

Church of St Cuthburga, Wimborne Minster

Annual report of activities at the Minster



**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
28th May 2026**

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Rector's Report

The Rev'd Canon Andrew Rowland

I begin by giving thanks to God for the past year, 2025.

I commend to you the report that follows and give thanks for all that comprises the church here at The Minster.

19th January we hosted the annual Holocaust memorial Service.

In January and February we ran Confirmation Classes – great fun!

22nd March I participated in the granting of Freedom of the Town, to the 280 NATO Signals regiment.

8th May I led the civic commemoration of VE & VJ80 (15th August) and the Mayor's Civic Service on the 11th (Cllr. Geof Hart).

22nd June we hosted the Valedictory Service of our retiring Archdeacon, Venerable Antony Macrow-Wood – Rt Revd Bishop Stephen officiating.

24th July we held the funeral and thanksgiving for former rector, Canon David Price, a much-loved priest and dear friend, now at rest.

A highlight of the year was the special Cuthburga Festival month from 31st August onwards in which we commemorated the 1300th anniversary of the death of our saintly foundress. Our Diocesan Bishop, Stephen of Salisbury, presided at Holy Communion with us on the great day, and on 28th September Bishop Karen of Sherborne celebrated as we held a very successful and enjoyable Flower Festival – with particular thanks to Christine Oliver and team.

A hat-trick of bishops was achieved with the visit of retired Bishop of London, Richard, Baron Chartres, to celebrate the Eucharist and share luncheon with the Minster Governors and Church Wardens, 19th October.

The year always draws to a close with the December Season of many Carol Services – literally thousands enter into the spirit of Christmas with us – may the Lord be born into many lives through our hospitality!

All the customary services were held with good attendances at the major festivals. We were pleased with the progress of our 11:15am Minster Praise Service with its linked Young Families Work, led by Claire.

In our traditional worship the choir continued to grow in excellence and numbers under the skilled directorship of Colin, and he also took up the conductorship of the Wimborne Choral Society from our very own retiring Christopher Dowie. Many and varied concerts were also held.

Our liturgy and rotas were mainly organised by my principal Associate – Revd Heather and I pay particular tribute to her dedicated service to us.

My time and cost is now shared across the three parishes of seven churches that comprise our benefice.

I want to thank the extensive team (*Body of Christ*) that supports me and each other. Our shared mission is to 'Make Jesus Known' – the charge upon us by our Diocese of Salisbury and the Christian Church in general.

Sincere thanks and appreciation for our wonderful Church Wardens and Standing Committee (their reward is in heaven!), PCC, Ministry and Staff Teams including Lay Worship Leaders and Lay Pastoral Assistants, Servers, Sidespersons, Intercessors, Bell-ringers, Librarians and numerous volunteers who served the Minster and indeed all seven of our churches, and various neighbouring parishes in interregnum or need.

Much of the Priestly Ministry is provided by non-stipendiary and retired clergy. They are a wonderful blessing to the benefice. Please afford them your appreciation for their loving and dedicated service, as I do.

During the year Rev Sharon stepped away, as her Hospital Chaplaincy duties rightly took priority. We miss her, but as the year ended Bishop Karen asked The Revd Steve Atkins (NSM) to join us, and he will begin after Easter 2026.

I have continued to serve as Rural Dean for Wimborne, and as a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral (Environment Committee), and as a Training Incumbent (for Revd Marianne). I am trustee of many trusts, mostly associated with The Governors of Wimborne Minster, of which I am one. I serve as trustee of Dorset Historic Churches Trust. By virtue of my office, I am a Local School Committee Member at Queen Elizabeth's (Upper) School. I also act as Chair of the SDBF Building Company, which has now ceased trading.

Celebrating all that has gone before and looking forward to all that lies ahead, I conclude by paying tribute to my beloved wife and dedicated partner in ministry, Zahra.

With every blessing in Christ – Andrew

Churchwardens' Report

Andrew Patrick, Peter Cook, Bruce Jensen, David Allen

Quiet Revival

Thanks be to God, attendance goes on growing, with new people joining all our services. In the quietest time, the first ten Sundays of the year, regular Sunday services saw a 22% increase from 2024 to 2025, and 25% to 2026. Christmas services – the busiest time – saw a 25% increase from 2024 to 2025: the Crib service by 47% and Midnight by 20 %. Over 450 attended Easter Day 2026. A Quiet Revival does look to be taking place in our nation. Minster Praise has the biggest percentage growth, and is now the second-largest regular Sunday service, but the Anglican Choral Tradition draws up to 75% of our regular Sunday attendance, and the Choir has grown. Peter and Colin report separately on *Choral Music* and *Concerts*.

A very big thank you!

Four or five services a Sunday, with a wide range of worship – Muddy and Messy Church to Choral Evensong and Compline - plus a myriad weekday activities - all involves a lot of very hard work, as the other Reports show.

So thank you to everyone who contributes to everything the Minster does. Admin, AV, bell ringing, Bible reading, catering, Chained Library, children, cleaning, environment, families, finance, flowers, the Friends, gardening, God's Acre, guiding, IT, laundering, LPA, Lunch & Chat, maintenance, meditation, money counting, music, Oasis, Parish Magazine, PCC, pastoral care, polishing, prayer, publicity, safeguarding, sacristan, servers, trusteeship, welcoming, worship: your time and talents are valued!

But we need more volunteers: can you help? Particularly AV, IT, 9.30 & 11.15 teas and coffees, or as flagged up in the other Reports.

Staff changes over the last year or so have seen Gerald and Elton join John as Vergers, and Martin taking up the new post of Minster Facilities Manager, with Jess now taking over finance. We welcome them to their new roles.

Who does what

We split responsibilities to make things manageable. Peter and David look after Traditional Worship. Peter coordinates events and organises many. Bruce looks after Fabric, IT and AV. Andrew oversees compliance, marketing, "Fresh Expressions" worship and Modernising the Minster.

The Minster buildings, contents, and grounds

Martin is now administering the Inventory on behalf of the Church Wardens. The buildings are in good general order. Please see Church Warden's separate reports on *Fabric*, *Modernising the Minster*, and *Security & Safety*.

Curate's Report

Rev. Marianne Mangham

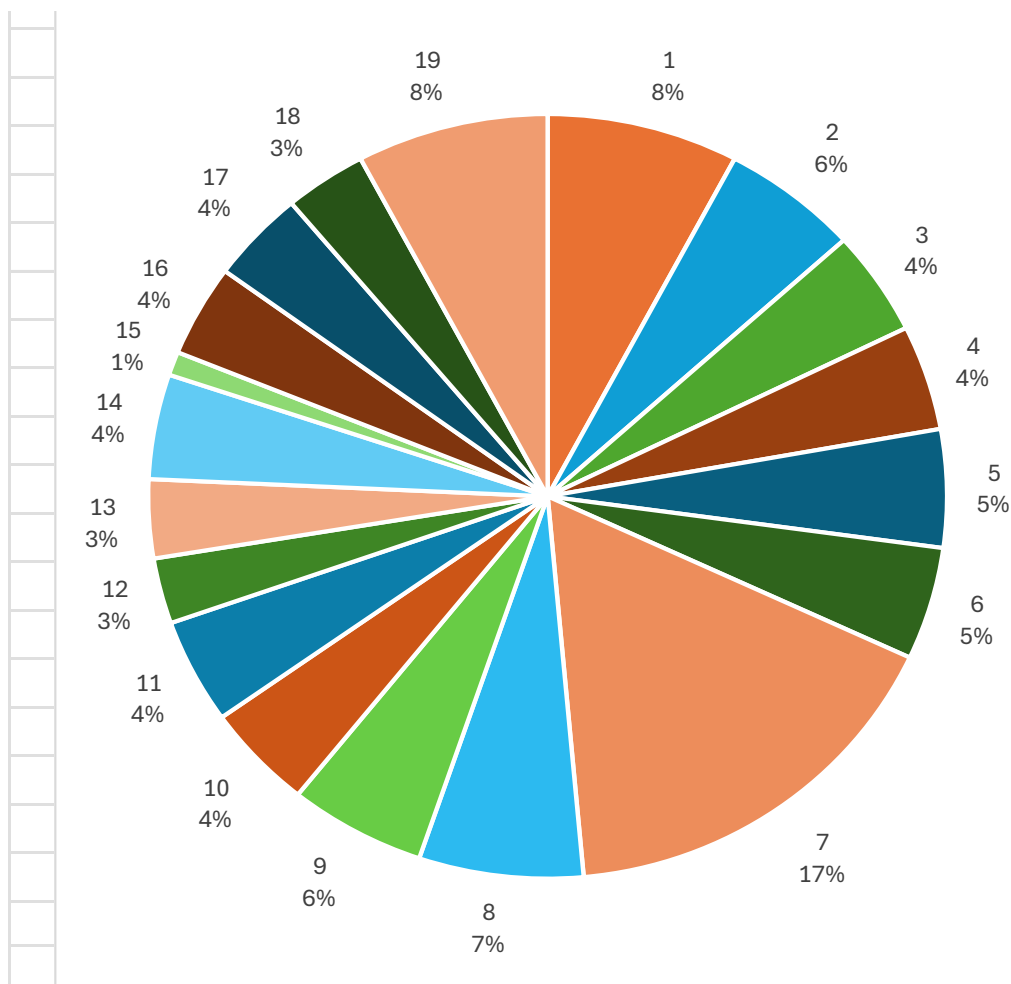
It seems like yesterday I was writing my first APCM report in March last year. Canon Andrew was right: time in curacy really does go quickly. Firstly, I would like to say a big thank you for your partnership in the Gospel and for your encouragement and learning opportunities.

Since being priested last year, my time has fallen into a pattern of ministry which means I spend approximately 30% of my time in the villages and 70% of my time at The Minster. This has meant that my curacy has been rich with experience. From rural ministry: Posada at Christmas: walking with Mary and Joseph as they rode on donkeys through the roads of Witchampton, village school assemblies and chairing my first APCM and four PCC meetings for Shapwick and Kingston Lacy, to leading large Minster weddings, funerals and baptisms, alongside many other weekly services at all of our parishes – life has been very full. Please see the graph for more specific information.

However, the highlights this year have to be co-leading our Deanery Alpha Course, which saw a Holy Spirit Day for three churches with twenty-eight attendees at Corfe Mullen with many people subsequently experiencing a deeper understanding and experiencing of faith. Additionally, co-leading a Deanery LPA Training Course which saw twelve new LPAs being commissioned on March 8th. I have also enjoyed leading a youth Bible study group and soon will be starting a Bible Society *Biblical Overview Course* with a home group.

My work with Christian Aid has been fulfilling and has included recent Christian Aid Week Services both at Witchampton and Minster Praise. Chaplaincy at QE continues weekly: I see students one to one for pastoral support and additionally have created activities and assemblies, such as creating a Station of the Cross experiential reflection within QE's reception area for staff, pupils and young people.

My recent placement with Archdeacon Penny was informative and enjoyable. I was able to reflect and learn amongst other things: approaches to blessing homes, objects and people, the role of the DAC and faculty visiting, and Bishops Council. I continue to look with hope at the months ahead as we seek to join in with all God wants to pioneer and grow in our midst and I look ahead to fulfilling the final IME 6 criteria of 'potential' and 'Safeguarding' – whilst carrying out a large written assignment after completing a local safeguarding audit. Thank you for all your collaboration and support.



