2025 APCM REPORTS

These reports cover the time from the last APCM (which was on 17th March 2024) until this meeting.

**PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL**

The PCC is responsible, amongst other things, for the church’s finances and the care and maintenance of the church, its contents and its grounds. Because St Aidan’s is a registered charity, all members are automatically trustees. The PCC chairman is the Vicar, The Rev’d Michael Payne. Since the APCM, the PCC has met 4 times and the Standing Committee 3 times. Dennis Ashurst resigned from the position as churchwarden in April but was co-opted back onto the PCC in July.

We welcomed Javed Elahi as a new member of the PCC. Sadly in June Dave Rawlinson, a member of the PCC, and manager of the Computer Room, for many years died in June and we record our thanks for his service to St Aidan’s. On the PCC by virtue of their membership of the Deanery Synod, were Janet Morris who resigned at the APCM in March, and Dr Peter Harris, who resigned in April. At time of writing, we have no lay representation on the Deanery Synod.

***Mike Welch***(PCC Secretary)

**DATA PROTECTION**

Our Data Protection Policy, was reissued on 19th May 2018 to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations enacted in May 2018. Copies are on the church noticeboard and on our web-site. As the result of having a CCTV installation we are registered with, the Information Commissioner (at a cost currently £52 p.a. - £40 last year.

Holders of personal data about individuals have been reminded that any such data held must be: **necessary, relevant, accurate, up to date**, **kept securely and can only be used for the purpose for which it was originally collected.** They have alsoreviewed and, where necessary, have updated the information they hold, and this opportunity is taken to remind everyone that requests received for information should be channelled through me so that they may be actioned within the legal timescale. Also, that notification of any data breaches (e.g. lost memory sticks or lap-tops containing personal data) must be reported to me as quickly as possible so that they may be channelled, via the Diocese, to the Information Commissioner within the extremely short timescale allowed by legislation.

Main Sunday services are ‘live-streamed’/recorded using a static camera focused on the altar. Members of the congregation are asked to sign consent forms to ensure that i) they agree to live streaming or recording of services (in which they or their children could be identified) and ii) also agree to receive information from St Aidan’s. Arrangements are made for those who have not so consented to receive the sacrament ‘out of shot’.

All necessary copyright licences have been purchased allowing copying of words or music as required and also to ‘live-stream’/record music/lyrics still in copyright.

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that data held by the Church and its officers etc is held in conformance with current legal requirements.

**Mike Welch** (Data Protection Officer)

**POWERHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE MANAGER’S REPORT**

With the death of Dave Rawlinson (Computer Centre Manager) in June the Computer Room effectively closed for casual users. The chances of finding someone with the time, experience and knowledge to take over this position would seem to be non-existent at present. If the Computer Room is ever to be reopened, consideration will have to be given to updating the hardware & software some of which is approaching 20 years old.

As a result of there being no volunteers willing to close up as hirers depart, it is not possible to let the Computer Suite, West Room or Lounge for evening events even if clients sought bookings. It is unfortunate that the facility is not at present being used as a Community Resource as was intended way back in its planning stage.

The Powerhouse continued to make a loss (see Financial Report). The charge for hiring the Powerhouse was: Computer Room, or West Room or Lounge continues to be – £12/hour; West Room & Lounge, from £15/hour.

**Mike Welch** (Powerhouse Community Centre Manager)

**CHOIR**

The choir has once again performed very well during the year. We have been kept busy with the music for the many special occasions such as Easter Day, St Aidan’s Patronal Festival Sunday, the All Souls’ service in November, the Advent Sunday Carol Service and the Nine Lessons & Carols Service. We have enjoyed using the new hymn books which were purchased by funds donated by John Morris, Jackie & Joan Howard. We were pleased to be in attendance at Ernie’s funeral as requested by the family.

David Sisterson

**SUNDAY MORNING REFRESHMENT ROTA**

I now have two ladies to do the refreshments every Sunday after the Service plus two ladies on standby if needed. Thanks to all on the rota for their work during the last year.

