

**St John the Evangelist, Milford**

**Annual Report  
and  
Financial Statements  
of the  
Parochial Church Council**

**For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

**Incumbent: Revd Jo Lamberth**

**The Vicarage  
Milford Heath Road  
Milford  
Surrey GU8 5BX**

# The Parish of St John the Evangelist, Milford

## Parochial Church Council

### Members and Advisers

<b>Vicar:</b>	Jo Lamberth	Inducted June 19 <sup>th</sup> 2025
<b>Assistant Priest</b>	Peter Hewson	(Ordained July 2012)
<b>Assistant Priest</b>	Barbara Steele-Perkins	
<b>Churchwardens:</b>	Judy Downing	(Term ended March 2025)
	Jackie Hills	(Appointed October 2020)
	Maddie Murray	(Appointed March 2025)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Miranda O'Brien	(Appointed March 2016)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Nicholas O'Brien	(Re-appointed March 2014)
<b>Deanery Synod Representatives:</b>	Maddie Murray	(Elected – March 2023)
<b>Members</b>	Fiona Stevenson	(Resigned October 2025)
	Nicki Herring	(Re-elected March 2023)
	Maddie Murray	(Re-elected March 2023)
	Frances Cousins	(Re-elected March 2024)
	Nicholas O'Brien	(Elected March 2023)
	Bill Braid	(Elected March 2024)
	Dave Thomas	(Elected March 2024)
	Suzy Vincent	(Elected March 2025, was co-opted)
	Chris Denton	(Elected March 2025)
	Luisa Mason	(Elected March 2025)
	Andy Lamberth	(Co-opted July 2025)
	David Pepe	(Co-opted November 2025)
<b>Bankers</b>	National Westminster Bank PLC 77 High Street, Godalming Surrey, GU7 1AR	
<b>Independent Examiner</b>	Alison Sanderson FCA 20 Fernhill Close Woking Surrey GU22 0DJ	

## **Structure, governance and management**

The method of 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.

## **Objectives and activities**

St John's PCC has the responsibility of co-operation with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church and the attached Church Centre at Church Road, Milford, Surrey.

## **Achievements and performance**

### **Vicar's Report**

It was a wonderful celebration on June 19<sup>th</sup> as we began a new ministry here in Milford. Andy, my husband, grew up in Milford and so he was delighted to have the opportunity to move "back home". As we were discerning whether this move was what God was calling us to, we attended a Sunday morning Holy Communion service and felt a real sense of the love of God present in church. After the interview in February and being offered and accepting the role as Vicar of Milford I became more aware that the theme of ministry that God was calling us to, was to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbour as yourself. Simple, powerful and the two greatest commandments.

I am so grateful to everyone who helped to lead the church through the vacancy, to Peter Hewson and Barbara Steele-Perkins, Jackie Hills, Judy Downing and Maddie Murray, Nick and Miranda O'Brien and all the PCC. I am also grateful to Brian Protheroe who stepped in to lead Holy Communion when Peter and Barbara were unable to. Thank you to Alison Turner who has continued to keep the website and our social media presence up to date. There are too many people for me to thank individually in this report but please be assured that I am thankful to the whole church family.

My journey to incumbency did not follow the traditional route. I was ordained as an OLM (Ordained Local Minister) which meant I was licensed to one Church, St John's Stoke. During my Curacy, I was asked to help out at Burpham during their vacancy and this led to a call to Incumbency.

So, I joined Milford with a huge passion for incumbency but not quite the experience that may be expected. However, I have had all the support a new incumbent could ask for and again I am extremely grateful for welcome, patience and care I experienced.

The first six months in post have passed by so quickly and I have tried not to change too much too soon, but take the time to listen and discern what the Lord is calling us to this season. Following a wonderful Nine Lessons and Carols service led by Alice Gold and Ruari Metcalfe we feel a strong sense of music being a key part of our worship and outreach. Even though our temperamental organ broke down completely, two minutes before the service began, it was still an amazing evening. We are excited to explore this further in 2026.

I have seen how important Holy Communion is to the members of St John's Milford and also how it is central to bringing the Kingdom of God to the Parish. I am privileged that we celebrate Holy Communion three times a week.

