

ST MARK'S CHURCH, ENGLEFIELD
in the Deanery of Bradfield
ANNUAL REPORT of ENGLEFIELD PCC
April 2025 – March 2026

ORGANISATION

Benefice of Englefield

<i>Rector</i>	<i>The Reverend Julia Myles, Chair of PCC. Associate Area Dean</i>
<i>Parish Office</i>	<i>St Mark's House, Englefield, RG7 5EP</i>
<i>Bank</i>	<i>Lloyds TSB, 1-2 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2BQ</i>
<i>Independent Examiner</i>	<i>Mr F W Wells FCA</i>

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council:

<i>Wardens</i>	<i>Paula Fenwick</i> <i>Torquil Montague-Johnstone</i>	
<i>Representatives on Deanery Synod</i>	<i>Paula Fenwick</i> <i>Torquil Montague-Johnstone</i>	<i>until APCM 2026</i> <i>until APCM 2026</i>
<i>Elected Members</i>	<i>Daphne Boddy</i> <i>Peter Hollands</i> <i>Lorraine Dehn</i> <i>Peter Haig</i> <i>Elizabeth Benyon</i> <i>Richard Benyon</i> <i>Linda Price</i> <i>Aldo Guiducci, (Vice-Chair)</i> <i>Catherine Haig</i> <i>Penny Savage (Secretary)</i> <i>Ron Marillier (Treasurer)</i>	<i>until APCM 2026</i> <i>until APCM 2026</i> <i>until APCM 2026</i> <i>until APCM 2026</i> <i>from APCM 2024</i> <i>from APCM 2024</i> <i>from APCM 2024</i> <i>from APCM 2025</i> <i>from APCM 2025</i> <i>from APCM 2025</i> <i>until May 2025</i>
<i>Co-opted</i>	<i>Ollie Bodger (Treasurer)</i>	<i>from June 2025</i>

This report covers April 2025 to March 2026.

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio, co-opted annually or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The Council aims to maintain twelve elected lay representatives having declined to accept the default laid out in the Synodical Government (Amendment) Measure 2003. Eleven elected members served in the year and the PCC has met five times during the year. Members of the Standing Committee are the Rector, Churchwardens, Patron, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

The Treasurer, Ron Marillier, stepped down in May due to ill health and Ollie Bodger took on the role having shadowed Ron for the previous year. Ron Marillier passed to glory in June and has been remembered fondly for his dedication and faithful service. Ollie Bodger was co-opted at the June PCC meeting and the Council is grateful for his stewardship of the finances.

Sunday services are 'streamed' live to the St Mark's community on the weekly email circulation list (approximately 145 people) via a private YouTube link. The average number of hours watched via this link each week is between 3 and 7 with more viewings later in the day or week. The PCC is grateful to Carole Harris who reports hymns to Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI).

The Eucharistic Prayer of Common Worship for each season in the church calendar and the Book of Common Prayer (1st Sunday in the month) are used for Sunday services. The Council ensures that Bible reflections and studies are circulated to the worshipping community. A reflection on the Sunday reading written by Aldo Guiducci is on the weekly news sheet and a selection of his reflections are included in each edition of the Parish News. The church is unlocked each morning to enable visitors to look around the church. The visitors' book records much appreciation of the peacefulness and beauty of the church building.

The Council aims to keep the church in good repair and to monitor the upkeep and appearance of the graveyard in accordance with the latest Diocesan and Parish regulations. Quinquennial work is carried out as required and is due to be completed in March 2026 when the Architect will be invited to inspect.

ATTENDANCE

(Last year's figures in brackets)

The 2025 APCM was held in church on Sunday 11th May. Statistics for Mission are reported for the calendar year 2025, with Baptisms 3 (11); Marriages 6 (10); Funerals 7 (4). The average in-person attendance was 44 (45) adults, 3 (4) children, with online connections averaging 4 (5). In-person attendance (including children) at major festivals in 2025 was: Easter Day 145 (154); Harvest 73 (93); Christmas Day 105 (172).

The electoral roll was revised and is due to be published on 22nd April in church. Numbers on the roll will be reported at the APCM on Sunday 10th May 2026. The total on roll is **63** (62), **49** (47) of whom are not resident within the parish and **14** (15) of whom are resident.