**Jenny Rawlinson**

**CHILDREN’S SOCIETY**

I have no more box-holders.as not many people have small change anymore. The 3 box-holders I had are now donating their money at the Christingle Service. Our Crib & Christingle Service went very well as usual: the Church was full which was very nice to see. We sent the Society £231.66.

**Jenny Rawlinson**

**AIDAN LADIES**

Aidan Ladies continues to flourish. We get new ladies joining us quite often. Last month we had 18 ladies and had a Craft Afternoon where we all made one or two Easter Cards and enjoyed the afternoon. We have a varied programme including guest speakers, quizzes, fun afternoons and our Vicar, Fr Michael giving us an interesting talk. My thanks to Barbara Potter for taking on the job of Treasurer from Anne Welch (who is missed by all of us). We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month in the West Room at 2.00pm.

**Jenny Rawlinson**

**CHURCH FLOWERS**

I am pleased to report that floral arrangements have continued to be made in church throughout the year. During the hot summer months, artificial flowers are used for the pedestals and Lady Chapel vases, also dried flower arrangements for the pedestals for Lent and Advent. Sadly, several of our loyal helpers, for various reasons, have had to step down, but we have been grateful for the added help given by Beryl Coster and Tina Copping. If you feel able to help, particularly at festivals (Christmas, Easter and Harvest) please have a word with me – any offers would be greatly appreciated. Thank you to those who have kindly given donations towards the cost of buying fresh flowers.

***Mavis Prater***

**FINANCE REPORT TO AGM FOR YEAR ENDING 31.12.2024**

The General Fund made a loss this year of £1,072 after a fund transfer of £9,300 from the Nursery School for the rent of the Hall and a transfer of £4,520 from the Building Fund. This leaves us with a balance of £2,125, a reserve of £8,959 in the Stipend Fund due to Gifts of £6,500 and £46,006 in the Legacy Fund. The budget for last year was to make a loss of £6,447 which, thankfully, did not happen.

Free Will Offerings were up by £415 and Cash Collections were down by £779. This figure includes the money paid through our card reader which amounted to £320. The PCC fees were down by £47 and Income Tax recovered (Gift Aid) was up by £497. I would ask anyone who pays tax, has a Freewill Envelope or pays by standing order and has not signed a Gift Aid form to contact the treasurer as soon as possible. The Church Hall made a net loss of £4,127 (£1,723 in 2023). The Powerhouse made a loss of £795 (£209 in 2023).

Total costs for the running of the church itself were £34,687 which equates to £667 per week. This is slightly less than last year mainly due to less usage of the utilities.

The Nursery Schools made a profit of £35,668 this year which leaves their fund balance a healthy £104,661.

The budget for 2025 is to make a loss of £5,665. Payment to the Diocese is again only £14,000, way below the requested amount. If hall lettings do not improve, we are likely to have a cash flow problem which will mean drawing on the Legacy Fund. We will lose Involve in March, but a Community Choir has signed to hire it every Wednesday evening. However, we still only have a total of 4 full time lets.

**Barbara Potter**

**CHURCH HALL LETTINGS 2024**

1. Nursery School every morning during term times.
2. CAAK Church every Sunday
3. Little Rainbows every Wednesday 1-3pm during term time.
4. Marlowe Singers every Thursday evening during term time
5. Involve – Exercises for older people every Thursday afternoon

There were 3 lets to Gravesham Council (2 for elections) and one other external let. Once the floor has been replaced we should concentrate on getting more long term hires.

**Barbara Potter**

**HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT**

Since taking over as H&S Officer I have carried out inspections of the Church and Hall. The Smoke Alarms in the Church have been replaced having come to the end of their life, also 1 extra alarm has been fitted in the Hall. While generally things are good, we all need to keep paying attention to basic house keeping with regards to storage which has the habit of getting out of hand.

I would like to thank Mike Welch for his help over the last year on H&S matters.

