uncle and sister-in-law died, and my seizure has made life more complicated owing to my inability to drive. It has however meant that lift sharing has been sociable and necessitated better forward planning. Suffering and lament are part of the Christian journey, and we do well to avoid minimizing or trivialising it. The atheist has no hope in the face of suffering. Worse still, the belief in an impartial mechanistic universe where only the fittest are valued which would mean that we stop caring for the marginalised. This could not be further from God's command to love 'thy neighbour as thyself'. We have an incarnate god who showed us how to bear with struggle and thus reveal the hope of glory and final victory over death. We live an Easter Saturday existence nestling between the tragedy of Good Friday and the triumph of Easter Day.

Thank you, fellow disciples of Christ, for journeying and striving to become more like Jesus and to serve him in so many rich and diverse ways, visible or invisible to the rest of us. To Jim, Jane and the St Andrew's team; junior church, lay readers, prayer warriors, missionaries, PCC, florists, cleaners, welcomers, editors, liturgists, sidespeople, Causeway, Ecochurch, Lent lunchers, coffee mornings, caterers, musicians, standing committee, ministry teams, fabric and finance teams, churchwardens, treasurers, compliance officers, safeguarding officer, bellringers, events organisers, (and the unknown unknowns who I have missed).

May you know His joy and peace throughout and perhaps despite the daily challenges that come your way. With love and prayers,  
Andrew, Revd Andrew Doarks BA MSc  
Rector of St Gregory's and Priest-in-charge of All Saints, Sudbury

## **Finance Report**

Having received £55k of the 3-year grant in 2024, we received a further £20k in December 2025 to advance our youth work as our part in "Growing in God -grow younger, from the Beacon fund". We also received a further grant towards employing a Family and Children's Worker to advance this ministry. However, to date we have only used approx. £4,000 of this latter grant as recruiting a suitable Family and Children's Worker has proved challenging. With Revd Andrew Doarks on sabbatical during the spring and early summer, this problem has taken longer to solve. We have however, retained the remaining 1<sup>st</sup> year money for a FCW and are presently looking at other options within the grant restrictions.

The PCC met with the DAC to discuss how we might use the Beacon grant towards maximizing space within the church as our original idea of using a garden room was not acceptable. Re-ordering of St Anne's Chapel, (working around the Carter tomb) was considered the best option but this only got underway in the last weeks of the year as this faculty had many hoops to jump through. With the 3<sup>rd</sup> year £25k of the grant to come, along with funds left, the PCC decided we had just about enough to complete this work without using building fund money, but it has come as a blow that the government fund whereby one recovered VAT has run out and closed. Other options are being considered, but as main payment is by grant, we may not be eligible to reclaim VAT in this case. Also within the grant was the opportunity to install an AV system for both the church and the old vestry (now Junior Church). Internet connection, cabling and positioning of screens is still not right or completed but we are moving slowly until we get it right as remaining funds are now very tight.

We were also in consultation with the DAC on ways to improve the heating in the church and unfortunately, they insisted on a trial with the new and repositioned heaters before a full faculty would be granted. This means that payment of just under £8k for this work will not be an end of it as we will be obliged to pay again for this work to be made permanent next year if heat reading around the font meet the DAC standards. The PCC are indebted to Andrew Crumpton for his perseverance with this and with the high number of other complicated faculties that we have asked him to grapple with over the last year: many thanks Andrew! Also, faculties come at a cost and most of these have also necessitated architect's drawings and specifications, etc, adding to those extra expenses.

All this has meant that we have had no spare money in 2025 and found meeting the Parish Share an impossibility. We paid only £20,400 out of the requested £38,627. This is sad as St Gregory's prided itself in always paying the Diocese our share, but in recent years this has often meant using designated funds which should really have been held for other running costs. We are starting again in 2026 and will endeavour to meet our Share from General Funds as best we can.