1	Chaplaincy and School Visits and Assemblies			
2	Co-Leading Deanery LPA Course			
3	Running Alpha Classes and follow up			
4	Weddings (Nine in total since Priested in June)			
5	Funerals (Twelve in total), including aftercare and visits			
6	Baptisms (Ten in total), including preparation and visits			
7	Church Services - Preparing, Presiding, Preaching, Leading Mpraise			
8	Christian Aid and Charity Work			
9	Speaking and Providing Workshops for Groups			
10	Youth Confirmation Classess			
11	Running Youth Bible Study Group			
12	Leading Morning Prayers			
13	Placements with Archdeacon Penny & St Mary's			
14	Leading House Group			
15	Eco Church			
16	Chairing PCC Meetings and APCM			
17	End of life hospital and home visits and pastoral care visits			
18	Deanery Chapter Meetings			
19	IME: Studies, Course Work, Curacy Essays, Training, Supervision			

Hon. Treasurer's Report

Richard Knott

In the knowledge that we would soon be required to spend a large amount on the recommendations made in this year's Quinquennial report, we budgeted for a significant surplus. That we were able to do this was due, primarily, to the fact that our Parish Share was much reduced as we now have only one salaried ordained minister (the others all being volunteers).

Our situation was further helped by three other factors: we received two small, but significant bequests; while carrying out a major overhaul of their finances, Minster Governors discovered an unused fund which they passed on us; and the Flower Festival raised almost £15k towards the cost of modernising the Minster. Two major benefactors have also continued to cover the cost of employing the Facilities Manager and the equivalent of a full time Verger, so our financial position remains healthy.

That said, we have faced some practical challenges in keeping an accurate account of our finances, which is only now coming to an end. There is no question that any money has gone missing, but keeping track of where all our funds are has not always gone smoothly. Aspects of the Minster finances are undoubtedly complicated as we have a range of designated and restricted funds with rules attached as to how those funds are allocated. Three Finance Managers have been appointed since Jackie left in 2024 with two deciding that they are not suited to the role; but we have employed outside accountants to check that all is now well; Jess, our present Finance Manager has slotted easily into her new role and is enjoying the challenge; and a new (and much cheaper!) accounting system, designed for use in churches, is now in place and proving to be much simpler to operate. I am genuinely optimistic that next year will prove a turning point.

The financial challenge for 2026 will be funding the major changes to the inside of the Minster. We cannot apply for grants until we have obtained permission from Dorset Council and Salisbury Diocese and getting that permission has proved a long and expensive process. (We have already spent many thousands of pounds in architects' and consultancy fees.) However, the end appears to be in sight and the long-awaited toilets, ramps and other changes now seem close to reality.

Safeguarding

Jane Davidson, Parish Safeguarding Representative

“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6 8



The National Safeguarding Team
Promoting a Safer Church

The Safeguarding Team at the Minster have received excellent support this year from the Diocese Safeguarding Team with monthly Zoom sessions and

face to face visits.

The Safeguarding Hub now registers volunteers, their training and DBS records. We are working to get all the staff, clergy and volunteer information up to date.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Safeguarding Training

As the Minster has a turnover of over £100,000 per annum, PCC members are legally required to have Enhanced Adult and Child DBS check. It is not related to any role a PCC member may carry out but a reflection of the overall responsibility of the day to day running of the Minster and its staff and visitors.

All volunteers need to go through Safer Recruitment. Safer Recruitment is a short application, informal interview and references. All community volunteer roles follow a similar process. Appropriate DBS checks and training are completed for the role. This information is entered onto the Safeguarding Hub by Jane Davidson, Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR)

The Safeguarding Hub notifies via email the appropriate training and level of DBS required for the volunteer role. **ALL** volunteers **MUST** complete **BASIC** Safeguarding training. All DBS checks are completed online. Jane can assist with these if necessarily. Verification of original documentation can now be completed digitally when the renewal is submitted or, face to face with Jane or other local verifiers. Checks and safeguarding training are renewed every **THREE YEARS NOT FIVE YEARS**. Registered volunteers will be notified when training is due for renewal.

Training is online through the Salisbury Diocese website:-

<https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>

Jane is available by telephone (07962718724), email janedavidson1959@gmail.com or appointment in the Minster; for enquiries, DBS checks and support with online training. De Ashton, acts as Deputy Parish Safeguarding Representative (DPSR) in Jane's absence.

Thank you to all the Wimborne Minster volunteers and congregation for their support in delivering the Safeguarding agenda. It is of great importance to ensure that our congregation and visitors are treated as Jesus would encourage us to do and historical mistakes are not repeated.

Deanery Synod Report

De Ashton

The Minster's Deanery Synod representatives for the year were: De Ashton, Minna Harvey, Anne King and Sarah Steele. There were three meetings, in March, June and November, the last being via Zoom. During the year a new Deanery Framework was presented in draft form, discussed, revised and accepted by the Synod. It has 6 areas of focus: Prioritising Children and Young People; Courageous Christian Leadership; Creative Partnerships in local mission (especially with schools); Justice and Creation Care; Financing the Future and Supporting Worship and Prayer. Thanks to Gillian Clarke for preparing this.

The Synod also discussed and implemented a new Deanery Facebook page – all are invited to 'follow'. Thanks to Hannah Wallace for creating it.

Financial matters always featured, with reports from Deanery Treasurer Derek Howshall, who prepared thorough sets of figures, balancing encouragement with hard facts. The Deanery churches had been asked to send just under £1.2m between them to the Diocese in Parish Share. By November, 77% of that had been sent. In June, Elizabeth Harvey of the DBF gave a report on how revenue is gathered from other sources, such as sale of property assets, accessing external funding and initiatives such as a solar farm.

Farewells were made to retiring clergy: Peter Breckwold, Jane Burgess and Deborah Matthews, also to Archdeacon Antony Macrow-Wood.

It is always encouraging to hear how other churches in the Deanery are continuing to 'Make Jesus Known' and to learn from their initiatives.

Section 2 Worship

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Choristers' Sunday School	<i>Heather Davey</i>
Flower Ladies	<i>Jackie Wharfe</i>
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Servers' Report	<i>Philip Evans, Head Server</i>
Sidespersons Report	<i>Anthony Oliver, Head Sidesperson</i>

Bellringers' Report

David Warwick, Tower Captain

2025 has been a year of good stability in the band with the regular core of eighteen or so ringers showing dedicated commitment to the ringing in the tower every Sunday and Tuesday. Additionally, extra-curricular activities such as peals, striking competitions and outings have been enthusiastically supported, and social occasions have been varied, plentiful and enjoyable. Recruitment and training have had success with two new youngsters now ringing rounds, and two more (slightly older) in the early stages of handling a bell.

Excepting a few occasions, we've rung all twelve bells each Sunday morning before the Parish Eucharist. Grandsire, Erin and Stedman Cinques, Cambridge and Yorkshire Maximus with some call changes and occasional Bristol Maximus has been the repertoire.

We've continued ringing quarter peals for Evensong, successfully completing 48 of which 28 were either Cinques or Maximus. Esther Davey rang her first on 12 (treble to Grandsire Cinques), James Cheshire his first on 10 (treble to Grandsire Caters) and Ben Avery his first of Major (treble to Cambridge). Hilary Child and Holly Kilgour rang their first of Bristol Maximus, and there were several other firsts achieved through the year – including a silent and non-conducted quarter of Yorkshire Maximus during Guild Firsts' Week.

Tuesday practices have been well attended, starting at 7.00pm on the front eight with the focus being on the younger ringers. Rounds, Plain Bob and Grandsire Doubles, Cambridge Minor, Grandsire and Stedman Triples with some Surprise Major mixed in. Tutoring through standing behind and explanation before and after touches has been shared by almost everyone and this has given the young ringers plenty of varied perspective and assistance in their learning. Twelve-bell ringing has generally started at around 7.45pm practising the Sunday repertoire of Grandsire, Stedman and Erin, Cambridge, Yorkshire and Bristol and also extending to Zanussi and Spliced Maximus. Visitors have been welcomed and given appropriate opportunity to join in with the ringing.

Three local band peals were successfully rung – 4-Spliced Maximus at Easter, Lincolnshire Maximus in May (conducted by Harry Blamire) and Stedman Cinques during the Flower Festival in August (conducted by Louis Suggett). A band including seven of the Minster ringers scored a peal of Spliced Stedman Cinques and Bristol Maximus at Christmas. Additionally, a Minster band (with one visitor) rang a peal of Cambridge Maximus at Llandaff Cathedral in October, and Esther Davey and Ben Avery rang their first peals – a peal of Plain Bob Triples at Bradford Peverell in December. The photo shows the band that rang with Esther and Ben in their first peal.





Wimborne won the Guild 8-bell striking competition at Amesbury in September and came second (to West Dorset again) in the 6-bell competition at Shrewton. (The photo shows the winning Wimborne 8-bell team with the Ivan Andrews Guild trophy.)

We gave our best-ever performance at the South West 12-bell competition in



October. Ringing Little Bob Maximus at Newport, South Wales, the scores of the 10 teams ranged from 50% to 93%. Our 91.5% put us in 3rd place within a hair's breadth of the top two teams - Exeter and Bristol – both of which have won the National Competition in recent years. We entered the National 12-bell competition in March this year, ringing in the qualifier heat on the mighty bells of St.Mary-le-Bow, London coming 5th (out of 6 teams). The photo shows the Wimborne band at Newport Cathedral wearing our new polo shirts, featuring the Minster logo and colour, worn when we are representing the Minster. Open Days to demonstrate ringing at the Minster Fair in June and for Heritage Week in September again attracted a good range of visitors, and we took advantage of the Family Days in August to offer people the opportunity to visit the ringing chamber and have a go at ringing a bell. Four new ringers have been taught during the latter part of the year and we look forward to them integrating fully with the band during 2026. Wimborne ringers have been very active in their support for ringing in the wider area, assisting at local towers, leading and helping at Branch Training courses and contributing to SDGR committees, all of which helps to foster good relations with ringers in Dorset and further afield.

Social events have been much enjoyed this year – including the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party, summer barbeque, and New Year's Eve supper before ringing in 2026. We also hosted the Branch Carol Service at the Minster, followed by mince pies and drinks in Church House which was enjoyed by about 50 members.

A single day outing in May to Yeovil, Taunton and South Petherton gave the band opportunity to experience ringing at different 12-bell towers, and in July we rang a quarter peal of Stedman Cinques at Winchester Cathedral. The main outing of the year was a full weekend in Cornwall organised by Harry Blamire. We rang on some of the area's best bells – the highlight being Truro Cathedral. (The photo shows the band in the ringing chamber at Truro Cathedral.)



Choirs' Report

Colin Davey, Organist and Choirmaster

Another successful year for music at the Minster!

Recent chorister recruitment events have been very successful. We currently have 19 singers under 18; with increasing numbers (currently 6) singing lower parts as efforts to keep boys singing through voice change start to pay off. We're building a strong culture of this now, and it's proving very positive in terms both of the balance of the choir and the overall sound. A number of our stronger singers have recently moved down; our treble line is now mainly made up of singers with less than 18 months' experience in the Minster, and we can consider this a period of rebuilding. The choristers have coped remarkably, with a number of excellent performances over the Easter period.