ACTIVITIES during the year

The PCC is confident that the congregation and local community are kept informed of church services, the school news and village events. A weekly news sheet (emailed to over 145 people), the website and Parish News provide up to date information on local issues, events and church news. The Rector keeps the Primary School updated for their news email. Posters on the noticeboards advertise major services throughout the year. The Rector's sermons are posted on the St Mark's website and YouTube; news/events are posted on the St Mark's Facebook page.

Sunday Club is held in term time with a crèche in the vestry each week. Children are encouraged to go into the vestry for craft activities related to the chosen Bible story. The children are always involved in the services at special festivals (eg Harvest and Mothering Sunday). The PCC is grateful to Saffy O'Sullivan and her team for their faithful ministry.

The Rector takes a weekly assembly at Englefield Primary School and is proactive in giving support where needed. A wonderful amount of £500 was raised from the church cake and produce stall towards the £4,000 total raised at the Flower Show. The Headteacher, Hilary Latimer, retired in December 2025 and the PCC presented her with a £250 voucher for the Grange Music Festival Alresford as well as making a donation towards the leaving event at Englefield House. Miss Kate Galvin was welcomed as the new Headteacher in January 2026

Following a poll at the 2025 APCM a Pentecost celebration with birthday cake and fizz plus a Petertide picnic were arranged in response to 'getting to know each other' which topped the poll. Various offers of help were received from a 'Getting Involved' appeal, including two new school helpers. The 'Write to the Rector' cards included suggestions of a monthly men's breakfast; reviving the hymn requests book; having more information from the school; having a votive candle stand.

The PCC is grateful for its Deanery Synod representatives who report on a regular basis. The Deanery events, including Let's Talk Theology are advertised to the church community. The Spiritual Development Group (SDG) is a Deanery-wide gathering at which Carol Boulter is our representative. It oversees the 'Let's Talk Theology' meeting which gathers monthly online in the winter, and at St Mary's Sulhamstead in May-October. Events included a Retreat Day 'Listening to the Spirit' led by Penny Lovelock as well as talks by Bishop Mary 'Arts & Creativity in Revolution and Spirituality' in October and 'Dying Well: What does it mean to me?' by Dr Jane Bywater (palliative care) in February.

Members of St Mark's took part in Ride & Stride on September 13th. Lucy walked for eight hours visiting 23 churches and Torquil cycled for 60 miles visiting 22 churches. Both raised over £1500 for Berkshire Historic Churches Trust.

The congregation has been encouraged to submit their views in the Diocesan survey earlier this year and as a church we continue to pray for the Bishop of Oxford in his retirement and the process of selecting his successor.

Special Services

Harvest donations of food items went to the West Berkshire Foodbank and monies collected were given to Christian Community Action (CCA) in Reading. Claire Lewis from CCA was the guest speaker.

'**Remembering Loved Ones**' was held in November. It is a prayerful time of reflection when a candle is lit as each name is read out.

Remembrance Sunday observed two minutes' silence at 11am during the service.

Christmas Carols by Candlelight was held at the earlier time of 4pm and was very well attended. The choir was directed by Daniel Nicholls and included several members of St Mark's. Daniel had composed a new carol which was given its debut at the service. Mulled wine and mince pies were served afterwards to complete the joyful evening.

Nativityngle (a crib service) on Christmas Eve is very popular with families of all ages (attendance 166). The PCC is grateful to Liz Wirth at the Village Stores for supplying 100 oranges and hundreds of sweets for the Christingles which were assembled by a small group of church volunteers. Richard Smith acted as fire safety officer to ensure the candlelit services were held safely and in accordance with our insurance policy.

The Rector has been co-leading Sunday Evening Worship on the last Sunday of the month with Rev Martin Davy at Holy Trinity Theale to which members of St Mark's are invited. Members of Holy Trinity Theale were invited to join the Ash Wednesday evening service, a time of reflection and prayer with Holy Communion and ashing.

The **World Day of Prayer** was hosted by St Mark's on Friday 6th March in conjunction with several churches from Sulhamstead, Burghfield and Mortimer. The service was written by Christian women in Nigeria and was entitled 'I will give you rest, come' based on Matthew 11:28-30. It featured stories from four women describing their burdens in daily life - injustice, marginalisation, religious persecution, poverty and despair. Members of St Mark's participated in the service and served refreshments afterwards for the 45 people attending.