On a more positive note, we have had some wonderful legacies recently and really must give thanks for these. It enabled us to fulfil one part of the Quinquennial work by replacing the side gate in memory of Michael Harding Payne. This cost was topped up using a little from some of Una Faithful's lovely legacy. With this it meant that we could again use the blacksmith, S.A.Castle Ltd, who produced a beautiful iron gate matching our front gate. Further to this, the town council have agreed to re-surface the path in the spring at their expense, which will be the icing on the cake!

We have also been able to give money and in kind to local charities within the town and have been inspired to raise money for our mission partners in Uganda where the first payment to arrive paid for new books for the children after a mudslide had swamped their school. Inspired by that, we raised a further £1,100 to send at Christmas to support the teachers who had not been paid for year. This fund is on-going and re-building for the next tranche -to buy them toilets! We are setting up a shop in church to properly sell the items we "sort- of" had on sale before, but no one noticed! The proceeds will be divided between our Fabric fund and the Uganda mission.

Our General Fund and the smaller restricted funds that make up our current account, and hold just about steady, with their shared monthly balance fluctuating up and down, but is usually approx. +/- £30,000 still. However, that doesn't go so far these days! This account consists of the Bell fund which is rebuilding at £3,955; Discretionary/Hardship at £214; the Flower fund, £250, the Vestment fund, £144; the Youth Fund at £2,206, and the Eco fund, £425. The Fabric fund has £3,953, which is funded by the wall safe and used to cover small maintenance jobs and purchases. We also thank kind people who step in when a vital expenditure suddenly occurs, such as the lovely anonymous donation we received for a new hot water boiler.

I must thank our church wardens, Avis and Pauline and deputy warden, Tony for their care of our assets, which is vitally important in maintaining the past, present and future of St Gregory's Church. We also appreciate how much of their valuable time is given over to St Gregory's. Also, thanks to those who keep the church clean and expect no payment for their selfless work. And all those who have reviewed their contributions and discovered opportunities to support us whenever assistance is required. God bless you all.

Mandy Turner - Tel. 07807 915146 or 01787 312900

E: [thetreasurer@stgregspcc.uk](mailto:thetreasurer@stgregspcc.uk) [mandyhgtturner@gmail.com](mailto:mandyhgtturner@gmail.com)

## **Bell Ringers Report**

We only have 6 regular Sunday ringers, sometimes relying on support from Little Cornard. We ring all 8 of the bells, those with discerning ears will be able to tell that we ring the front 6 and then switch to the back 6. With the advent of James and Jenny Croft we have been improving our bell control and striking to the degree that we won the SW District trophy last summer, as I am sure everyone is aware!

We have 3 learners and 1 improving ringer and have hopes of being able to ring all 8 bells at once before too long.

The bells are going well, Taylors sent someone in February to check the striking of the individual bells and 4 of them needed adjustments. This was covered by warranty. Apart from that, the clapper in the 8<sup>th</sup> bell needs replacing – Taylors now have a better method for attaching the ball of the clapper to the wooden shaft. This will also be covered by warranty and will be changed within the next year or so.

As with all rehung bells, ringers are keen to come and try them out: there have been several visiting bands and some peal ringing and the local district has found them very useful for 8 bell practices.

This year the Suffolk Guild of Bellringers is holding its AGM in our district and so on the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> April you will hear a celebration peal rung from our tower.

While 6 or 10 ringers seems a good number, there are always weeks when there are not enough ringers for Sunday ringing: we are always looking for more ringers. If you have ever wanted to try your hand at bell ringing, why not come along to our Tuesday practices, 7.30 – 9.00 pm, to meet the ringers and have a go? There is no age limit, from 10 years upwards, the only difficulty might be the 43 spiral steps up to the ringing chamber!

Pauline Brown, Tower Captain

## **Coffee Servery**

Thank you to everyone who volunteers to serve Coffee after Sunday Morning Services and any other time in Church if needed for additional help. ie Monthly Coffee Mornings. We now have a new boiler installed for the instant hot water. If anyone else feels they could help on occasions it would be greatly appreciated please contact me.