**Les Munns** Health & Safety Officer

**SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday School is held twice a month on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month. I run the class on the 2nd Sunday and Amy does the 3rd. Numbers attending vary throughout the year from about 5 to sometimes 20 children. Lessons are based on the Gospel reading for that Sunday. Children listen to the reading, sometimes play a game and do craft or make a poster for members of the congregation to see. We have 2 young helpers and an adult attending each session to comply with safeguarding requirements. Parents are welcome to stay with younger children if they wish.

**Ann Ashurst**

**ELECTORAL ROLL OF THE PARISH OF ST.AIDAN GRAVESEND 2025**

This year a completely new Electoral Roll has been prepared as required by the Church Representation Rules.

The total number of people who have now registered is 51 which includes nine new names.

**Doreen McIntosh**

**FRAPS REPORT FOR 2024-2025**

The main fundraising event last year was the Christmas Fair held on 30 November. The event was very successful, raising about £840. It was well attended although apart from those helping few people from St Aidan’s came but it seems to be a welcome community event. Refreshments of tea, coffee and cakes were popular.

It was decided not to hold the Quiz Evening this year following the sad death of David Rawlinson who contributed so much to the Quiz Evenings.

FRAPS members helped with refreshments throughout the year including the coffee mornings on the first Wednesday of the month, the Agapé Meal in March, the Coffee, Cake and Plant Sale for Christian Aid in May, the Patronal Festival in September and the All Souls’ Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving in November. They have also provided buffet meals for wakes after funerals of church members.

On 31 October a Light Party organised by Fr Michael was held in the church as an alternative to Hallowe’en celebrations and some FRAPS members helped serve refreshments.

**Janet Trevor**

**LITTLE RAINBOWS**

Attendance has been good this year, and we have kept in touch with people via our Facebook page.

We have had about 10 new families since September and 2 childminders with 6 children. On average we have between 5 & 7 regular families each week.

**Lesley & Ariadne**

**CHAIR’S REMARKS**

This last year has seen us moving between two poles: on the one hand we have experienced some significant bereavements, with the deaths of some long-serving and much loved members of our congregation. I would like to add once more my profound thanks to God for all they were, and for the service they did to further the Kingdom of God, often, as ever, in small everyday ways. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Secondly, we have seen some growth in the numbers of new folk joining us as individuals and young families. This has been great to see and what particularly cheers me is that it is the welcome received which has made them feel that St Aidan’s can be the church for them, so I am so grateful to our welcoming ‘team’ who greet people at the door, but more than that, the chats and the smiles they have received from people in church after services-it really is making a difference.

Our social media presence continues to be the best way to let people know what is going on, although we do still use posters and flyers, and our paper news sheet. Sunday services are live streamed on Facebook and regularly reach anything from 60 to 100+ people. Online Night Prayer is receiving around 50 views each time and our live streamed Rosary prayers attract about 60 views, and whilst this may mean folk are having a look and maybe then scrolling on, they are engaging regularly as well as those who stay online and join us for the whole service.

In our worship we continue to offer something which is recognisable as reverent Anglican liturgy but which is clear and accessible. I am grateful to David Sisterson and the choir for their continued provision of high quality music and for our small team of servers - there is space for more!

Our sound system is showing its age and we will be looking at improvements during 2025.

I am very grateful to Rob our churchwarden, to Barbara our PCC treasurer and Mike, who continues as PCC Secretary and ‘magic pixie’ who makes all kinds of things just happen. In earnest, though, Mike has served us excellently in different capacities for many years and has now passed Health and Safety Officer on, which has been ably taken up by Les Munns.

Our outreach work is picking up apace. I am grateful to Mavis, Jenny and the social events team for regular events such as our coffee morning and yearly ones such as the quiz and Christmas fair. Our Light Cafe and Christingle service continue to reach dozens of families.

Our ministry team has contracted slightly following the departure of Dr Peter Harris to another parish - we continue to wish him well. Sylvia Munns is continuing to minister as Anna Chaplain to the elderly, and in building community links. We also have our team of ‘reflection’ writers which has grown in number and we are now able to offer a range of perspectives on the week’s bible readings via our weekly communication. My thanks to Mavis for continuing to disseminate these and for her monthly contribution to these.