There are a few areas of Milford Church life that are completely new to me. I have enjoyed attending my first Mother's Union meetings and I am grateful to Penny Clark and all the team for their dedication and for the support they provide to a local women's refuge. Having a

church school is also new to me. I have enjoyed visiting Chandler and delivering my first school assemblies. Milford is also blessed with a talented team looking after the flowers. The flower arches that are created for weddings are beautiful. Thank you to Pam Hewson and all the team.

One of the bigger challenges I have faced is the complex governance structure of Milford Village Hall and how we may move forward in order to ensure the future smooth running of the facility and be able to tap into grant funding for much needed improvements. I am pleased to say that we have found a way forward where we merge the Trust that owns the property and the Trust that runs the village Hall. This should be completed in 2026. I am grateful to Kathy Smythe and William Edwards for their help in bringing about the improved structure.

So, what does 2026 hold for us? We will hold a strategy day to confirm our vision for the future and how we connect with our community. As part of that we will look to refresh our "shop window" including our internet and social media presence as well as our signage.

Early indications are that music will play a key part of our future, both in terms of worship and engaging with all ages of people in the community. I am grateful to Alice and Ruari for the energy they have brought to the choir and I am grateful to the choir for embracing their energy so readily.

We are building a good relationship with Milford Baptist Church and it is wonderful to have partners in the Gospel so close by. We are planning to trial Lego Church as a joint venture in 2026. I am very excited about this.

Once again, I give thanks for St John's Milford, the church family and the wider community. I am looking forward very much to where the Lord leads us in 2026.

**Revd Jo Lamberth**

## **Churchwarden's Reports**

This year began while we were still in a vacancy, and once again we would all like to express our thanks to Peter Hewson who led the majority of our services during this time. Our gratitude is also due to Barbara Steele-Perkins who gave her time to fill in and to Brian Protheroe, who presided at Holy Communion once a month.

On 6th February we held interviews for a new incumbent. These were attended by Wardens Judy and Jackie along with Bishop Paul, Archdeacon Catharine and Area Dean Chris. In March we held Lent Lunches and a Lent Course. In April we hosted a U3A Concert to raise funds for St John's. Then at the APCM chaired by Chris Bessant Area Dean, we expressed our gratitude to Judy who completed her term as Churchwarden. We then voted in Maddie to take on the role.

The Easter season began with a Maundy Thursday Agape Meal followed by a short vigil in the church and then the usual services on Good Friday and Easter Day.

We formed a Working Party in May to spring clean the church and tidy the garden. On June 5<sup>th</sup> Jackie and Maddie attended the annual Churchwardens Visitation Service at St John's, Stoke. The annual Village Fete was held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, and the church had four stalls to raise funds.

June 19<sup>th</sup> was a day of celebration when we were able to welcome our new Vicar Jo at her Induction Service. In a packed church the service was led by Bishop Paul and Area Dean Chris. On the hottest day of the year, we enjoyed this happy occasion with a reception party to follow the formalities.

July saw us once more enjoying a lovely BBQ at Borough Farm and a month later we were invited back again for a delightful Tea & Swim, with many thanks to Nicki and John for their

generosity. In August we were very happy to witness the marriage of Megan and Josh, our own Church members. During October we held a full week of Harvest Celebrations. Jo decorated the church beautifully and included a session of Corn craft and an information stand from the Green Hub Teen Garden Charity, which promotes teenagers' mental health. On October 31<sup>st</sup> we held the Samson's Quiz Night which was a great success as usual. The Remembrance Day service was well attended and the annual Christmas Tree Lights switch-on at the Village Hall was hosted by Milford Clergy with Dame Penelope Keith once again switching them on.

For the second time we held a Christmas Tree display in the church, also a craft sale, wreath-making session, a Christmas Quiz and a Festive Photo Booth. The U3A held another concert and then our newly formed choir led our Carol Service. We extend our thanks to Alice and Ruari whose hard work made this a very special event. Afterwards we enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine courtesy of John and Nicki.

In addition, the bell ropes were repaired, a service was held in aid of Chase Hospice and Jo and Andy hosted a lovely Christmas Drop-In at the Vicarage. On Christmas Eve there was a well-attended Christingle Service, followed by the midnight communion and then our usual 8am and 10am communion services on Christmas Day.