MANAGEMENT

The Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually with the PCC and volunteers reminded to keep training up to date using the Diocesan on-line modules. Action Plan Level 2 was reviewed and approved. The Council is grateful to the Sunday Club leaders, the Safeguarding Officer and Parish Verifier for their support in this important area. DBS checks are now made through Verifile as recommended by the Diocese. The Rector takes the role of Recruiter for DBS checks. A report is given at each PCC meeting as well as the APCM.

Health & Safety is reported at each PCC meeting and the Council is grateful to Paul Myles for his careful attention and advice. A three-hour First Aid course took place in September in Englefield Village Hall with 10 delegates from St Mark's and 2 from Holy Trinity Theale. The training was competently and enjoyably delivered by Jen Morrison of Thames Training. The six-monthly high-level dusting was carried out by Malden cleaners in July and the five-year electrical inspection took place in April. The church's fire risk assessment was done and a printed copy put in the vestry filing cupboard. A bi-annual H&S walkabout is done by Paul with a member of the PCC. Fire extinguishers are inspected annually.

A report from church heating advisers recommended new twin oil-fired boilers to improve the efficiency of the church heating and to adequately maintain the fabric of the building. The boiler is not to be considered viable after this winter. Alternative 'green' options identified so far do not meet the benefits of the current system. It has already been recognised that to extend adequate electricity cables from the Estate would be extremely

expensive. A new oil-fired boiler would be 30% more efficient therefore burning less fuel to reach the required temperature recommended by the Organ Builders Association.

The condition of the oil tank is inspected monthly by the Englefield Estate. There have been difficulties with regular billing from the energy supplier SSE which frustrates the monitoring of electricity charges. A Smart-meter would not be viable as it would require Wi-Fi connection which is not available during the week.

The PCC is grateful to Innes Catto for his research into secondary glazing for the vestry to help improve the energy efficiency. A quotation was received, however, the benefit achieved for the cost involved was minimal and therefore the PCC decided not to go ahead with the work.

The Technical Team, Peter Hollands, Paul Myles and Ronan O'Sullivan, provide continual high-quality sound in church as well as the online streaming of every Sunday morning service. The team acquired a new Sennheiser body transmitter and lapel microphone to replace one of the hand-held ones. The licensing terms under Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) were reviewed and Peter Hollands recommended using the same four products but reducing our annual payments from £560 to £301 due to the average attendance having gradually reduced from 66 to 49.

The six regular bell ringers meet on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings. New recruits are always welcome. All eight bell ropes were replaced in December as they were over 20 years old fraying badly.

The Council is grateful to the ladies who provide beautiful flower arrangements in church during the year and particularly at festivals. The volunteers who serve a delicious array of refreshments after the service are very much appreciated, as is the rota organiser. The Council is grateful for the support of everyone who serves on the church rota and for their faithful involvement with the church services throughout the year. The Council appreciates the talented organists who play on a monthly rota basis. The organ is serviced twice a year and the possibility of cleaning the pipes is being investigated with several organ tuners. In line with the Organists Association recommendation our organists' fee for Sunday mornings would be increased to £60 with effect from 1 April 2026.

The Council aims to provide 10% of its unrestricted income, averaged over any three-year period, to specific outreach appeals. Donations in the year were made to Christian Community Action, Faith Christian Group, the Salvation Army, Christians Against Poverty, PACT, Medical Education & Training (IMET). The Royal British Legion was supported at Remembrance and Berkshire Historic Churches Trust at Ride & Stride. Good stewardship of St Mark's is encouraged amongst the congregation and community. The QR code linking to our *JustGiving* page, the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS), and a 'tap to donate' terminal in church are provided as alternative options to cash.

Our Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025, as certified by the Accounts Examiner, show a small surplus of income over expenditure for the year and sufficient reserves to ensure that the fabric of the Church can be maintained in good condition including replacement of the heating system. Our parish share for 2026 is £25,829.

The PCC is grateful to Oliver Bodger taking on the Treasurer role and Rosemary Ambrose who was appointed Gift Aid Officer at the 2025 APCM. The 'Good Practice in Fundraising' is followed by the PCC and the guidelines and policy were agreed in March.

Signed

Date