(Minster Choir sang Evensong with Salisbury Cathedral Girls' Choir)

With that in mind, we have changed our model of vocal coaching, moving to using a more experienced current singer assisting Colin during rehearsals to support and encourage the young singers. Esther has taken on this role initially, and we are exploring ways that this could become a sustainable model providing both the opportunity for outreach and developmental opportunities for aspiring singers. In addition, Peter Cook has been helping to train the lower voices in Tuesday chorister rehearsals.

The choir took part in a very successful concert with Armonico Consort and singers from local schools; more events like this are planned. We also joined Salisbury Cathedral choir for choral evensong, and were in turn joined by the college of Elizabeth College Guernsey. Both of these events have led to calls for a return fixture; nothing is decided but both are possibilities.

The Sopranos have continued to grow, and a second monthly service and some rehearsal time have both become regular features on the calendar.

Minster Voices have stepped up admirably to some more demanding repertoire and have continued to lead worship at a number of important services through the year.

In October, Colin's work at the Minster was recognised by the Royal School of Church Music, with the presentation of the Nicholson Award at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. In addition to his role, the choirs are supported by a huge team: Peter Cook (as mentioned above), Peter Gibson (librarian), Rosalind Jensen (robes & chaperone), Claire Lehmann (who has been instrumental in our successful recruitment), Liz Watson (Minster Voices admin). We've been lucky enough to have a number of superb musicians accompanying (and occasionally conducting) us – David Warwick, Sean Tucker, Sam Hanson and Peter Cook.

Choristers' Sunday School

Heather Davey

The Sunday School has continued to meet when the choristers sing at the morning 9.30am Eucharist. Choir numbers have grown so, consequently this has had an effect on the group. We have a strong team of five volunteers who work on a rota basis, and who prepare material for the classes and lead the sessions. Usually, the theme for the week is based on the Gospel reading for the day or on one of the other readings specified in the lectionary. On occasion, this may vary and themes may be chosen to reflect repertoire that the choristers are learning, or more general aspects of Christianity. We continue to use *Roots on the Web* as a starting point for preparing sessions, but tailor this to the particular needs and interests of the group. Activities in the past year have included games, crafts, quizzes, craft and discussion.



(Members of the choir recording a carol for the diocesan Christmas campaign)

Flower Ladies' Report

Jackie Wharfe

The year has been busy.

The Flower Festival will be reported on by Christine Oliver who has to be commended for her commitment and organizational skills.

The Flower Ladies and other volunteers have work hard to provide floral decorations in the Minster, not only for the festivals but throughout the year.

A decision was made to provide silk flowers at the High Altar so we could use the extra money to decorate the porch as a warm welcome to the Minster. This has been



commented on and appreciated.

We had 9 weddings in the Minster, for 3 of which we provided extra flowers. We make a small profit on this service which means that we can keep our books balanced. We have put up the price for this service in 2026, as the prices of the flowers have gone up by at least 20% depending on the time of the year. In the future I will be asking the Churchwardens to increase the fixed flower fee as well.

The Minster was asked to provide a display for the Salisbury Flower Festival, which thankfully, though stressful was successful and appreciated.

I asked for donations of garden flowers last year at the encouragement of many of the congregation.

Unfortunately only one bunch was left and we found the garden flowers do not have a long life span.

Carnival Flowers gives us 10% discount and can be trusted to provide fresh flowers and be there in emergencies, which is invaluable.

I would like to thank the Friends of the Minster for their support and encouragement. A huge thank you to the ladies who provide their time and effort to create beautiful flower arrangements. They have become a group of close friends who are very supportive of each other.

The Minster seems to be getting more and more visitors, and I have had many comments of appreciation. This is wonderfully encouraging to all. I hope we can continue to enhance our beautiful building.

Lay Worship Leaders and Minster Praise

De Ashton

Our informal, family-friendly 11.15am service, Minster Praise, has continued to thrive in 2025, attracting growing numbers of families, older worshippers and visitors. Claire Lehmann's role as Family Outreach Worker has led to her making contact with families who find 'Kids in the Crypt' a great way for their young children to engage with Bible stories. The worship leaders, Revds Andrew, Derek and Marianne and LWLs De Ashton and Andrew Patrick, have tried to lead worship which is both accessible for people who have little prior knowledge of church and offers food for thought for more mature Christians. Numbers have risen overall, although affected by the seasons and diary highlights. The services have not necessarily followed the Lectionary, but have combined the Church's usual festivals with short series on themes such as 'Old Testament Heroes' and 'Miracles of Jesus'. Various creative elements have been included, like making, drama and film clips. Once a month there was an additional Holy Communion service.

The team is very grateful to the musicians who played for services: Rosemary Protheroe, Sue Tipping, Dinah Ingle-Finch and visiting keyboard-players Phil Bevan and Joe England. In August we welcomed Bishop Stephen to sit in the congregation, having preached at the St Cuthburga Patronal Festival service, and are pleased to report that he loved it! We also included baptisms in some services.

Many thanks to those who acted as welcomers, the people who provided the refreshments (a mammoth task), the volunteers who assisted with the children, the vergers and furniture-movers and the technical back-up team.

We look forward to being more inclusive in the future when the porch area is re-ordered and toilets are provided.

Saint Margaret's and Saint Anthony's Chapel

Dinah Ingle-Finch and Sue Robinson

Our 11am Holy Communion services on the third Thursday of every month continue, with regular attenders, visitors and newcomers alike, enjoying worship in this special place. A dedicated rota of Minster clergy leads the Common Worship service appropriate to the liturgical season or occasion.

Early in 2025, it was decided to see if the chapel bell, which has not been rung for some years, could be used again. Churchwarden Bruce organised a safety inspection and the Almshouse Trust recently agreed to the necessary works. We look forward to hearing the ringing of the bell again before the start of worship each month.

In July we were delighted to welcome Rev. Marianne Mangham to lead the worship for the first time since her ordination. She talked to us about a 'Rule of Life' and how we can benefit from aspects of this ourselves. This theme particularly resonated with our former chapel 'verger', John Old, who follows a rule of life as a Tertiary member of the Franciscans. Beautiful bouquets of seasonal garden flowers adorned the chapel and hymns were led by piano and flute. After the service, our customary fellowship and refreshments were enjoyed by all.



On Saturday, September 13th, the Ride and Stride fundraising event for Dorset Historic Churches Trust celebrated its 65th year. Once again, St Margaret's was open throughout the

day to welcome and provide refreshments for cyclists and walkers from near and far. True to tradition, the Minster Cycle Team of Martin, Bruce and Dinah were first to arrive after making an early start. In all, around 50 visitors came to the chapel during the event, including one of the canine variety!

Our contribution to the Crypt displays by benefice churches at the renowned quinquennial Minster Flower Festival was planned by Sue and Leonie. There was a written description of the Chapel's place in local history and community, and its continuing worship. There were medicinal herbs (as may have been used for the lepers who lived and worshipped there), a dragon for St Margaret, a pig for St Anthony, a beautiful Minster Broderers kneeler depicting the Chapel, and the chapel banner.

In October the Rector led the worship, celebrating Harvest and the ministry of St Luke. The Chapel was creatively and colourfully decorated and traditional harvest hymns were sung. Fresh produce and tinned goods were gratefully received by the Allendale Centre's Community Food Supply. Cake, hot drinks and friendly chat were enjoyed after the service. Once again, for the Christmas season our beautifully ornate Nativity figures were displayed on the chapel windowsills. They remain there until Candlemas when they return to the Minster for storage. Advent candles, seasonal greenery and shiny baubles added to the festive atmosphere at our popular and well-attended Service with Carols. Afterwards there

was mulled wine, hot drinks and sweet treats along with convivial conversation in the lovely surroundings of this holy place.

Even when it is cold outside, the chapel is cosy and welcoming, thanks to Pauline, Almshouse resident and our chapel's key holder. We are grateful for all she does; to our musicians Leonie and Dinah; and to Sue and other helpers who make worshipping here such a pleasure and privilege.

Servers

Philip Evans, Head Server

Overview

This year has been a positive and encouraging one for our small team of servers. Through regular service at the Parish Eucharist and other special liturgies such as Christmas and Easter, our servers have continued to support the worship of The Minster with dedication and reverence.

Service and Commitment

Everyone's reliability and willingness to serve have contributed greatly to the smooth running and prayerful atmosphere of our services.

Thanks and Appreciation

I am grateful to all our servers for their time, commitment, and reverent service.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we hope to build the team, so would welcome new members and can provide training.

It is a great honour and privilege to be able to serve and to be right at the heart of the service at the altar, so please prayerfully consider if this is something that you may be called to do. We work on a rota basis and with the Rector's permission, have the same time off as the Choir, so it is not too onerous.

Our aim remains to serve the altar and Minster faithfully while growing in faith and understanding together.

Picture: servers leading the Palm Sunday procession



Sidespersons

Anthony Oliver, Head Sidesperson

I want to start by welcoming those who have joined the Team during the course of the year Linda Salter, Jacqui Myers, Tricia Knott, Sue Slydel, Ian Grimbly, Adam Deary and Sam Hammond. These additions have greatly helped and ensures that you are not on duty too often. However although we still have a reasonable number of Sidespersons we can always do with more. Remember they cover four services on a Sunday and also special services held throughout the year. If there are any members of the congregation who would like to join the Team particularly for the 8.00am Holy Communion Service on a Sunday please just speak to me. The only requirement to be a Sidesperson is to be on the Minsters Electoral Roll.

Throughput the year Sidespersons have continued to maintain their high standard of giving a warm and friendly welcome to all those attending the different Services in the Minster. This is often commented on by not only visitors but also regular members of the congregation. Thank you to all involved and also to those who have assisted at special services during the year.

The Sidespersons list now includes those taking up the Elements at the 9.30am Parish Eucharist and thank you to those who have joined this Team.

If there are any members of the congregation who would like to join either team they only have to speak to me.

Section 3. Building and Grounds

Fabric Committee Report	<i>Bruce Jensen, Deputy Churchwarden</i>
“God’s Acre”	<i>Judy Burrows</i>
Minster Re-ordering plans	<i>Andrew Patrick, Churchwarden</i>
Safety and Security	<i>David Allen, Deputy Churchwarden, Andrew Patrick, Churchwarden, Martin Smith, Facilities Manager</i>

Fabric Report

Bruce Jensen, Deputy Churchwarden, Chair of Fabric Committee

Windows: an act of vandalism on the Michael James window (over the West door) broke several panes, which were repaired with great skill by Stonecroft Stained Glass. Several quotes were obtained for the repair of the Beaufort window (faculty submitted April 2026).

Glass doors: a vandal broke one of the two glass doors of the north porch, which was replaced.

Boiler: our gas boilers failed their safety inspection in May. We made the decision over the summer to replace our 2 aging boilers with one efficient modern condensing boiler. We engaged Max Fordham to consult with us on installing the heating system in such a way that we can easily migrate to all-electric heating, in accordance with the Church of England's goal to be Net-Zero by 2030. After overcoming some initial problems, our new boiler is heating the church using much less gas than the old boilers. We were awarded a C of E Demonstrator Church grant to pay consultants to design a fully-electric heating system.