Thank you to everyone who supports the daily life of our Church, including Judy and other deputy wardens, Penny with the Mother's Union, Alice and Ruari with music provision, all who fill our various rotas, Andy for maintenance and admin, Peter, Barbara, Alison and David who preach sermons, and especially Jo for her dedication, hard work and inspiration.

**Jackie Hills – Churchwarden**

With plenty of help from Judy and Jackie I have done my first year !! I have had quite a few forms to sign but I think I'm getting there.

**Madeline Murray - Churchwarden**

## **Church Electoral Roll 2025**

As a new Electoral Roll has to be done every 6 years, we had to do a new one in 2025.

We managed to get 91 on the new Roll by the beginning of March. There were 2 deaths in April and September and 2 moved away in October but we had 1 new addition in June and 2 new additions in August so we were up to 90 by the end of 2025.

**Miranda O'Brien  
Electoral Roll Officer**

## **PCC Secretary's Report**

During 2025, which included the last 6 months of the Vacancy, the Parochial Church Council has continued to meet on average once every two months so this year we totalled 6 meetings, all held in the Church Centre plus a first meeting chaired by Jo in the vicarage Garden. The PCC also took part in the Interview Day where Jo was chosen as our new Incumbent. This took place on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February and consisted of a short Communion Service where Jo preached. The PPC also supported the Churchwardens in planning Jo's Installation on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

One of our discussions after Jo's Installation has been the Revitalisation of St John's and we have Jens Mankel, a Diocesan Mission Enabler to work alongside us in a Revitalisation Programme. We have also been looking at roles and positions on the PCC so that not all the work is being done by a few people.

The PCC had also been specifically asked to approve a resolution from the Architect for the Glass Doors Project. 'This PCC fully supports the installation of glass doors to the front of the existing wooden main Church Door. This is to allow more open and welcoming access to the Church to encourage visitors and worshippers. Funds have already been raised for this enhancement but we will need more.' This was approved and formed part of the Faculty Application.

We had 4 elections at the APCM, 1 of whom had been co-opted in 2024, and also 2 co-options during the year, 1 in July and 1 in October. However, we did have 1 resignation in October as they moved away.

**Miranda O'Brien**  
**PCC Secretary**

## **Financial Review - Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**

### **Summary**

Our Parish Share at £55,746 was low this year because of 6 months of enhanced Vacancy support on top of the reduction resulting from going for only a half-time minister (0.5 FTE).

The big change was the arrival of Jo Lamberth as our new incumbent. This meant that the PCC had to pay for any necessary internal redecoration of the vicarage outside of the office/study area which remains a diocesan responsibility as was the exterior redecoration. This has been included in the accounts under Vicarage Maintenance. Generously, Jo and Andy paid for this work as a gift-aided donation resulting in a very high donation income and a higher Gift Aid Tax refund. This meant that our General Fund Deficit was reduced to £3,540 compared with a budgeted deficit of £17,473.

We paid off our outstanding Parish Share arrears of £19,711 but this had been factored into the 2024 accounts and so is not visible in 2025.

The Fabric Fund this year paid out £10,663 in Stonework Repairs as required by the by the Quinquennial Inspection. It also paid for a late Electrical Condition report and repairs to our bell ropes and a fix for the rain getting into the church centre entrance and the entrance doors. With funds available, we paid the deposit to start work on the Glass Doors project to provide a more welcoming aspect to the day-time church main entrance. Unfortunately, we had not allowed enough for the complexity of the planning and faculty applications.

### **Funds**

- The General Fund decreased by £3,540 from £19,511 to £15,971.
- The Unrestricted Legacy Fund was unchanged at £1,000.
- The Fabric Fund decreased by £6,674 from £20,349 to £13,575.
- The "Glass Door" Fund decreased by £12,375 from £17,683 to £5,307.
- The Discretionary Fund was unchanged at £2,250.
- The Flower Fund went up by £324 to £1,543.
- The Restricted Bequest Fund decreased by £6,806 to £163,441.