Overall, then, I feel that we are generally in a ‘good place’. Recently, somebody in church said that there was a ‘buzz’ and I think that this is a good word to describe where we are. Looking ahead, I plan for us to join in the diocese’s vision to seek first the Kingdom of God and to join in mission which can cause change, and which calls us to serve as we seek to grow.

It continues to be my privilege to serve as Vicar of St Aidan’s-now in my seventh year!

***Fr Michael***

**SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

Safeguarding procedures and requirements are constantly under review by

Rochester Diocese and Thirtyone:eight (previously CCPAS). Safeguarding is

always an item on the PCC agenda. Janet Trevor is Parish Safeguarding

Officer (PSO) in addition to her role as Lead Recruiter for DBS applications.

In line with Church of England requirements, St Aidan’s has details of the

PSO and other local and national agencies who may be contacted for help

and advice displayed in the entrance vestibule and Hall. The PSO’s contact

details are also published in the weekly News Sheet and on the parish

website.

20 people currently have completed DBS checks with eight more waiting for

clearance or in the process of completing applications, including all members

of the PCC. One certificate is due for renewal in the coming months. DBS

certificates have to be renewed every three years from January 2022 instead

of every five years.

Janet Trevor, the Lead Recruiter, liaises with the Vicar to agree who is eligible

to be receive a DBS check and to review training requirements.

Thirtyone:eight provide the safeguarding service including DBS checks on

behalf of the Diocese and also training. The Diocese also provides online

safeguarding training and workshops and has a safeguarding team of

advisers. Rochester Diocese now requires Basic Level training (formerly C0)

for anyone who has any role in the church. Foundation Level and Leadership

training (formerly C1 and C2) are also required for some roles. This training is

undertaken through the Church of England Training Portal. Rochester

Diocese has also launched Dashboard which is a tool to help parishes

monitor safeguarding.

***Janet Trevor***

I am very grateful for Janet’s service as PSO and Lead Recruiter. As noted elsewhere in these papers, safeguarding has loomed large in the light of recent events in the CofE-and rightly so.

Safeguarding should not be seen as a chore or a ‘box tick’ exercise, but a vigilant stance which insists that our churches should be safe and healthy communities for all.

***Fr Michael***

**DIOCESAN AND DEANERY SYNODS**

Diocesan Synod has met at different venues across the diocese to discuss matters of importance to the diocese and the wider Church of England. Unsurprisingly, safeguarding has come to the fore this year, with one member of synod proposing a motion of no confidence in the safeguarding management in the CofE by senior clergy and others. The motion was passed and this has led to conversations between Bishop Jonathan and Stephen, the Archbishop of York.

Since then, General Synod met and voted to move towards independent oversight of safeguarding by external bodies at national level, with parishes and dioceses continuing, at present at least, to manage safeguarding. This was seen as a step back by some, who wanted to see independent safeguarding across the board. It remains to be seen how this will ultimately play out, but it really does seem that the Archbishop and our bishop are genuinely looking to change the culture around safeguarding in the CofE.

Deanery Synod met in May at Chalk Church where we heard from Archdeacon Andy (now retired), who brought us up to date on the creation of a new Deanery of Swanscombe which has ‘shrunk’ Gravesend Deanery a bit. We now comprise St Aidan’s, St George’s, Christ Church, St John’s Higham, St Mary’s (Wrotham Rd) Ss Peter and Paul (Milton) Holy Family, Ifield St Margaret, Ss Peter and Paul (Shorne), St Mary (Chalk), All Saints Perry Street.

The parishes of Northfleet and Rosherville, plus Swanscombe and Greenhithe, alongside Southfleet and Istead Rise now constitute the new Deanery, which has been created to largely deal with new housing developments at Ebbsfleet by providing a more contained, local focus and also to provide a focus for mission in the area more generally. Whilst the Gravesend Deanery has felt the loss of these parishes we continue to look ahead positively.