Marg McConnell

## **Junior Church Report**

It has been a busy year for Junior Church, but not without its complications and demands. Numbers were high after the Light Party and Christmas Through the Keyhole and then we

started the new year with a new Families Worker. Unfortunately, he left us just before Easter and so the Junior Church team, plus volunteers from the benefice, stepped up to provide a wonderful new outreach afternoon 'The Easter Egg Hunt' on Easter Saturday and also went back to their roles of preparing and delivering sessions on a Sunday. After a drop in attendance, we are seeing an overall increase and the sessions have been varied and fun, split into a Toddler Church downstairs and Junior Church upstairs. We look forward to the handrail to assist safe access upstairs and the WiFi extension to allow us to use the screens easily in the near future and are grateful for the work going into those applications and purchases. The wider team have helped with our key outreach events and it has been great to work with All Saints' and this congregation in welcoming families to Christmas Through the Keyhole and The Light Party again this year. A real highlight was the Christmas Party where we celebrated with 22 youngsters across the two groups in church on Sunday. We now look forward to the challenges of a secondary school cohort on the horizon and welcome the new All-in Service, while seeking prayer and guidance on recruitment for the key role of Families Worker, in whatever form that takes.

Many thanks to those who have supported us in delivering the Sunday Junior Church, particularly Jackie who certainly deserves an individual mention!  
Kate D and Pauline D

## **St Greg's Church Hire Report**

Because of essential work inside the Church, hiring was only possible from May to December 2025. Coupled with the fact that John Hessenthaler had experienced problems with groups which caused 11th hour cancellations, total bookings were substantially fewer than had been the case in recent years. The total for that period was ten bookings. PCC decided to discontinue commercial concerts at St Gregs henceforth. Mr Hessenthaler was informed and expressed much disappointment. He has instead made bookings at other local churches, including Lavenham and Bury St Eds Cathedral and further afield.

Tony Brightwell

## **Robed Choir Report**

This has been another fine year for St Gregs Choir, although we have twelve members signed up, due to illness, holidays, family problems etc. our average attendance on Sundays is nine. We have had no new singers during the past year.

Sadly, we lost Jean Theobald in June through cancer. She was a fine singer and a devoted member, who is sorely missed.

We thank Robin Keylock for his organ playing on alternate Sundays.

We must thank our Choir Master Roger Green for his excellent leadership and teaching. Leading the practice on alternate Fridays shows his true dedication. Particularly during cold winter months when St Gregs gives the impression it is the coldest place in England!

Thanks must, of course, extend to all our singers. They are a lovely friendly group to work with.

Finally, I would ask everybody to think about joining St Gregs' robed Choir, and whether they know of anyone who might consider doing the same.

If you have any questions about this, please contact me either in Church or by phone 07903107437.

Tony Brightwell

## **Website**

Our website [www.stgregorychurchsudbury.co.uk](http://www.stgregorychurchsudbury.co.uk) carries information about current and future events, including the weekly newsletter and the monthly "Writing from the Rectory". The History section spans more than 1000 years, including Simon of Sudbury. There are reports of events from the last ten years of the 2017 building work, and of the renovation of the organ. You will also find numerous photographs, a page for St Gregory's Fellowship, an opportunity to make a request for prayer, and many sermons. We are hugely grateful to June Freeman and Len Cooper, who developed and maintained our website over many years. I have been updating information since last September, until a successor is found. Any contributions (text and photos) and comments are welcome, either to me or via the parish secretary. On average there are about 400 visits per month, including a substantial number from the United States and others from various parts of the world.

Malcolm Snow

## **Christian Aid**

Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. We work with some of the world's most vulnerable communities in 29 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Current humanitarian emergencies include Ukraine and the Middle East.

We are very grateful for the efforts of all the Sudbury and Cornard volunteers, including some from St Gregory's, who deliver envelopes door-to-door. The total collected locally in 2025 was £3,366, including donations to our on-line e-envelope of £790 (excluding Gift Aid). Across the country, the income from Christian Aid week was £5.2m.