## Income

Significant changes were:

- Giving to the General Fund (both with and without Gift Aid) increased by **£5,188 (+18%)**. Regular giving to the Fabric Fund at £4,334 was the same as last year.
- Other Gift Aid giving to the General Fund, including variable weekly Gift Aid donations, decreased by £393 (-15%).
- Unrestricted collections were down by £644 (-15%). Collections for outward giving at £1,944 were up by £795 to £1,944 giving a total increase of £150 (3%)
- One-off donations to the General Fund at £13,733 were **£12,012 (700%)** up on last year due to the gift of the Vicarage re-decoration work.
- The Discretionary Fund had no income.
- General Fund Gift Aid tax recovery was up by **£3,009 (+30%)** while the Fabric Fund was £120 up on last year.
- Fund raising events were down £244 (-4%) on last year. The Village Fete income was £168 up at £842. While the Quiz Night at £1,014 was down by £269 (21%). Porch Produce was up by £57 but Sunday Coffee was down by £78. Christmas Events like the Wreath Workshop and the Christmas Tree Festival raised £965 but has been allocated this year to General Funds rather than the Glass Doors Fund. The 2024 Christmas Quiz raised £322 for Glass Door Fund, treated as being in 2025 when all the money came in. We had only 2 U3A concerts this year raising £499.
- Wedding & Funeral fees this year were slightly down on last year by £154 (-5%). The vacancy support which allowed us to retain the Diocesan portion of the fees came to an end with the end of the vacancy so effectively this was an increase.
- Church Centre income increased by £811 (+49%) helped by income from other than U3A bookings being well up.
- Sundry Income included collections to say thank you to the clergy team (Peter, Barbara and Brian Prothero) who supporting us so well during the vacancy.
- Interest Payments at £1,035 were £631 (156%) up on last year.

As a result of the above changes our General Fund income at £82,820 was £19,172 (+33%) up on last year. The big items were the increase in Planned Giving and Donations plus the resulting increase in the Tax Refund. The total for all funds increased by £7,897 to £92,749 (+9%).

## Expenditure

Fund Raising costs at £769 were £268 (+51%) up on last year, mainly because of the £288 cost of the Christmas Trees for the Christmas Tree Festival.

Gifts for Outward Giving causes have been maintained at just under 10% of all income at £8,061 which was £1,962 (32%) up on last year. Money has been given to our 5 regular charities (The Chandler School, The Children's Society, The Samson Centre, Mission Aviation Fellowship and Skillway) plus an extra donation to the Clockhouse.

Our Parish Share decreased by £7,540 to £55,746 mainly because of a £1,000 per month reduction as extra Vacancy support for 6 months until Jo started.

Carol Mitchell, our Organist, decided in the Autumn that she could not continue for personal reasons. So, the Honorarium (in Salary and Wages) that we pay an organist was decreased by £760 (-45%) to £920.

Clergy expenses at a total of £9,584 were well up on last year (£2,898). This is mainly because the PCC was liable for much of the interior redecoration cost of the Vicarage at £8,105, with the diocese only covering the Office space. This was covered by a generous Gift by Jo and Andy but needs to be visible for future reference. The Telephone/Broadband costs were down as we switched to a much cheaper Fibre-to-the-home package with EE.

With nobody resident in the Vicarage for the first 6 months, Thames Water realised from the new water meter that we had been overpaying our water rates.

Our insurance costs went up by 7% (£3,332 vs £3,104)

Sacristy costs were down by £210 (-41%) to £298.

The organ needed a couple of maintenance visits this year which did not help much leaving the organ not in a good state.

IT and Web services were static at £842 (+2%).

Printing costs were down from £244 from £344 as we got a new printer/copier.

General Maintenance was up at £1,571 from £977 from £1,281. £379 was spent on cleaning up the Denyer Grave in the cemetery which we are supposed to do as part of the restrictions on the Denyer Bequest. A great job was done and now it is looking almost as good as new.

We cut down on printed copies of the reports for the APCM to save Governance costs but the few we felt we had to print were done at a copy shop (£75) which reminded us of why a good in-house printer is valuable.

Utilities costs (gas, electricity, and water) were slightly down on last year (£3,191 vs £3,290).

The Church Centre running costs were £65 (8%) up on last year at £906.

Total Church Running Expenses were up by £836 (+8%) from £10,355 to £11,171.