***Fr Michael***

**PASTORAL TEAM**

The group continues to meet every eight weeks or so to pray for and update on pastoral issues in the church, co-ordinating any visits to homes or hospice/hospital as appropriate. The overarching aim of the team is to extend pastoral care to anyone who is unable to attend, or who is going through some challenges, and to promote the welcome visitors receive. Details of members and their contact details are posted on the noticeboard in the entrance vestibule. If you are interested in becoming a member of this team, please let me know.

***Fr Michael***

**EAST GRAVESEND GROUP**

The East Gravesend Group is a group of churches in the East of the Deanery who were constituted to support one another and work together as appropriate. Currently the group comprises St Aidan’s, Christ Church, Holy Family & Ifield and Shorne.

The Rev’d Ted Hurst is retiring after Christmas so Holy Family, Ifield and Shorne will be vacant. The truth is that in the last couple of years, really since Covid, the group has not done much together and it has rather gone into abeyance. However, I hope that in due course we can revive this important support network. A the diocese looks to become more missional I am sure there will be continued emphasis on sharing ideas and good practice rather than staying within our own ‘castles’!

***Fr Michael***

**ST AIDAN’S NURSERIES - MANAGER’S REPORT - MARCH 2025**

This September both nurseries were full. We have a lot less SEN children than last year, but have taken more 2 year olds. We also seem to have had a rise in Safeguarding/Social Services cases (all outside of nursery) that we are having to deal with – though the staff are well trained and up for the challenge.

In July 2024, The Christopher Centre Nursery had its Ofsted visit and though they visited on our Leavers Concert day, had a minor flood in the visitor toilet – we achieved Good in all areas.

In February 2025, The Church Hall Nursery, had its Ofsted and like the Christopher Centre achieved Good in all areas. The Inspector commented that all children were involved in learning and play and all were extremely happy. We were very pleased with both outcomes and were told that our next inspections should be in 6 years.

At the Church Hall we re-fenced the Community Garden and replaced the old planters (as they had decayed) and have since planted 4 fruit trees, 2 x apple, 1 plum and 1 pear. We will continue to plant vegetables through out the year and use and maintain this space for all to use.

We have just purchased our Cherry Blossom Tree, which is to be potted and placed in our memorial part of our Garden in Forest School.

I have just called new children for our intake in September and again it looks currently that we will have good numbers in September at both nurseries.

We have had quite a lot of sickness at both settings and have had to rely on additional staff to cover illness and absence. Sadly at present one of our staff Karen O at the Church Hall who has been off poorly as just been diagnosed with Cancer and we are currently unsure of when she will return to work.

The year is flying and we have many fun things planned for the children, such as visits from River and his Rodents.

I hope you are all well and thank you for your continued support for both myself and the nurseries. ( We are very much looking forward to the new floor at the Church Hall).

**Gayle Farquhar** – Manager – St Aidan’s Nurseries

**CRAFT AND CHAT**

This is a new group starting in March 2025 open to all especially the Community, you can bring your own craft along to do and share with others or we will have a demonstrator to introduce a new craft each time. We will also be looking at how we can use our waste objects so be eco friendly.

**Sylvia Munns**

**ECO CHURCH**

Having obtained our Bronze award we continue to move forward towards our Silver award some things are easier to change than others and some people find it difficult to adjust to reducing waste recycling and not going for the cheapest option when it comes to food and cleaning materials we use in church. Everyone is finding money a problem with everything costing more so it is difficult to change some things however we can only try and help and support others. We are nearly at the silver award stage. Thank you to all those who are supporting this project. We are recycling crisp packets ,bread wrappers, batteries, ink cartridges, used stamps so please bring them along and put them in the box at the back of the church.

**Sylvia Munns**

**ANNA CHAPLAINCY**

Since my last report I have continued to work with Fr Michael visiting those who are unable to attend church and taking them the holy Sacrament. Many of my visits have been to not only support the person but also the family. Phone calls are a life line to some people as they do not get out and no one visits. One person said to me last week if it were not for you ringing me I would not use my voice and I would forget I had one.