This year, Christian Aid Week is 10-16 May 2026. The week starts with a United Service on Sunday 10 May at 6.30pm at All Saints' Church, Sudbury. Everyone is welcome: please come if you can.

We are always pleased to have more volunteers to deliver envelopes in Sudbury to support the work of Christian Aid around the world. If you can join the team, please speak to Malcolm Snow (01787 374096) or Pam Hunter (01787 375817).

Malcolm Snow

## **Cleaning**

Grateful thanks to everyone who cleans our beautiful Church weekly, usually on a Wed or Thurs, any other days are acceptable to suit yourselves. We work in pairs and I am still looking for someone to clean with another partner if only for one and half hours every 2 months.

Please speak to me if you are able to assist or know of a friend who would help with one of the Team. There is a list at the back of the Church on the Notice board of dates when the cleaning is done, usually mornings or afternoons.

Irene Harding-Payne

## **Churches Together in Sudbury & District**

One Church, One Faith, One Lord.

We are blessed with an active Churches Together group in this area.

We hope more members of St Gregory's congregation will take advantage of the opportunities to worship, pray, discuss, enjoy fellowship, and serve the wider community, alongside people from other churches.

Principal activities include Saturday morning breakfasts and prayer time, United Services, and Open Forums four times a year. The January 2026 Forum included two Bible Studies, one on the Lord's Prayer and one on praying with Psalms.

Kettle & Fish community café opens on the second and fourth Thursdays of most months. Here you will find a warm welcome, great food, an opportunity to chat, and always someone on hand for a conversation about the Christian faith or to pray with you.

Linked organisations include:

Future Vision, providing Christian input to schools, such as re-enacting bible stories with "Open the Book", and chaplaincy services to pupils and staff;

Eden's, a youth centre with a Christian ethos;

Storehouse, a foodbank serving needy families and individuals in the local area;

Abi's Footprints baby bank, supporting local parents who are struggling to meet the practical needs of a new baby or child;

Number 72 North St, the Family and Community Network;

Foxearth Meadows local nature reserve owned and managed by A Rocha UK, a Christian charity committed to equipping people to protect and restore the environment.

Each year we have two open-air services, and an Ascension Day picnic and Prayer Walk.

We are grateful to the people of St Gregory's who support these organisations, by giving time, money or goods.

We have a website [www.churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk](http://www.churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk), a Facebook page and a BlueSky account. To receive our weekly email newsletter, contact [ctis.news@gmail.com](mailto:ctis.news@gmail.com).

The porch notice board has a list of forthcoming events. At the back of church there are copies of our information leaflets and those of linked organisations, and a folder with reports of recent meetings.

Every church should have two representatives for Churches Together. We hope St Gregory's will find a second rep soon. To extend your Christian horizon beyond the boundaries of our own parish, I strongly commend involvement with CTiS&D to you.

Malcolm Snow

## **Meditation Group**

After a year of disruption, our small group was delighted to regain the Prayer Corner, not just for our Thursday evening silent, meditative prayer but for anyone, at any time, who wished to light a candle of hope or just say a private prayer.

The Meditation Group continues to meet at 6pm every Thursday evening. We chat, have a relevant reading, then light a candle for all that is on our minds and pray for these, for healing, for peace and for a knowledge of the Lord's presence, before settling down to silence. The John Main Christian Meditation CD takes us through instruction, prayer and music with chimes leading into 25 minutes of silence. Chimes and beautiful music bring one back slowly, but we all agree that there is nothing to beat those precious minutes spent in silence with our God within.

Do consider joining us and try it out for yourself some evening – you don't have to be regular to try it. Blessings, Mandy Turner

## St Gregory's Fellowship

Since the last APCM, St Gregory's Fellowship Group have enjoyed many interesting and varied meetings and outings. These included:

- Visiting Ashley Cooper's Hill Farm at Gestingthorpe, seeing the many interesting Roman artifacts in his private museum;
- A boat trip on the River Stour to Cornard Lock, followed by Tea and Cake;
- Being entertained superbly by Stephen, Elaine and Tim's wonderful music;
- Homemade Afternoon Tea at Painters @ the Angel;
- Christmas Lunch at The Brewers Arms; and
- We've also had illustrated talks on 'Tools with A Mission', 'Transforming a Hadleigh Garden', 'The Storehouse Foodbank' and 'Abi's Footprints Baby Bank'.