We spent Fabric Funds on Quinquennial Stonework repairs of £10,663. One bell rope broke so we renewed all of them at a cost of £654. We have had ongoing problems with water getting into the automatic doors and the entrance lobby so our roofer has improved the run-off from the roof over the doors which should fix the problems but cost £1,030. We had not had an Electrical Condition Report done as part of the Quinquennial Inspection so we had one done this year at a cost of £744 which will lead to some remedial work. We started work on the Glass Doors project which included a £7,284 deposit on the manufacture. But we also needed a further £1,047 in Building Regs application plus an unplanned but essential £4,367 in Architect Fees to get this application done. The other 50% of the manufacturing costs are still to come plus the faculty application and extra installation costs

Sundry Expenses, as shown in the details page, included £1,620 for a new printer/copier which can make booklets, as well as a new coffee machine and a replacement for a failed amplifier in the sound system. These expenses were all covered by donations. Included in Sundry were the costs of thank-you presents to the Vacancy Clergy Team and the costs of welcoming Jo to St Johns.

Overall, our General Fund expenditure was up by £1,890 from £84,470 to £86,360.

## **Assets**

Under the current Charities Act we must show Restricted Fund share investments at their true value, but we are normally only able to spend the income arising and not the capital value of the shares. This money has come from a couple of restricted bequests, so the Fund is now referred to as the (Restricted) Bequest Fund. This year the value went down by £6,806.

## **Forecast**

The Parish Share for 2026 has been set at £64,647, 4.6% up on what we should have paid last year (£61,770) excluding the effect of the Extended Vacancy Support from the Diocese. We cannot expect Donations and the Tax Refund to do anything like as well as last year and the forecast is for General Fund deficit in 2026 of £19,406. Unless we can push up our

income drastically, we may need to sell off the rest of the Miss Price Bequest in order to keep afloat let alone fund renewal initiatives.

Most of the essential work arising from the Quinquennial Inspection has now been done although there is some electrical work to do. So, the Fabric Fund may recover a little in 2026.

**Nicholas O'Brien**  
**Hon. Treasurer**

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2026 and signed on its behalf by:



8/4/2026

**Revd Jo Lamberth (Chairman and Incumbent)**

## **Associated Reports**

### **Life as the Honorary Curate of St John's**

The last year has been quite a “roller-coaster”. I believe that we are all delighted that our search for a new Vicar has not only been completed but so well with Jo joining us in July. That brought a very significant change to my life and Pam’s too. I now know that incumbents do really have quite a hard time balancing Church, family and the wider parish all at the same time. It is all too easy to just accept that they are there whenever we need them. The reality is that they have a life, as do we, and we should respect that. Jo has started so well and the changes that she has made and continues to make are positive and encouraging. Please continue to show your appreciation and support for her as we grow the Parish together. I shall do my best to be with her and alongside her as and when required.

**Peter Hewson**

### **Occasional Preaching**

There are currently two occasional preachers:

Alison Turner;

David Pepe;

Following the installation of Jo Lamberth in June 2025, the occasional preachers are preaching more often than in previous years. On their particular Sundays, they are also now preaching at the 8 o'clock service, which is a different experience from the 10 o'clock service.

The sermons/homilies generally expand on the Readings and Gospel appointed for the day and each occasional preacher tries to bring a different viewpoint and approach from that of the clergy.

**David Pepe  
Alison Turner**

### **Pastoral Care Report 2025**

There are ten members of the Pastoral Team who each have a list of members to check on. I am extremely grateful to the team who have a genuine loving concern for the St John’s church family. This has been especially important during the vacancy.

In 2026 we will look at how best to serve our community going forward. And investigate potential software options to help us.

**Revd Jo Lamberth**

### **Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod met once in 2025 and because it was Jo’s first meeting, it was held at St John’s.

Madeline Murray represents St John's. The triennial election by parishes of lay members of Deanery Synods is due to take place at the APCM in 2026.

The Diocesan records show our 2025 Electoral Roll number to be 92, giving us 3 Deanery lay representatives to be elected at the APCM

**Madeline Murray**

## **Building and Maintenance**

Period: July 2025 to December 2025

1. Carried out review of the sound system with quotes obtained from several companies for replacement of speakers and some equipment in sounds cupboard. Cost approximately £8K to £10K
2. The Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) was completed. Three issues were identified:
  - a. Distribution board in boiler room is non-compliant and needs to be replaced
  - b. Unidentified circuit on distribution board in main church
  - c. Open circuit on distribution board in main church

These will be rectified in early 2026

3. PAT testing was completed with no issues found
4. Outside masonry repairs were completed as identified in 2024 quinquennial report