Churchyard: three benches in the churchyard were restored. A car crashed into the (new!) fence in the Forest Garden, necessitating repairs. A tree along the wall between God's Acre and the Forest Garden blew down in a strong wind. The tree was sawn up and the logs stacked along the wall, to encourage wildlife. Since it had been more than 5 years since the last tree survey, we had a new survey in 2025. Recommendations from that survey are being pursued.

Drains: A complete survey of the rainwater drains in the churchyard was undertaken. An inspection chamber was added to the drain that runs from beside the steps to the boiler room into the main rainwater drain under the path along the north side of the church. The drain was inspected with CCTV, was found to be damaged, and was relined.

Lighting: The exterior lighting of the church was improved. For the floodlights, faulty lights were replaced and lights were added to spots that were not sufficiently lit. Some small lights were added to the path along the south of the church for pedestrian safety. The emergency lights in the interior of the church were surveyed and a project was initiated to upgrade them.

West wall, children's corner: The last remaining project from the 2020 Quinquennial report was to fix the Beethell monument on the west wall in the children's corner to the wall with stainless-steel cramps, repair and replaster the wall, and attach the Wardell monument in the baptistry with stainless-steel cramps. We had a quote from Ellis for around £7000 for this work. The faculty was submitted and the DAC asked for a more

detailed statement of works from our architect. The architect's statement of works said the Beethell monument (which is made up of many separate pieces) should be taken off the wall, all iron cramps and fittings be removed, and then the monument be reattached with stainless-steel cramps. The new quote from Ellis for this was around £30,000. A second quote from a different firm was £20,000. It was decided to wait on this work until the next Quinquennium.

2025 Quinquennial inspection is due to take place over three days. The first was 2nd October 2nd, 2025. The second visit was Wednesday 18th February 2026. The third visit is yet to be scheduled.

Pictures below: a) Damage to the Michael James window; b) Installing the new boiler



God's Acre

Judy Burrows

I began last year's report by saying that it has been a challenging year for gardeners. Well nothing changes! I have lost count of how many named storms we have had, and of course there is a major clear up each time.

Last April Mollie and I went to Knoll Garden to pick up the grasses which had been donated. They are now in situ and are thriving, and hopefully add to the environment. They look great anyway.

The garden looks wonderful at the moment with the wild garlic and bluebells doing their thing. The bluebells are a little early this year due to the warmer spring weather. When



they have finished blooming we will dig some up to create more space.

We have renewed the path with bark chippings and this year's Christmas tree has been cut up and used to line it. Our plan for the future is to get more interest in for summer. After spring it tends to go rather dull. Fuchsias, hardy geraniums and crocosmias should provide brightness.

We are waiting for the remaining rubbish from the collapsed tree to be removed. Hopefully this will be done soon.

We are very fortunate that we have a new member in Lennie, who works nonstop and achieves miracles.

The new guidance on bird feeding is that seed feeders should not be used so as not to pass on serious infections. We can use fat balls and scatter a little seed; this will benefit the small birds as they cannot get near the feeder due to the jackdaws and magpies..

Hope you continue to enjoy the garden. We love working there. Why not join us?

Minster Re-ordering Plans

Andrew Patrick, Churchwarden

Our Vision for the Minster is a centre for Mission, traditional and modern worship, musical excellence, and community use, with imaginative interpretation of our faith and heritage. For that we need toilets, a Welcome Zone, accessible Chapel of Remembrance & Reflection, more storage, central dais, Choir School and Music Library.

Those need (a) a Faculty granted by the Diocesan Chancellor on the advice of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), (b) Building Regulation consent for drainage or structural work, and (c) planning permission (PP) for any extension. Feasibility studies began in Autumn 2022. The Minster community gave broad support upon consultation in Spring 2023, but Dorset Council officers made it clear getting PP for an extension would be very difficult. So, to achieve the most urgent needs, we are focussing, as Phase1, on getting toilets and Welcome Zone without PP.



Toilets in Trinity

‘General use’ toilets are urgent for Mission and safeguarding, and use as a music venue. The only readily available sewer connection is south-east of the Minster, so after DAC informal advice, and a very great deal of thought, consideration, and prayer, we propose a “Toilet Pod” in Trinity (no longer used for worship). Whilst not ideal – there is no ideal available – it should be soundproof and will be plumbed, drained, and ventilated via the existing heating duct. Reflecting the organ casing in appearance, it will be out of sight of the main body of the church, especially the Nave and High Altar, but easy

to get to by parents with small children or those with mobility issues. (See the computer-rendered visualisation.)

The Welcome Zone

Our entrance should be welcoming, safe, and accessible for everyone. But the main doors are dark, heavy, and difficult to open, and the steep steps are potentially hazardous and an obstacle to baby buggies or mobility devices. Thus we propose glazed main doors, shallower carpeted steps away from the doors, a carpeted ramp for buggies and mobility scooters, and push-button door operation. The old shop counter is important to the Minster’s Mission, acting as make-shift servery for Minster Praise, Messy Church, concerts, and cream teas, with potential for more. But it is too small, with no plumbing or drainage. The shop is partly redundant, so we propose reducing it to enable a large “tea & cake” servery, plumbed and drained (but with no cooker, ‘fridge or dishwasher).

Faculty Application

These toilet and Welcome Zone proposals were supported by the vast majority of the Minster community who responded to the Spring 2025 consultation so the PCC resolved to apply for a Faculty. This involved the completion of 30 drawings by our Architects,

Benjamin & Beauchamp, who specialise in old buildings, especially churches. They were accompanied by 189 pages of documentation, half by the Architects, and half by myself using my past experience as an Architect, Town Planner, and in conservation. The Faculty was submitted in October 2025. The DAC queried some details, so changes were made to the appearance of the server cupboard, and the carpeting (which will be ribbed, and light – mid grey to match the stone floor).

Formal consultation, which is a legal requirement, with organisations such as the Victorian Society, closed in mid-April. No organisation had objected by the deadline. Apart from the Server and carpet the only material comment is the re-use of the ornamental hinges from the existing Victorian Main Doors (probably possible in Phase 2). The Faculty application is to be reviewed by DAC on 8 May and can hopefully then proceed. It then has to be advertised for 30 days before the decision by the Registry or Chancellor of the Diocese. If there are no objections that could be in June or July.

Building Regulation Application

This was also submitted in 2025. Over the years we have been exploring many ways of draining the server sink that avoid or minimise excavating through the consecrated grounds, and extensive burials both inside and outside the Minster. At the time of writing (mid April) we are finalising the most practicable route, by gravity to a pump in the adjacent boiler room, then through a new 63mm pipe to be laid in the existing CH ducts which extend all the way to the far end of the South Transept, thence via a 400mm deep trench through ground already disturbed when the stormwater system was put in in 1985, to the sewer outside the Vestry.

Finance and construction

If Building Regulation consent is achieved, our Architects will put the Phase 1 works out to competitive tender on our behalf. This will tell us if Phase 1 can be financed now out of funds currently held by the Minster and associated organisations, including the £16,000 raised by the Flower Festival for the steps and ramp. It will also indicate how long contractors expect to be on site – much of the work is high quality joinery which will be made in off-site workshops. If we are granted Building Regulation consent, if we are granted the Faculty, if we can fund Phase 1 now, and if the contract period fits in, the work might take place in Autumn 2026, but January – Easter 2027 might be more likely.

Safety and Security Report
David Allen, Deputy Churchwarden,
Andrew Patrick, Churchwarden,
Martin Smith, Facilities Manager

Our moral and legal duty is to seek to keep Minster premises and contents secure, and everybody in them safe from fire, injury, or attack. In the light of today's world and local incidents, we must follow best practice, the latest standards, and new laws. That means change to the way we do things. We are thus taking action to review emergency exits and procedures, and management of services and events. Safer recruiting, registration of all volunteers, volunteer role descriptions, clear lines of accountability, and communication, are all vital for security, safety, and safeguarding.

So all volunteers, staff and clergy are requested to follow these actions:

Safeguarding: Wear your lanyard on Minster premises: at all times by Clergy, staff & C.W. team, and whenever on duty by most volunteers;

Security: always keep Outer Vestry doors locked at all times whenever Vestries are unoccupied, or money is being counted, and access Vestries only if you are clergy, staff, or a volunteer with reason to be there.

Safety: when the Minster is open to the public, keep all doors marked as an emergency exit unlocked, and keep the Baptistry doors open.

Policy: follow those in process of being adopted by PCC:

- Emergency Evacuation Policy – Interim Draft
- Intimidating & Violent Behaviour
- Photography & Filming
- Social Media
- Complaints

All staff now have mobile radios while on duty, and this is being considered for Bell Ringers, Chained Library, Forest Garden, and Guide volunteers.

New legislation will impact any event with 200 or more, (including staff, choir, etc). We are therefore reviewing safe numbers for each type of service or event, and the stewards needed, in the light of Fire Service guidance. Booking terms & conditions are being revised accordingly.

The existing emergency lighting was tested to identify weak points, and emergency exit signs reviewed. Deputy Churchwarden David is working up a scheme with our preferred contractors to upgrade both, in consultation with Churchwardens Andrew and Peter, and our Architect Michael Vaughan. Diocesan consent might be possible via a variation on our Lighting Faculty, but if not, a new Faculty will be needed, which the PCC has resolved to seek, if required.

Section 4. Minster Life and Outreach

Aspects of Spirituality,	<i>Heather Butler</i>
Chained Library	<i>Jayne and Mike Twomey, Senior Librarians</i>
Children and Families Outreach	<i>Claire Lehmann, Families Outreach Worker</i>
Concerts	<i>Peter Cook, Churchwarden</i>
Flower Festival	<i>Christine Oliver</i>
Friends of Wimborne Minster	<i>David Allen, Chair</i>
House Groups:	<i>Barclay (Anne Pollard) Emmaus (Sara Ellis), Lighthouse (De Ashton), Peter (Barry Glazier), Refresh (Tricia Knott), Wellsprings (De Ashton)</i>
Lay Pastoral Assistants	<i>Sue Tipping, LPA Co-ordinator</i>
Lunch & Chat	<i>Tricia Knott</i>
Minster Environment Group, (MEG)	<i>Alison Francis</i>
Minster Guides	<i>Gordon Edgar, Head Guide</i>
Mothers' Union	<i>Di Hiscock</i>
Oasis	<i>Sue Tipping</i>
Outreach to Schools	<i>De Ashton</i>
Parish Magazine	<i>Andrew Kelley and Rosalind Jensen, co-editors</i>
Publicity	<i>Anthony Oliver, Publicity Office</i>
Stewardship	<i>Dennis Child, Stewardship and Gift Aid Secretary</i>
Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust	<i>Peter Cook, Chair</i>

Aspects of Spirituality

Heather Butler

Aspects of Spirituality speakers this year were four international and inspirational speakers. Amy Boucher-Pye spoke about *Praying using Bible text*, Dr. John Leach breathed *Life into Liturgy*, Brother John helped us understand and use *Contemplation* and Marie Calvert showed how *Creativity* can be so much part of prayer.