By the time you read this our 2026 Programme will be underway. So far this year we've had:

- Talks on 'My Life in Broadcasting from Brian Tora', 'The Work of Citizens Advice Bureau', and 'Fire Safety in the Home'.

Still to look forward to are:

- Visits to Angie Wild's Garden, and Liston Church, both followed by Tea and Cake;
- Summer Afternoon Tea and Christmas Lunch; and
- Illustrated talks on 'Long Melford Men's Shed', 'My Life in Scouting', 'Community Policing in Sudbury & District' and 'A Musical Afternoon'.

We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Christopher Centre, Friars Street commencing at 2.30pm. A subscription of £3.50 per person is payable for each meeting, which includes tea/coffee and biscuits, plus a complementary raffle. All are welcome to these meetings. Membership isn't limited to members of St Gregory's Church.

Please see our printed Programme leaflets, available at the back of the Church, our posters and the Church Newsletter.

Many thanks to my fellow committee members: - Irene for arranging our Programme, Pam A our Secretary; Pam H who collects our subs, all who serve our refreshments, and our existing members for their support. New members are always welcome to any or all of our meetings.

May Grace & Blessings be Yours, Avril Gardiner, Leader

## Safeguarding

There are no safeguarding reports of note. The parish safeguarding dashboard has been updated providing an up-to-date traffic light assessment of our parish, giving assurance that our church is operating safely. However further work is required in the completion of

mandatory training for all church roles that require safeguarding training. The process of identifying all members of our church that undertake roles identified within the Diocese safeguarding strategy 2024-2027 to ensure everyone has received the correct training has been actioned through the PCC.

Training must be identified and completed through registration on the Diocese safeguarding portal. Further support through a local training strategy will be developed for those requiring assistance to complete online training, please let me know those that require assistance.

In 2026 we can still expect a Diocese led inspection of parish safeguarding will take place as an outcome of the Makin review and Synod votes on independent safeguarding & amended codes of practice. This is likely to involve a visit to our parish and assurance provided through our records. It is therefore important that we work together to ensure, training & risk assessments are up to date, and any safeguarding concerns continue to be reported using the agreed procedures.

Loving God, we pray that this church may be a place of welcome, security and compassion. Keep us watchful yet caring, trusting yet ready to question, that all who worship here may do so in safety and in the knowledge of your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Steffen Morgan-Fisher, Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **Church Wardens Report**

A busy year!

In April drawings were drawn up for St Anne's chapel; we had a churchyard clear up; Rob Wilks repaired a dangerous step near the bottom of the tower; the piano was tuned; Toby Hart from the diocese met with Ciaran Griffin (Town Clerk) to discuss the church path, paving stones and churchyard wall repairs, it was agreed that with permission from the diocese all these repairs would be covered by the Town Council.

In May the roof alarms were checked, in June the DAC visited re: heating and a temporary reordering was granted. In July Toby Hart and Philip Orchard met re: faculty for the church path and new gate; TM Services came to fit av screens; the BBC met with Andrew D and Mandy Turner for a Radio 4 programme about Simon's head

In August the annual PATesting was done; battens were fitted for door curtains; there was a problem with the water boiler in the servery.

In September the door curtains were fitted, the main cost of these was covered by a diocesan 'small gains net zero' grant, the curtains are draught proof and fire resistant.

In October Rob Wilks worked on the TRO, altering the heaters; a safety light was fitted in the ringing chamber. In November the annual fire extinguisher check and replacement was carried out.