There were other things done but these were organised by Nick and/or churchwardens:

1. Fire extinguishers check
2. Gas boiler servicing

**Andy Lamberth**

## **House Groups**

### **Mondays at Hawthorn Cottage**

Our small group continued to meet on average fortnightly throughout 2025. We finished off the Acts of the Apostles, the second half of which is mainly about St Paul leading the expansion of the early church in the face of much opposition from the Jewish establishment. We then moved on to study the two books of Samuel and to see how God's initial choice of Saul only seemed to prove why asking to have a King was not a good idea. In contrast, the trials and tribulations of David with instances of his deep faith and trust in God but also his sin and failures showed that we should place all our works in God's hand like he did.

**Nicholas O'Brien**

### **The Friday Morning Home Group**

The Friday Morning Home Group (of 8 regular members) met on alternate months during 2025. Each time we explored the three readings for the coming Sunday, a theme which was appreciated and enjoyed by all.

**Barbara Steele-Perkins**

## **Chandler School**

The Chandler is at last back to normal all be it with a slightly lower roll than it is capable of taking. This is through a lower birth rate in our catchment area which has reduced the number of pupils in our feeder schools. The curriculum has taken a positive move forward where all subjects are now taught through a philosophical approach where challenge and thought development are encouraged. It is quite amazing to hear and see the pupils debate and challenge each other over all aspects of life. It can be a challenge standing in front of a class of around 30 pupils, let alone 300 in assembly, when you ask for feedback or questions and a "flood" comes.

The results for the Level 2 Sats, the public exams taken at the end of year 6 before the pupils leave for Senior School, were good and better than the National average. We should all be proud of the children and their teachers who work hard to achieve this result.

Once again, the School Budget is stretched even tighter which has resulted in some further restructuring. Central Government funding is never enough for all the activities that the School would like to undertake. The funding for children with Special Needs is a particular problem for The Chandler and many schools Nationally. A new initiative and funding has been started with the full support of the education authority where children with extra needs are taught in a small separate unit for some of their subjects. It has been given the name of The Lighthouse which is most appropriate considering that the School's Moto is Every Light Shining.

We held a leavers service in the summer which was well attended. It is to be hoped that we can do more of this in church activity for The Chandler and other schools.

**Peter Hewson**

## **Safeguarding**

We have had another quiet year as far as safeguarding goes. I am not aware of any issues coming up and no reports of any concerns or worries. The Diocese is concerned that our Parish Dashboard, which shows where we stand on all areas of safeguarding and clearance issues, is not up to date but Jo has taken this on board and changes are coming.

As last year, I have deliberately delayed seeking new DBS checks for those that might need them as we are not undertaking any activities that might require them. I hope and imagine that this will change in the coming months.

**Peter Hewson**

## **Gardens Report**

A huge thank you to everyone who has helped to maintain and keep our church garden tidy. A special thank you to Andy Papworth for his regular use of the mower to keep the grass under control and to Jonathon and Janet Hills for keeping the shrubs trimmed and controlled. Also, a thank you to the Parish council for keeping the rest of the church yard tidy.

Thank you to everyone that turned up with forks and secateurs when we held a working party in the Spring. Also, a thank you to the very welcome provider of cups of tea and coffee for the workers.

Hopefully, we will have another working party soon, to tidy up and prepare the garden for summer.

**Pam Hewson**

## **The Children's Society**

Following the changes established in 2023, fewer Children's Society boxes were handed in for counting this year but we remain very grateful for those members of the congregation and wider community who continue to put money in their box each year. During October the congregation was urged to donate via cheque, cash or Sum Up card reader and a total of £ 505.62 was raised. The Children's Society sent a heartfelt letter of thanks. We also

supported the Society at a Christingle service just before Christmas raising a further £197.31 and our Outward Giving programme rounded the total up to £1,000.

**Penny Clark**

## **Mothers' Union**

The Mothers' Union had a busy year with regular meetings and events within the diocese. Subjects covered in the monthly meetings included reflections on Lent, visiting speakers talking about their lives and work and on 2 occasions beautiful slides shows reflecting the seasons with links to God's kingdom. We also had a craft session led by Revd. Jo, a concert by The Lammass Handbell Ringers and tea celebrating Summer and Christmas by kind invitation of Carol and Geraldine in Church Close. Members also welcomed the chance of sharing with the wider membership at the Lady Day Service at the Cathedral, 2 members' meetings and helping to run the craft sessions at the annual Summer party for women and children from the local refuges and others living in fear.