They spoke as we listened then tried things outside our comfort zones. Each Monday evening was unique and so worth going to, and we were pleased to welcome people from other local churches. A big thank you to our lovely speakers. Organisers Paula, Gilly and myself also give massive thanks to Bruce for helping practically, Derek for filming each evening and the lovely team of people who helped with refreshments.

Attendance was disappointing and we wonder whether Aspects of Spirituality in its current form has outrun itself. We are therefore praying about how to morph it into a different format working with Christians from other local churches.

So watch this space!

Chained Library

Jayne and Mike Twomey, Senior Librarians

This was a record year for visitors and donations for the season, and so much more.

	2025	2024	Difference
Visitors	8,866	8,285	+581/+7%
Donations	£3,804	£3,195	+£609/+19% (cash, cards & promotions)
Guide Books and postcards	£1,250	£1,411	-£161/-11%
Total income	£5,054	£4,606	+£448 /+10%

2025 Special Events

Illustrated talks on the Chained Library delivered by Jayne and Mike Twomey to among others Holt Parish Council, Probus (Blandford) and Wimborne u3a.

Heritage Talks: two in the Library and one in Church House, a total of 45 visitors.

Folk Festival: 184 visitors.

Food Festival: only 1 session due to a wedding but 68 visitors.

Flower Festival: 100 visitors across 2 sessions.

A total of 969 visitors over 23 sessions and an average of 42 visitors per session.

Social Media

We are now involved in various social media activities, initiated by Mike Twomey and handed over to Lucy James (new Senior Librarian) to manage. Lucy's work in this area has been marvellous and has undoubtedly raised our profile.



66 followers (started Jan 2025),



92 followers (started June 2025), and



, an end of season addition (reviews in new season expected).

Numerous press releases for the Library were written by Mike Twomey and distributed by Anthony Oliver.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

With the need to implement policies in these areas, new documents were produced and approved by Jane Davidson (JD) and Martin Smith (MS). A new and much-needed formalisation of recruitment documentation was also developed which has been introduced for the 2026 season. Copies of these were also passed to JD & MS for their use if required.

Hard copies of all documents have been introduced to the team are now available in a folder in the Chained Library for the new season.

New 2026 Season opening times

Weekdays: Mon 30 March to Fri 30 Oct

Saturday: mornings only for 1st & 3rd in April, May, June & October, and all Saturday mornings in July, August & September. For Wimborne Festival and Fairs we will open (where possible) on Saturdays 10:00 to 12:00 / 12:00 to 14:00 / 14:00 to 16:00.

Volunteers in the Chained Library

We started the 2025 season with 31 volunteers, having lost four due to retirement personal circumstances or relocation. An on-going policy of active recruitment is still being undertaken, resulting in 34 team members starting the 2026 season. Recruitment is carried out via recommendation from team members, from requests for new volunteers when conducting talks/presentations, in publications (Parish Magazine) and in press releases.

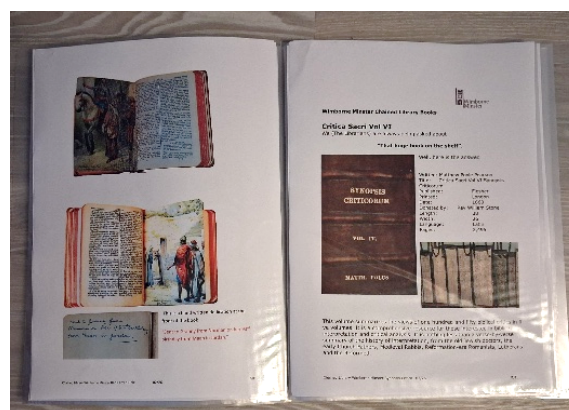
A particular reference, we feel, must be made to two retirees: Norma Aitchison for her unstinting devotion to the Library over 20+ years, and Ian Broadway for his erudition and contribution over the last few years.

News for the New Season

So far, the closed season has seen special visits from academics (including a PhD student from Corpus Christi, Oxford) and researchers, family and interest groups (including a calligraphy group from Brighton), along with a presentation to u3a groups and an antiquarian society in Ringwood.

Also, we have had interest from external groups to make films in and around the Chained Library and the Minster. Phoenix History have completed a YouTube video which has now been uploaded on to their site (previous work done by them with the National Trust and English Heritage). Bournemouth University are planning to make a film for a student project.

The Pre-Season Team Meeting was held in Church House on 9th March with an excellent turnout, where the new initiatives were greeted with enthusiastic support, including the introduction of a new information booklet which will be of great use in the Choir Vestry to show visitors who cannot ascend the stairs the delights and wonders of our Library.



Sincere thanks to *all* the volunteers in the Library for their unstinting devotion and enthusiasm. Thanks also to the Vergers, Minster Guides, Ruth Marshall, Martin Smith and Jane Davidson for their help over the year.

Children and Families Outreach

Claire Lehmann, Families Outreach Worker

This past year has seen continued growth of our families, children's and youth ministry at the Minster.

This includes an increase in families at *Minster Praise*. We are frequently joined by more than twenty children each week, so we now offer two Sunday School groups - Kids in the Crypt for babies and toddlers and Kids in Trinity for older children. In these groups we follow the main theme of the Service through a wide range of activities including crafts, science experiments and sensory play. Making bread proved very popular. There are now also two or three baptisms a month, and many of the families continue to attend, including 8 children that had been baptised this year on Easter Sunday.

Our weekly family provision includes *Forest Garden Toddlers* (Tuesday mornings), which follows the Muddy Church Programme. In the colder months 15 children attend with this number increasing to 30 in the warmer months. The *Two by Two* parent and child group continues on Thursday mornings, where we are regularly joined by 20 children and their carers. Home Education is becoming increasingly popular and our home education group in the Forest Garden on alternate Fridays is attended by approximately twenty children aged two to thirteen. In this group we follow the Muddy Church programme and the main Christian festivals and beliefs. There is also a yearly *Minster Exploration* morning and *Experience Easter* session for home educating families. With support from the Minster, there is also now a parent-run group for home-educating families on alternate Wednesdays in Church House.

Messy Church is held monthly on a Saturday morning - or Thursday during school holidays - covering themes such as Easter, Noah's Ark and Daniel in the Lions' Den. This informal service is regularly attended by 50 children and their carers. *Muddy Church* (in the Forest Garden) follows a similar schedule, monthly on a Saturday morning or on Tuesdays during school holidays. During this informal service we explore Christianity with a focus on biblical links to nature and farmers and fishermen in the bible. *Muddy Church* is regularly attended by twenty to forty children depending on the time of year. Both *Messy* and *Muddy Church* are targeted at families that are new to Church and are spiritually curious.

In partnership with Dorset Children's Foundation, a local parent run charity supporting children with SEN, there are also termly *Messy Church* sessions for children with complex needs.

We have been joined by many local education providers this year at the Minster from the state, specialist and independent sector. This includes Reception children coming to hear the Christmas story and make a decoration for a Christmas tree, specialist settings exploring Christianity and the role of churches in the local community and GCSE history students researching Isaac Gulliver.

Every Monday sixth form students from *Beaucroft College and Canford School* join us for work experience and take part in a wide range of tasks including gardening, vacuuming, service prep and putting up the Christmas tree.

I lead a weekly Art Club at *Pamphill School* for children who find friendships challenging. At the request of the school I now lead regular whole school Collective Worship, exploring the school's focus on Kindness, Love and Forgiveness. I spend two afternoons a week at *Queen Elizabeth's School* providing sixth form chaplaincy and leading the Worship Committee (formerly known as the Christian Union) which is attended by twenty students weekly.

Innovate is an alternative provision school based in CLARC (next to the Minster) that has in time established strong links with the Minster, including regular visits to the Minster where students learn about the Christian faith, and sharing of facilities so that students can learn to cook in the Church House kitchen as part of their preparations for independent living. The number of *choristers* in the choir has increased this year; as well as their singing and Sunday School sessions (*see reports in Section 2*), they have taken part in social events including visiting the Signals Museum in Blandford, a Circus Skills workshop and a Christmas Party. Several Choristers were confirmed at Kingston Lacy following confirmation classes.

Our theme for the *summer holidays* was Festivals and a hundred children a week joined sessions in the Forest Garden and the Minster. Thursday afternoon cream teas were popular, with 50-70 people attending each week. The End of Summer Festival had to adapt due to wet weather, but was well attended.

Highlights of *Christmas* include the Craft Fair which forges links with local businesses and the community, Springs Dance Companies performance of Return of the Magi, and the Crib Service attended by over two hundred children. A joint project between the congregation, Queen Elizabeth's School and Canford School led to 260 shoeboxes filled with gifts being distributed to local teenagers who were unlikely to receive a gift at Christmas. Fifty students at Queen Elizabeths school gave up their time to prepare and wrap the boxes, alongside wrapping 250 copies of the Christmas Story that were given to children over the Christmas period. Dumpton School gave 80 presents for children in the community, that were placed under the Christmas tree. This was very popular with the local community and led to a further 150 gifts being donated, which were shared with schools, Dorset Children's Foundation, and families in the community.

This *Easter*, the donkeys joining us on Palm Sunday, Bun Walk to St Stephens, Pamphill and the Minster Praise Easter Extravaganza saw an increase in attendance.

Women's ministry this year has included a Ladies Breakfast, a Summer Tapas night in the Forest Garden and a Christmas Wreath-making Workshop.

Throughout the year as families and Individuals in the community continue to experience financial challenges our regular *clothes and toy swaps* continue to grow in popularity. This helps in many ways with examples including a parent finding an outfit for a job Interview, school uniform for children following a growth spurt and a 'new' toy for the school holidays. Our yearly Wedding Fair and cream tea cafe encourages couples to consider a church wedding; many are not aware that a church wedding is an option for them. It also builds links with photographers and florists in the wedding industry.

I end this report with many thank-you's and an apology to those accidentally forgotten:

- Firstly, to the 45 volunteers who bake, pray, knit the cardigans for new babies, serve refreshments, oversee activities and stay to help with the hoovering and washing up when the families have left;
- to the facilities team who set up and take down the tables, fill the urn and help with the Powerpoint, and the Chained Library team who welcome groups of children and fulfil the important role of Santa and Mrs Santa;
- to the Friends of Wimborne Minster for their financial support which has enabled the purchase of a new tent amongst other items;
- and finally to the whole congregation, who have embraced the arrival of so many children, young people and families at the Minster in recent years.

Concerts

Peter Cook, Churchwarden

Now that the memory of Covid has receded the Minster is again much in demand for concerts and recitals.

2025 started with an orchestral concert by Dorset Chamber Orchestra with soloist Sam Hanson playing Rachmaninov's *Third Piano Concerto*, a piece requiring considerable skill and stamina. Wimborne Choral Society, now under the direction of our own Colin Davey, began their season with Brahms' *Requiem* in the version with piano duet as accompaniment. Yours truly was persuaded to join the tenor section since I had sung the

work several times in my youth.

At the end of April we welcomed the Orlando Singers, conducted by Sam Hanson in a very successful performance of Bach's *B minor Mass* which attracted an audience of 150. Broadstone Community Band joined us for their Spring Concert in early May and towards the end of the month we enjoyed the first of our now



two annual evening organ recitals. The Barnes Recital is in tribute to Edmund Barnes who was a chorister here in Victorian times and who bequeathed the Minster a substantial legacy which is used to support the choir and provided funds for the organ. This year the recital was given by Sam Hanson who included several requests in his programme.