At this time many people are finding it difficult to manage with out money and are having to make some difficult decisions about food, heating etc as well as going out if they are able to. Many younger families are also finding it difficult and having to work so cannot support the older generation as they did. Many older folk are finding getting to appointments difficult so I have been helping out and supporting them.

During the year I have attended training sessions which have been very useful, services and supported other Anna Chaplains with events in their parishes.

I continue to work with the hospital and Hospice Chaplains when our members are in hospital or attending the Hospice. Another part of my role is to support those who have lost a loved one or received bad news or are having to move and adjust to new surroundings.

Fr Ted from our neighbouring parish has been in hospital so Fr Michael asked if I would attend Watling Court and continue the service Fr Ted there once a month which I have continued to do also I have made contact with Wimbourne house and Hever Court nursing home.

Before closing I must mention Ernie Lane who was called to higher service at the beginning of the year I visited Ernie first at home with Daphne and then each week while he was in the care home it was always a joy to visit him and we shared some good times together Thank you to all those from the church who supported me in doing this and sent Ernie magazines, cards etc to see his face light up was a picture.

Much of what I do is not seen or heard about but I am doing Gods work so only He knows.

As we move forward as a Parish there will be other things going on for our older generation which I hope you will be able to support.

If you want to know more about Anna Chaplaincy please talk to me or Fr Michael.

 **Sylvia Munns**

**CHURCH WARDEN’S REPORT**

We are waiting for the Diocese to give us permission to remove the porches above both entrance ways. The reasons to remove the porches are the following:

1. The main entrance porch is the main entrance for funeral processions, currently it is difficult to carry the coffin around the pillars.
2. Both porches are used and abused by the local youth. They climb on top and damage the roofing and the graffiti and use of obscene words is not acceptable.

We have had some quotes for the removal of the porches and have found a local builder who is keen to do the work for us.

We await a response from the Diocese.

The lift was serviced and given the all clear.

The Alarm system was serviced, and we have been advised that when it is due for another service in 4-5 months, we need to replace the emergency backup battery.

The Quinquennial report is due this year, Les Munns and I have been working together to try and keep on top of any issues that are likely to be highlighted by the Architect.

The flooring in the Church Hall is being renewed, however an issue with damp to the original floor has been raised and we may need to remove the original floor. This is going to incur more cost, and a new quote has been requested. We are positive that we have the funds to cover this issue.

Currently the oil for the candles is being stored in the cupboard in the office. As this is a fire hazard, we are looking to get a fire-retardant container to store it in. This would need funding so will speak to the P.C.C regarding this issue.

The path and grass area around the car park are a cause for concern, the amount of dog faeces that is being left behind is a health hazard especially for children. It is a difficult issue to raise as it means speaking to current residents about clearing up after their dogs. Any suggestions on how we tackle this would be appreciated.

The lighting along the side of the church leading to the car park needs to be replaced. Ideally needs to be done during summer months ready for winter.

I would like to thank Dennis for all his help and expertise in assisting me over the past year, his help has been unwavering and very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank Les Munns for his support and assistance.

**Rob Hollands**

**CHURCHES TOGETHER**

We meet regularly to pray and update each other as to what is going on in our churches and to discuss and arrange public events we can share .eg the Easter walk to Windmill Hill,

Rev David Scott sends out updates about the street pasters and school pasters and sends out prayer requests.

The Churches together secretary sends out updates from different churches and about other things that are going on such as the foodbanks, Sanctuary project, the Hub Centre at the Methodist church. it is good to join in with others sometimes.

If you would like to know more please speak to me or Fr Michael

**Sylvia Munns**

**ALZHEIMERS AND DEMENTIA SUPPORT SERVICES**

As part of my role as an Anna Chaplain I attend these meetings regularly where we are updated on services which are available for those with Dementia and those of the older generation. I update others as to what Anna Chaplains can offer During Dementia week we put on events to let people what is on offer etc

If you would like to know more please contact me

**Sylvia Munns**