Money raised at the village fete and during meetings is sent to help pay for costs of running the summer party and also for worldwide projects such as Literacy and Numeracy campaigns.

As well as MU activities in the parish we welcome the chance to improve our link with the Waverley Refuge and Geraldine and Carol deliver goods donated by members and others from across the diocese twice a year. As we have said before we hope to be able to develop this relationship but it is difficult because of families moving on and the confidentiality involved.

As last year we continue to send anniversary of Baptism cards and deal with the Children's Society boxes.

**Penny Clark**

## **Mission and Outreach**

It is an important part of the Life of St John's Milford to support our Mission Partners and other local organisations.

We have continued to support MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship), the world's largest humanitarian air operator, which is close to our hearts because of the link with Fiona Stevenson.

We have also continued to support Chandler School through financial giving as well as time. Peter Hewson continued as a governor throughout 2025. St John's partners with All Saints Witley to provide weekly assemblies.

We also continued to support Skillway, a Christian Charity who aim to motivate and build confidence in teenagers by teaching them practical craft skills allied to trades and to nurture their personal potential, sometimes for the first time.

At Christmas, we collected cash for Shooting Stars Hospice so that parents could use the money to buy Christmas presents for their children.

The Samson Centre founded by John Hambly is another important organisation close to the hearts of the worshippers at St John's. The aim of Samson Centre is to empower people living with multiple Sclerosis.

We have engaged more with Greenhub and Hydens Flower Farm who partner to promote mental wellbeing in teens. We look forward to growing that partnership.

**Revd Jo Lamberth**

## **Flower Rota**

First of all, a very big thank you to all the Flower Team for their help and support this year. They have all been very generous with their time and their flowers. Their efforts ensure that every week we have flowers for everyone to enjoy in the church.

With economy in mind, we have continued to invest in some lovely silk flowers to use during the winter months when fresh flowers are expensive. Fresh flowers will continue to be used in the summer and autumn months. Also, we will continue to decorate the church at Easter with our Easter Lily donation scheme.

We have enjoyed doing the flowers for two out of the three weddings this year with the profits going into church funds. Our prices are very competitive!

**Pam Hewson**

## **Bells Report**

As always, we are grateful to our regular team of bell ringers, Tricia Boynton, Miranda O'Brien, Penny Clark and Chris Denton. Sadly, Marina, one of our team, left Milford but we have been really pleased to be joined by Chris Denton.

It is always good to hear the bells calling us to worship as we approach the church on a Sunday and we also ring the bells at weddings when requested and this year we were honoured to be asked to ring them at three weddings.

Unfortunately, one of the bell ropes was broken for much of the year and this made ringing a little difficult having, only 7 bells instead of 8. However, thanks to Jo who managed to find someone who could repair the bells, we had a full complement to ring for Christmas.

Although we have 5 bell ringers on the list, they are all people who do other jobs as well which sometimes means their duties clash. To avoid this situation, it would be really great to have more church members join the team, men or ladies are equally welcome. It is not difficult; you just have to be able to count to eight and it is really good exercise for the backs of the arms. Please speak to me if you are interested in giving it a try.

**Tricia Boynton**

## **Church Centre**

The Church hires out the Church Centre for community use. The hire charge was increased on 1 July 2025 to a basic rate of £13 per hour to bring it more in line with other sites in the area.

The main user continues to be Milford and Godalming U3A who use the Centre for a variety of different groups. There are though plenty of other dates available for anyone looking for a small room for some occasion/meeting.

Thanks to Debbie for doing the cleaning and the Post Office for keeping the key.

**Bill Braid**  
**Booking Secretary**

## **Music at St John's**

When I joined the church, the choir I saw sing was a maximum of four people, singing in unison. When Jo asked me to take on the choir for the Nine Lessons and Carols Service, at our first rehearsal (19<sup>th</sup> November 2025), ten trepidatious singers arrived and, in only five

practices, became a fantastic, very capable choir singing in four (and sometimes five!) part harmony.