The end of June saw the usual lunch time school recitals under the Michael James Trust banner "Music Box Week". Originally conceived by Margaret James almost 30 years ago, this opportunity for the Minster to welcome young people is still going strong. The month ended with Wimborne Choral Society's Summer Concert which included Kodaly's *Missa Brevis*. On Saturday July 5 we had a visit by Ealing Choral Society under their conductor Peter Asprey (also Director of Music at the National Musicians' Church in London) who performed an eclectic mix of music ending with Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* and audience participation in *Hey Jude*. This highly successful event raised over £900 for the Minster Makes Music appeal.

Our Summer Recital series began on Monday lunchtimes in July and included performances by Vintage Brass, a school choir from Oxford, a song recital by two of our choristers and a flute recital by Lauren Marshall. Organ recitals took over in August with Simon Morley (a previous organist of the Minster), William Ings from Canford School, Colin Davey and Jeremy Blandford (a former teacher of Colin). All of these were very successful and made contributions towards the Minster and Minster Makes Music.

The Haywood Organ recital took place in September with John Challenger from Salisbury Cathedral. This recital is named after John Haywood who built the organ in 1664 after the Restoration, pipes of which still remain in the current instrument.

As usual concerts abounded in the autumn and run up to Christmas with offerings from Bournemouth Bach Choir, a special concert organised by Chris Slocock for Minster Makes Music, Wimborne Choral Society (singing *St Paul* by Mendelssohn), Bournemouth Symphony and Youth Chorus, Broadstone Community Band, and Bournemouth and District Concert Band. This together with too many school and other carol services and concerts to review in detail here. Music is very much alive and well at the Minster.

Flower Festival

Christine Oliver

The first Flower Festival to be held in the Minster Church of St. Cuthburga for three years took place over the weekend of Friday 26th to Monday 29th September. It attracted over 2000 visitors and raised £16,691.63 towards the cost of a proposed ramp and improved steps to make the historic Minster Church readily accessible to everyone. The Festival was opened during the Preview Evening on the Thursday by the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Mr Michael Dooley with a special 'cry' for the occasion given by Iain Mitchell Town Crier of West Moors, standing in for Wimborne Minster's Town Crier Chris Brown.



The Festival, entitled "The Delights of Dorset," was designed and organised by myself and a wonderful team and I was so grateful for all the help and support I received. Twelve Dorset Flower Clubs took part, each having been given a title depicting somewhere in Dorset, such as Durdle Door, Gold Hill, the Cheese Festival and of course the Jurassic Coast. The latter featured a 16' dinosaur Demelza and her baby Dino, made out of papier mache. The Clubs were joined by the Minsters own team of Flower Arrangers and some individuals. There were over sixty tableaux and smaller arrangements filling every corner of the Minster with colour, taste and smells of the countryside. Visitors were greeted at the West Door by a lovely display depicting the Dorset Flag which was created by Carnival Flowers, the local florist who supplied many of the flowers for the various

arrangements. I also thank the Wimborne BID, some local firms and some anonymous individuals for their sponsorship towards the Festival. Light refreshments were available throughout the Festival.

The whole Festival was a great success and this was evidenced by the numerous comments from visitors left in a book at the exit, which included, "A mini-Chelsea Flower Show, Beautiful" and "Absolutely stunning displays-very talented people".

The Festival was the culmination of a month of events which commemorated the 1300th anniversary of the death of the Minster's Patron Saint Cuthburga. It started with the Patronal Festival on Sunday 31st August and a visit from the Bishop of Salisbury, The Right Revd Stephen Lake, and included three Cuthburga Lectures, some concerts and finally a visit by the Bishop of Sherborne, The Right Revd Karen Gorham, on the Sunday of the Flower Festival.

Friends of Wimborne Minster

David Allen, Chair

The Friends of Wimborne Minster is a registered charitable incorporated organisation originally set up in 1945 to support the Minster with regard to its buildings and its mission. During 2025 the Friends celebrated its 80th Anniversary.

The number attending the annual Valentine's Coffee Morning held in February was disappointing, although it still raised funds in excess of £200. For 2026 there will be an Easter Coffee Morning rather than a Valentine's Coffee Morning. The Friends' stall at the Minster Fair was highly successful and raised in the region of £1,500 which was an increase of 50% over the previous year. The Friends were appreciative of the donations especially



for the sale of plants.

The preacher for Evensong following the AGM was Revd Nick Wells, former Curate at the Minster, and this was then followed by the traditional Cream Tea.

The Cuthburga Lectures were all very good and very interesting, but not as well patronised as we hoped.

1st by Martyn Whittock, supported and paid for by the Friends.

2nd, a Lecture Recital, with Colin Davey, Peter Cook and the choir. This was a joint

venture sponsored by the Friends and the Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust.

3rd, sponsored entirely by the Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust.

Members of the Events Team provided tea for the annual visit of Laudemus! in August, as well as refreshments for the Cuthburga Lectures, choral concerts and organ recitals.

In early September members enjoyed the annual Coffee Morning at Deans Court with Sir William Hanham in attendance. The final event of the year was the November Tea Party which again was very popular, with the entertainment being provided by Dinah (Flute) and Mark (Guitar). A presentation was made to Peter Cook, who was standing down as Secretary of the Friends at the end of 2025, for his service over a number of years.

During the year Trustee John Hughes arranged a successful trip to Winchester Cathedral. A reciprocal visit is being organised for later in the year. The Friends had a stall at the Christmas Frost Fair organised by Claire Lehmann.

Over the past year we have welcomed several new members including four Life Members. Fund-raising produces a modest amount on a regular basis from lectures and teas. With the increasing use of Bank/Credit Cards, during the year, we purchased a card payment machine which has proved highly successful particularly at events such as Minster Fair and where the Events team serve refreshments.

Membership fees have continued to be collected and with careful management of our investments we find ourselves still in a position to make grants. Overall, we are still in a

healthy position and have no doubts about continuing to operate according to our constitutional requirements.

During the year grants were awarded for

- *Choir Cassocks

- *Altar Cloths

- *Vergers Cassocks

- *Albs

- *Altar Frontal

- *Hymn Books

- *Lighting for the Roman tiles

- *Claire Lehmann's work with families

Home groups

Overview by Tricia Knott

Since the major Home Group Refresh in the Autumn of 2024 there has been steady growth and there are now eight thriving groups within the Minster family, each with a slightly different feel and approach but all focused on trying to deepen faith through study and support each other both in prayer and practical ways. Most groups meet once a fortnight on various days of the week, some in the daytime and some in the evening.

The growth in the number of groups has been very encouraging but it has left the need for more people to step forward to lead groups or, in some cases, share leadership. In order to address this need, a very inspiring Leadership Day was held last September led by the Reverend Derek Butler. The day was divided into three main sessions: What is Leadership? Leading a Session and Methods and Materials. Within each session there were small group activities and plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion. As well as the excellent teaching, one of the most valuable parts of the day was the chance to be with members of other groups and to hear about their studies and activities. If you feel you might be interested in helping to lead a group please contact Derek via the details on the weekly news sheet.

The size of home groups is necessarily limited by the size of people's houses (as the name implies) and most groups are at, or nearly at, capacity. However, there are a few vacancies scattered around the groups so, if you think you would like to join a group, please contact Tricia Knott (triciaknott2810@gmail.com).

The Barclay House Group continue to meet regularly. Sadly, through ill health two of our members have been unable to join us, but we remember them in our prayers and keep in touch. We have been studying the Psalms from the *Cover to Cover Bible Study*. During Lent we studied the Lent Course *Journeys and Resting Places* by Rev. Tim Heston, taking it in turns to lead. We all found it very interesting and thought-provoking. We continue to support Ehashan from Nepal through World Vision, both financially and in our prayers, and hear regularly about his progress. We meet socially for a lunch together now and again, enjoying the company. – Anne Pollard

The Emmaus House Group currently has eight members who meet on alternate Monday evenings over tea and biscuits to study God's word and try to understand what this means for our lives. This year we have studied various courses and study books, including *Persecuted Christians*, and *Corinthians*. Most recently we have followed the Salisbury Lent course *Journeys and Resting Places*.

We also use the opportunity to join together to support in prayer those we know of in need of prayer, and also pray for the world's problems. – Sara Ellis

The Lighthouse House Group had seven members for most of the year and met fortnightly in the homes of several members. We continued our study of the gospel of Mark, chapter by chapter, aided by Tom Wright's commentary until the autumn, when we viewed the

videos of 'Aspects of Spirituality' and discussed the types of prayer – praying with the Scriptures, praying with Liturgy, contemplative prayer and creative prayer. We valued the lively discussion and the opportunity to delve deeper into the Bible.

Peter House Group. As a group of 9, we meet in each other's homes on alternate Thursday evenings, with the usual breaks for half-terms and holidays. The home host usually acts as the leader of the discussions of the topics agreed in advance, and for an hour or so we consider the set readings, occasionally obeying the instruction to express in our reading aloud the excitement, the fears, the questioning and the wonder of the biblical verses. We then consider the questions asked by the author of the text under consideration, often challenging the author's assumptions and suggested conclusions. This is followed by refreshments and further discussions which reflect the warm friendship, empathy and support each of us thoroughly enjoys. We were delighted to welcome two new members to our group, replacing long-standing members. During the year we studied The Twelve Disciples, Women of the New Testament and the Lent course: Journeys and Resting Places (Revd Canon Tim Heaton).

Refresh Group has continued to meet on alternate Wednesday afternoons in each other's houses. We have studied a variety of material including Amy Scott Robinson's book *Image of the Invisible*, after which we returned to more traditional bible study with Tom Wright's notes on *Timothy* and *Titus*.

In addition, we have enjoyed some social events such as a summer afternoon tea and a Christmas games afternoon. We continue to support each other in prayer, and in other ways, as members and their families have experienced various ups and downs. Our members also continue to be actively involved in the life of the Minster in many different ways and so we support these activities in prayer including Safeguarding, LPA ministry, Oasis, Lunch and Chat, PCC, Welcomers, Music and children's work. – *Tricia Knott*

The **Wellsprings** group continued with nine members, meetings being held fortnightly in members' homes. Sadly, we lost one of our members, Paula Finn, early in the year. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. We studied New Testament Prayer by Tom Wright, then became engrossed in the Lent course Images of Grace by Amy Scott Robinson, who had led the 'Aspects of Spirituality' series of talks in 2024. This absorbed us until the Autumn, when we began Hope in Hard Places, a study produced by Embrace the Middle East, which gave us much food for thought. We continued to value our WhatsApp group, by which we supported one another with prayer in times both of joy and stress.

Lay Pastoral Assistants

Sue Tipping, LPA Co-ordinator

Our team of LPAs continue to support those in need. We now have 7 LPAs (Lay Pastoral Assistants) in Wimborne Minster – Sue Hatherley, Sarah Steele, Sue Tipping, Tricia Knott and Jackie Deung who have recently been joined by Trish Hitchins and Martin Smith. There are also 2 LPAs who work in the Villages – Gillian Lovett and Jackie Wadsworth – and who are included in all communication, meetings, training etc.

LPAs are involved in various different pastoral activities. Some of us lead the Oasis Group, offering support to those who have been bereaved.