In December Rob Wilks started work in St Anne's chapel. In January the Pannell tomb was removed, the ledger stone is to be stood against the wall where the head of the tomb had been. The new gate in memory of Michael Harding Payne was erected. Rich King came to check a leak on the outside tap and later making a permanent repair to the tap.

In February a new water boiler was installed in the servery, not being possible to keep the original one repaired any longer.

In March a bench in memory of Jo Fitzlyon was installed in the churchyard.

Avis Bull & Pauline Brown, Church Wardens

## **Deanery Synod Report**

If you have ever wondered what Deanery Synod are all about, we have a compilation of the minutes of two Deanery Synod meetings plus all corresponding information, available for you to read. There will be a few paper copies in Church at the APCM, Claire can email you a copy if you ask her ([parishsecretary@stgregspcc.uk](mailto:parishsecretary@stgregspcc.uk)) or you may have received a copy with the 22<sup>nd</sup> March Church Newsletter if you subscribe to this.

St. Gregory's Church currently have a vacancy for a Deanery Synod representative. If you would like more information on this role, please read on, or speak to Mandy Turner, and prayerfully consider if this could be a calling for you.

What is Deanery Synod?

Deanery Synod is a gathering of representatives from the Church of England parishes within a defined area of the country. It meets just a few times each year. It represents a group of parishes, facilitating communication and decision-making between local churches and the wider church hierarchy.

What is the role of Deanery Synod?

Intermediary Role: It acts as a link between the parochial church councils (PCCs) of individual parishes and the diocesan synod, allowing for the flow of information and concerns from local to higher church levels.

Decision-making: Deanery Synods make decisions on matters affecting the parishes, including mission planning and resource allocation. They can also raise issues to be considered by the diocesan synod.

Support and Fellowship: The synod fosters collaboration among parishes, sharing ideas and resources to enhance their collective mission and support one another in their activities.

Membership of Deanery Synod. This typically includes: Clergy: All licensed clergy within the deanery are automatically members.

Lay Representatives: Elected lay members from each parish, usually chosen during an annual parochial church meeting.

### Meetings and Governance of Deanery Synod

Deanery Synods meet several times a year to discuss relevant issues, plan activities, and make decisions. The synod is co-chaired by the Area Dean and an elected Lay Chair.

Church of England Rules of Representation outline the role of Deanery Synod in greater detail and these can be viewed here [Church Representation Rules online - part 3 | The Church of England](#).

## Stewardship Report

In 2025 we have all felt the effects of inflation and the need to look at our spending. With this situation we must thank those parishioners who realised “where their treasure was, there their heart would be also”. A number have reviewed their giving and have switched to use the **Parish Giving Scheme** which cuts out bank charges for the church as well as simplifying the work behind the scenes, which is much appreciated.

Without the regular givers, St Gregory’s church couldn’t survive. We now have 29 people/families using Parish Giving Scheme, who brought in £27,779 this year. This giving is topped up by 2 who use weekly envelopes and 3 using monthly envelopes, 1 using BACs and 6 elderly who are sticking with their original standing orders, but between all these, they added a further £5,512.

It will be fairly clear to most that this annual income is not sufficient to run the church and is actually less than the Parish Share requested by the Diocese! So, what other income have we got?

If everyone (and I realise not everyone is a UK taxpayer) could provide a **Gift Aid declaration** it would make a big difference. As it is, we were able to claim back in Gift Aid and small donation **GASDS** scheme £11,550 from the government at no extra cost to those givers.

Loose plate collections, appeals, fund raisers and coffee mornings also brought in a useful revenue of around £7,000. A big thank you for all the people that make these possible – giving in effort and kind is just as vital to the church. Special thanks also for those givers who respond to need with large one-off donations where needed – a big help. The Good Box is the best way for visitors to donate and this year its returns were more than doubled at £2,032

An often-over-looked way of giving to St Gregory’s is in your will – after all we can’t take it with us! We have had some lovely **legacies** recently; in all over £20,000, but it doesn’t have to be a large amount, just a share.

If you want to talk about any aspect of giving in Grace, I am always about and happy to chat in confidence.

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