For this service, I called in the favours of my colleagues in the music and theatre industry to come and sing with us, and we were joined by four singers from the fantastic Royal Surrey Choir. We also hired Martina Smyth, a notable organist who has performed at St. Paul's Cathedral. Unfortunately, the organ broke at the beginning of the service, but Martina moved to the keyboard, and the choir rose to the occasion.

In the lead-up to the service, there were notable changes in the church in terms of energy and happiness. Whilst these, of course, have come from Jo's fantastic work in St. John's, feedback from within the choir suggested they felt new joy and excitement in church life and felt proud to be able to enhance the worship of their friends and fellow parishioners. Feedback from the non-choir congregation expressed the same joy, with a feeling of both a return to a once good choral heritage within the church and a revitalisation of the liturgy and Eucharist being supported by excellent choral singing. Within choir, we talk about the meaning of what we are singing, with a high-level of musicality adding more clarity and depth of meaning to the text for singer and listener alike, and the choir ably upholding the congregation in raising their voices in the worship of God. We end all our services with The Chorister's Prayer.

The fellowship gained by the choir is also immense, with many creating deeper relationships with fellow congregants driven by a true feeling of community.

Directly on the back of the Nine Lessons and Carols, the choir has gained two new members, bringing new faces into our church family.

The overall reception of the choir and enthusiasm from within the choir, and desire to promote worship supported by good, traditional music, has inspired me to run the choir full-time, supported by my partner Ruari Metcalfe. Using Ruari's business acumen and my professional music expertise and connections, we are looking at various ways we can develop the choir and secure additional funding. Ultimate plans include choral scholars and a junior choir, but everything in its own time. We will make St. John's a place people of any age can come to learn, participate or experience a high quality of music in worship. Each of these additional fundings require proof of commitment to music.

This is already in action as looking forward to the coming year, I have now secured an organist to join us after Easter. He has an excellent CV, and will play for us regularly. In terms of bringing youth into the church, Jo's leadership has already resulted in our choir being run by somebody under-30 (me!), our church having an organist who is under 30, and music being assisted by somebody under 35. During my hunt for an organist(!), St. John's was commended by many for wanting to revitalise choral and church music in this manner at a time when many are feeling the loss of it.

In a document of aims for the church published last year, the PCC wrote that they wanted better music to support the praise of God, but felt there was simply "not the talent" in Milford. I am proud to report the choir has proved this entirely wrong. The talent was there all the time, and only needed a little love and direction in order to flourish.

It is my privilege to run the choir and see the jubilation and spark it has brought to church life. St. John's is an incredibly special church in which God is so evident, and I feel that this revitalisation of the choir upholds the church's profound Christianity, so wonderfully rooted in tradition, whilst also ensuring St. John's maintains the unique identity of which it can be proud.

**Alice Gold**

## **Wedding Co-Ordinator**

We were delighted to enjoy three weddings in our church this year and three more are booked in for 2026.

**Pam Hewson**

## **Website and Facebook**

Alison continues to make edits to keep our Church Edit website as current and helpful as possible. Since Jo arrived and decisions have started to be taken about new services, so it has finally been possible to retire old descriptions of children's activities which never resumed after covid and add information about our hall-to-hire and our new choir. Alison also adds details of planned services to <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/8197/> (our pages on the central Church of England site) particularly for Christmas and Easter events. And from time to time, she prepares 'whole church' emails to send out through MailChimp.

Alice Gold has started to take over social media posts, adding more Instagram-friendly visual content, beyond the local Facebook event notices that we had been providing up to this point.

**Alison Turner**

## **The Friends Co-ordinator.**

There are currently 27 people on the Friends of St Johns list and of those eight people give regular donations (monthly, quarterly or annually) whilst the remainder made a one-off donation initially.

Two newsletters have been sent to the Friends this year by email or post : before Easter and Christmas. Jo introduced herself in the Christmas letter and news of forthcoming activities and church affairs was added. Information about services and special events were also in the newsletter with a message of thanks and a promise of a warm welcome should any Friends decide to join us in person.

There is still a lack of feedback or acknowledgement for these newsletters so we cannot be certain how interested people are, if they are still receiving them or even if they are reading them. I would welcome some ideas about what we should do next.

**Penny Clark**

## **Data Protection**

We have no Data Protection Officer at the moment but we are currently actively pursuing one.

**Data Protection Officer vacant**