Some of us take Communion to Streets Meadow Care Home and to Wimborne Manor Care Home. We offer this Communion to any residents who want it, and, sometimes, to members of staff as well. We are also hoping to take Communion to Wimborne Hospital sometime soon.

Some of us take Home Communion to people in their own homes. These are usually members of Wimborne Minster who are unable to go to church, for whatever reason. This may be a short term or long term situation.

Some of us visit Church Members who are unable to get out much. Again, there could be a number of reasons for this.

There are also a large number of people in our congregation who visit and provide ongoing support for those known to them who find it difficult to come to church. They are not trained as LPAs but take on the role of “Befriender”. If they feel that the person they are visiting would like more support than they feel able to offer, there is an LPA available to offer that support.

Since I took over as the Minster LPA co-ordinator last Autumn, we have had one meeting for all our LPAs and they have all undertaken the necessary up to date training. A meeting for all LPAs in the Wimborne Deanery has been arranged at St Michaels, Colehill, on April 28th. We plan to have more regular meetings for Minster LPAs and for LPAs in the Deanery. We need to learn from and to support each other in this very important work.

Lunch and Chat

Tricia Knott

Lunch and Chat continues to take place every Friday from 12.00 – 1.00 pm, offering homemade soup with bread, followed by cake and coffee in Church House Lounge. All the soup and cake is donated so all the £5.00 voluntary donation goes straight to the Sudan Medical Link which we are delighted to support. You can find out more about this valuable work by following this link: <https://www.salisburysudanspartnership.co.uk/medical-link> (and see Section 5 below).

As well as raising money and providing a nutritious homemade meal, Lunch and Chat has a lively social atmosphere which is enjoyed by a combination of regular members of the Minster, visitors to Wimborne and staff members. Numbers can vary from week to week so we are always delighted to see new faces.

As ever, we are extremely grateful to all our volunteers both those who make soup and cake and to those who run the sessions, wash up, put out tables and chairs and put together the rotas. If you would like to contribute by making soup or cake or would like to help out at the sessions then please speak to Anne Pollard, Tricia Knott or Sue Slydel.

Minster Environmental Guide (MEG)

Alison Francis



MEG monitors Minster activities with the aim of improving and reducing the church's environmental impact. We recognise that the world is changing fast and it is important to support action to reduce global warming and maintain biodiversity. We care because it is God's creation, not ours, and as a church we are committed to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of our planet.

MEG Activities in 2025:

- Promoting implementation of the Minster Environment Policy
- Caring for our environment which includes the Forest Garden, its trees, growing areas, pond and wildlife
- Continuing to monitor temperatures and energy usage in the Minster and Church House. The new boiler which was installed in the autumn of 2025 did not initially show the expected increase in efficiency, but this is now improving after investigations by Deputy Churchwarden Bruce Jensen.
- MEG was involved in the Spring Green Festival on Earth Day in April and then Planet Wimborne Green Festival in October, hosting the Fair on the Green and providing refreshments in the Minster. There was a week of events with a focus on sustainability talks and activities
- Donate IT was held on two occasions when IT items are collected for repair or recycling and donated where there is a need. A group from Wimborne visited the premises near Yeovil to see how equipment is cleaned and recycled
- MEG continues to be involved in activities in the town such as Win on Waste and the Repair Shop
- MEG joined with the God's Acre team to hold a RSPB Bird Watch in God's Acre in January.

(Image: European Commission)

Minster Guides

Gordon Edgar, Head Guide

During the 2025 season the Minster Guides greeted many visitors and told them about our Minster heritage.

It was my impression that a greater number of visitors than 2024 came into the Minster which is pleasing as it would suggest that the effect of Covid is on the wane. As in 2024, it is also my impression that many of those visitors wanted to know more than superficial details, and from some we learned additional material.

The experimental AV material was well received, and the team learnt a great deal from the exercise. The children's activity sheets were in demand, and adults made a lot of use of the self-guiding folders. I am relieved to say we only lost one during the season.

We also welcomed several large groups, some travelling considerable distances to visit. There was an apparent increase in visitors using Wimborne as a stop-off on the long journey from the southwest to the southeast, but targeting the Minster as the 'place to visit.

During the 2025 season the Guiding team was made up of 10 individuals, but during the season ill health meant that two of our number were unable to fulfil all their Guiding slots. During the time the Minster is open there are 19 Guiding slots which means some slots cannot be filled and some guides must cover more than one slot. In addition, we take booked tours around the Minster and Guides are in the Minster during significant town events such as the Folk Festival.

I am grateful for the support I am given by the Guides and doubly grateful for the warm welcome they give to those who visit us.

Thus, it was with some trepidation that I started the 2026 season, but it has started well. I have two additional Guides training, so in a few weeks the Guide numbers will be back to the numbers they were at the start of 2025. More volunteers would be welcome to cover the Guiding slots that need to be filled each week, and to support other Guide activities. Guiding is fun; you get to meet many different people, so if being with people is your thing, why not come and join us. Sure, there is knowledge to be acquired, but we will support you with that.

There has also been an increase in the number of booked tours for 2026 coming through. Some groups are large and others just family groups. It is a privilege to share the beauty and history of our Minster with them.

The Minster also attracts interest from academics and people undertaking research. For example, since November we have been visited by academics studying a variety of features including dug-out chests, Saxon foundations and heraldic devices in the Beaufort window. All this activity reveals more not only about the development of the Minster, but also about the people who have worshipped here.

Finally, a group of first-year students from Bournemouth University are due to film in the Minster as part of their end of First Year assessment. I have met them and what a delightful bunch of young people they are. They are attempting to tell the story of the Minster in 8 minutes. I wish them well and hope this will be the first of many contacts with Bournemouth University.

Mothers' Union

Di Hiscock



Mothers' Union had another busy year in 2025. Our membership remains steady and as we lose one member we gain another which has been good.

On the first Wednesday of every month we meet for coffee before the midweek Communion Service in the Minster. Our main meetings are on the third Thursday of every month, except August. They have included a wide variety of speakers and activities. The Revd. Marianne Mangham, Revd. Sharon Boyle and Martin Smith were inspirational speakers. *Empowering Her Literacy* was the subject of a discussion led by Jenny Child, which highlighted the staggering number of women and girls worldwide who have no literacy skills. The MU is continuing to teach these much needed skills, particularly in Africa. On a lighter note we visited Beaucroft College for lunch followed by an interesting and informative tour of the Wimborne Community Garden. In December we went to West Moors to a Deanery Advent Carol Service followed by a time of fellowship over tea and cake. We took part in the global Wave of Prayer and organised making posies for Mothering Sunday.

Throughout the year we supported MU projects. We raised money at a tea and cake afternoon to enable a mother and young son, who attend some Minster family activities, to have a holiday in the MU holiday home at Rockley Sands. Some members took welcome packs of groceries and treats for those coming on holiday.

With help from the congregation we sent some generous donations of Tesco and Boots vouchers as Christmas presents to the women in the Salisbury Women's Refuge.

We continue to support our Diocesan projects: - the Angel Tree Project which provides Christmas presents for prisoners to give their children, the Virtual Babies project, the Rise Up against Domestic Abuse campaign, and knitting cot blankets and teddies, as well as the national overseas work.

We now have a notice board in the Minster. We are grateful to Joy Craddock, our branch secretary, for this. She is now researching the history of our branch in Wimborne and has found some interesting facts. You will hear more of this soon!

In 2026 Mothers' Union celebrates its 150th Anniversary! Our theme is JOIN US, JOIN IN. We hope you will!

<https://www.mothersunion.org/>

OASIS

Sue Tipping

The Oasis Bereavement Support Group continues to thrive. We have over 30 members, including several who have joined us this year. We follow up every enquiry with a phone call and a visit, to talk about what Oasis can offer.

Our monthly meetings always start with a “Thought for the Day”, then a shared lunch, followed by a talk, an activity or a discussion on a bereavement topic. The talks have been on a variety of subjects, such as C.A.B, healthy eating, wildlife photography and life as a journalist. We have also had a trip to the New Forest and a Christmas Lunch at the British Legion.



As well as the monthly meetings, we meet for coffee in the Methodist Lounge every Friday morning, and some members then go on to Lunch and Chat. There is always an Oasis leader at these coffee mornings and gives our members a chance to chat to each other informally.

The Oasis members organise a Sunday lunch once a month in a local pub, as many find Sunday is a very difficult day for them. Recently, some members are also meeting for coffee at a garden centre from time to time and, since Christmas, they have organised a Saturday games afternoon at a member's home. Our aim at Oasis is to give those who have been bereaved the tools to cope with a different way of life and to adjust to a “new normal”. Many of our members have told us it has been their lifeline and they have made lots of new friends, who have all been through a similar experience. We welcome people of all faiths and none and we are there for as long as our members feel that they want to come.

- *Sue Tipping on behalf of Carol Jarvis, Sue Hatherley, Tricia Knott and Jane Ashworth*

Outreach to Schools

De Ashton

Three schools' ministries in which the Minster continues to participate alongside other local churches are *Open the Book*, *Experience Easter* and the *Year 4 Leavers' Service*.

Open the Book, created by the Bible Society, enables church groups to go into schools and act out stories from the Bible, contributing to the Religious Education element of National Curriculum. The Wimborne team, made up of members from the Minster and St. John's Church Wimborne, went fortnightly to Wimborne First School early on Wednesday mornings.

In 2025, the team presented stories from the Old Testament in the Spring and Summer terms, from The Creation to the Rebuilding of the Temple by Nehemiah. It's amazing how a gymnastics platform covered in sheets can have a starring role - as a well into which Joseph is thrown, the mouth of a big fish to swallow Jonah and a den for the lions who eat Daniel's accusers! In the Summer term, the focus moved to the life of Jesus, from his Baptism to the Feeding of the 5,000. Christmas and Easter featured strongly in the storytelling, as always. We included up to a dozen Year 4 children in supporting roles at each assembly.

In June of 2025 we were fortunate to have a visit by one of the leaders of the scheme, Steff Shepherd, who gave us fresh ideas for bringing stories to life. We welcomed members of other local OTB groups and shared both learning and lunch.

Volunteers put in considerable time and effort to rehearse the stories and create costumes and props. Many thanks to them all. We are grateful to Wimborne First School for their warm welcome.

Do you recognise these Bible stories?



Experience Easter

Annual Report 2026

During a single week towards the end of the Spring Term, the Minster became a pilgrimage walk from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, with six stations sited throughout the building. Over 500 children, from pre-school and home-educated groups and Beaucroft School to Years 2, 3 and 5 from four First and two Middle Schools, visited to learn about the events of Holy Week in an interactive way. Volunteers from The Lantern, St. John's Church, St. Michael's and Wimborne Minster collaborated in doing the storytelling.

In 2025, for the first time, after the schools had left families were invited to explore the trail, and on the Wednesday evening Minster house groups were given the opportunity to take a tour around, at their own pace, helped by a self-guiding 'pilgrim's' leaflet. About twenty people spent time in contemplation and meditation on these stations of Holy Week. We could not offer this ministry without the help of all the volunteers and the Minster staff. Thanks to all.

Year 4 Leavers' Service

Since 2019 a new schools' event on the calendar has been the Leavers' Farewell Service for Year 4 pupils at First Schools throughout the Deanery. Since 2023 the service has been developed in-house at the Minster. In 2025 we were glad to welcome Kevin Metcalfe of St. John's Wimborne and Ruth Grist of The Lantern to the planning team.

The service was even more popular than ever, with over 300 children attended with accompanying staff and volunteers. On a very hot day they managed to find shade in the church grounds and Church House in which to eat a packed lunch.

The theme was 'Keep on Growing,' based on the Parable of the Sower. Two Middle Schools, St. Michael's and Emmanuel, Verwood, presented drama and prayers. A display was created of banners showing how the children thought seeds had been sown in their lives by their experience at First School. Bishop Tim Thornton gave an interactive address and had everyone raising their arms in prayers of thanksgiving. Each child took home a specially-designed bookmark as a memento of the day. Music was provided by local worship musicians and on the Minster organ. Many thanks are due to the planning team and the Minster volunteers and staff.

Parish Magazine
Andrew Kelley, Rosalind Jensen, Co-editors

The Parish Magazine has continued to play an important role in reflecting both the life of the Minster and the wider community throughout the past year. The editors believe it has been a positive and productive year for the magazine's content, and we are grateful for the continued support and contributions received from clergy and members of the congregation.

During the past twelve months the magazine has covered a wide range of events and activities, including the Flower Festival, the Minster's varied music programme, stewardship matters, and features relating to the Chained Library. We have also continued to include book reviews and the popular crossword on the inside back page. We are always keen to encourage further contributions. Anyone with an article, viewpoint, event, or community activity they would like to promote is warmly invited to submit material for consideration. Feedback from readers is equally appreciated, whether positive or constructive, as it helps ensure the magazine continues to serve the parish and wider community effectively.

Particular attention is given to the cover photographs each month, which aim either to reflect a featured topic or the changing seasons. We are grateful to our printer for the imaginative presentation and production quality that helps bring these images to life. The magazine currently produces approximately 300 copies each month, with increased print runs at Christmas and Easter. Copies are generally available in the Minster on the final Sunday of each month for the following edition. Distribution also takes place through the Museum, Gullivers Bookshop, East Dorset Heritage Centre, and King Street Community Centre. Additional circulation is provided through family groups, and copies are also sent to the Diocese. The magazine remains available on the Minster website together with archived back editions.

Financially, however, the magazine continues to face challenges. We remain extremely grateful for the support of our printer, Doug Saunders of Shadow Design, who has maintained very competitive pricing over several years. For the financial year April 2025 to March 2026, production costs amounted to £4,031. Advertising revenue appears to total £3,540, resulting in an overall deficit of £491. We continue to benefit from the loyalty of a core group of regular advertisers who support the magazine consistently each month. Nevertheless, there is an increasing reluctance among smaller businesses to invest in print advertising, particularly within publications with relatively modest circulation figures. While we have welcomed a number of one-off advertisers during the year, many understandably expect an immediate response and do not always continue advertising when this is not forthcoming.

At present, the editors do not believe that charging for the magazine would be a practical or desirable solution. However, it may be worth exploring opportunities for corporate sponsorship or alternative sources of support in the future. Suggestions and ideas from members of the congregation would be greatly welcomed.

Publicity

Anthony Oliver, Publicity Officer

I make no apology for repeating much of last year's report as little if anything has changed but all the contacts have been maintained. The *Daily Echo* has been particularly helpful and on many occasions not only have they covered events with editorial but pictures as well. We have continued to have good support from all of the other publications including the *Dorset View* and *Viewpoint* magazines, *Wimborne Around Guides*, the *Wimborne Directory*, and the *New Stour and Avon Magazine*. Wimborne BID, which receives a copy of our parish magazine every month, kindly mentions Minster events both on their website and in printed publications. The parish magazine is also still sent monthly by e-mail to the Salisbury Diocesan *Grapevine* for their information and to the Museum of East Dorset for their archives. There is quite a lead-in time for the monthly publications in particular and deadline dates have to be watched carefully if forthcoming events are to be well publicised.

One of the events of the year was of course the Flower Festival, and this was well covered by all the media, printed papers, radio and television. Sponsorship for this and other Minster events including the Pancake Race has been much appreciated.

Links are maintained with both BBC South and Meridian ITV and also the radio stations which cover our area. Major events like the annual Pancake Race usually attract the attention of these outlets. Our freelance friends at the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Bournemouth News Agency* still keep in contact and pictures have appeared in national publications from time to time as a result.

The Minster website is also kept well informed of our various events and as has been said on many occasions the most essential is to keep the Minster in the public eye so as to ensure it is seen as a lively and active Church.

Stewardship

Dennis Child, Stewardship and Gift Aid Secretary

Following my letter last year suggesting that we try and increase our giving by one cup of coffee per week it is pleasing to report that the challenge has been taken up by a good number of our regular givers, and with some of the new members of the congregation now giving regularly, our income looks healthy.

More and more givers are signing up to the Church of England's *Parish Giving Scheme*, which is entirely without cost to parishes and considerably helps our treasurer and me with much less administration.

If you are new to the Minster and would like to join one of our regular giving schemes, please do contact me or visit our website which has all the information that you require.



Our contactless machines that you now see around the Minster continue to increase our income from visitors, as more and more people become used to this method of payment.

In 2024 the total giving from this source was £17,363 and last year £22,423. This is welcome news for the Minster, for whilst we are open 6 days a week for visitors we do not charge for entry, and their generous donations help to keep the Minster open. Shown in this report is one of our *CollectTin* machines which we can now operate anywhere; they contain the same kind of sim card as your mobile phone, and this will help us when we have outside events.

With the Chancellor continuing to freeze the personal allowance for all people, almost everyone this year will pay income tax. I am aware that some of our givers have not been able to sign a gift aid form before as they did not pay income tax. If you now fall into this category (you will have received a notification from HMRC), are you able to consider gift aiding your donation to the Minster?

If anyone requires help / clarification do please contact me, Dennis Child, at stewardship@wimborneminster.org.uk , tel. 07973698576.

Minster Musical Heritage Trust

Peter Cook, Chair

The Trust was established in early 2020 to manage the finance of the *Minster Makes Music* Appeal. It is a non-membership Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The five trustees have met regularly during the year. During the year two Trustees left: Christopher Dowie retired and Jean Harvey resigned when she moved away from Wimborne. The Trust subsequently appointed Sam Hanson to be a Trustee.

A grant made to the Trust by the Michael James Music Trust for the cost of an Organ Scholar has been used to support Matthew Kelley, who left for a new post at Easter 2025. The cost of his duties exceeded the MJT grant and this was recovered from the PCC. The Trust has also continued to pay for extra coaching for the young choristers by Mrs Elizabeth Green. A grant of £1300 was made available for a WOOFYT course, £659 of which was paid for by a grant from the diocese to the Trust. Grants were also made to Laudemus (£600) and Lauren Marshall (£250) for a piccolo. This latter amount came from the restricted funds which are available for instrument purchase or music lessons. The Summer Organ Recitals made a good profit (£1500) due to increased numbers and the purchase of a card reader allowing contactless donations. The two major evening recitals were very successful, being given by Sam Hanson and John Challenger respectively. The Trust received a donation of £200 for a special request at the May Recital.

A performance of Bach's *B minor Mass* by the Orlando Singers in took place in April. The Trust provided the programmes which were sold at a small profit and received a donation of £250 from the Orlando Singers.

The accounts are examined and agreed as required by the Charity Commission and the trust is now registered for reclaiming of VAT on donations. Cheques for the appeal may be made payable to: Wimborne Minster Musical Heritage Trust.

Section 5. External charities supported by the Minster

Background

MARS Trust *Anne King*

Christian Aid *Mike Lunt*

Sudan Link

Background

The Minster congregation supports a wide range of external charities and specific projects. Donations are collected for the Food Bank and Wimborne Community Food Supply through the year. The collections at the Advent and Christmas services are dedicated to named



charities (Crisis at Christmas, and a local, a national and an international charity). Specific sums are raised at particular times for projects such as Real Easter Eggs, a visiting children's theatre group, and Christmas chocolates for children, as well as the Dorset Historic Churches Trust annual Ride and Stride.

When local schools hold their Christmas services in the Minster (for which the Minster of course does not charge), a part of the collection goes to the Minster to cover costs, but the schools also choose their own charities to support. A number of Minster organisations are part of a national charity, such as the Mothers' Union, and raise funds for specific needs as well. Individual members of the congregations organise fund-raising for other charities they are involved in, such as the Children's Society and the Bible Society.

The organisation, extent and nature of charitable giving has been the subject of discussion in the PCC in 2025-6. Below are a few of the charities that are regularly supported by the whole of the Minster.

Christian Aid

Mike Lunt



Christian Aid, established in 1947, is a member of the UK Disasters Emergency Committee which provides immediate relief and long-term support to those affected by disasters such as floods, droughts and earthquakes. It also campaigns for change, for example by challenging economic models that favour the rich at the expense of those who are poorer. It continues to work closely with UK churches, producing resources for education and worship which can inform, inspire and challenge us all. Christian Aid always works through partner organisations who can identify local problems and show how they can be overcome. The local Wimborne Christian Aid Group actively raises money through a programme of regular events including lunches during Lent and on Christmas Eve, a quiz at the end of January, and a street collection during Christian Aid Week in May. Last year we raised just over £10,000 and rely heavily on support and encouragement from the Minster and other local Churches.

The MARS Trust

Anne King



Money donated on Sundays at coffee after the 9.30am service goes to The MARS Trust, a local charity. In 2025, this amounted to over **£500**.

MARS stands for Modelling Active Relationships Skills. The MARS Trust runs workshops in schools to give children from Primary School upwards an understanding of what constitutes good relationships and how to build and maintain them.

The sessions are led by a MARS leader with support from volunteer facilitators who help small groups of children think and talk about what is involved in building good relationships with the people they may meet in life.

The sessions are always interesting, and the feedback from staff and children is very encouraging. They know how important relationships are in all aspects of their lives. They enjoy learning about how to manage their relationships, be a good friend, handle conflict, make the right choices and much more.

The Trust is having some difficulty in recruiting small group leaders to help with the workshops. Commitment is usually only about two half-days a term, and those who do help find it is a real joy to work with young people in a positive and constructive way. If you can help with this, please visit the MARS website – themarstrust.co.uk/get-involved.

Sudan Medical Link



Money raised at Friday's weekly Lunch and Chat is sent to the Sudan Medical Link; in 2025 this amounted to **£2571.74**.

Salisbury Diocese has a long-standing mutual relationship with the Episcopal Church in Sudan and South Sudan, and the

Medical Link comes under this umbrella. It supports the Episcopal Church in South Sudan (ECSS) in delivering healthcare to its people and local communities by providing medicines to 16 primary healthcare clinics. Individuals and parishes also sponsor and fund the training of clinical officers, nurses and midwives.

Unlike an aid agency, the SML is based on mutuality: that two churches separated by distance and culture can care for one another in sharing resources, experience and practical help. Central to SML is prayer for one another, strengthened by relationships between people from different countries. Members of the Medical Link visit South Sudan when possible, to report back on the work of the clinics.

<https://www.salisburysudanspartnership.co.uk/medical-link>