

St Mary's Church, Wavendon - Churchwardens Report 2025-6

The most significant event in 2025 was Matt's three month sabbatical towards the end of the year during which neither he nor Alise attended church nor took part in church life. This was meticulously planned and Matt arranged for all the services to be taken by other ministers and church leaders from our congregation. Together with the Churchwardens at All Saints, we were all briefed as to what should happen in a whole range of circumstances. With such preparation there were no unforeseen circumstances!

We are really grateful to Rev Alison for the tremendous work she did during Matt's absence and to all the other ministers and service leaders who stepped in to take services and attend to other important matters. There's an awful lot to being a minister!

We are pleased to say that when Matt returned we were all delighted to see him. And we were able to hand back a congregation no less vibrant and loving than when he left three months earlier. He returned ready to 'hit the ground, walking' and we pray that a somewhat less busy workload might now be the norm.

During the year our congregation has steadily increased. In early 2025 our congregation averaged around 85. During Matt's sabbatical we are pleased to say that our congregation numbers continued to show a modest increase. In the first months of 2026 this increase in our congregation has, on one or two Sundays, tested the capacity limits of both service sheets and seating.

During the year we have continued to take communion by means of individual wafers and glasses. The option of non-alcoholic 'wine' (ie fruit squash) continues to be very popular. On some occasions we have not laid out sufficient for communion and a 'top up' has been necessary causing a slight pause. With the main tables full to capacity of saucers, the extra small table seems sufficient – at least for the moment – in providing the necessary capacity. We'll keep this under review!

Our weekly and monthly activities in the community continue to thrive: language classes, coffee mornings, quiz nights and Canzonetta concerts. We are grateful to all who organise these events. A number of activities are organised jointly with other churches in the Walton Churches Partnership with youth as a focus: Zoom Kids, Voices of Joy children's choir and Relax Teens. Big Basics is a great new initiative introduced at the end of 2025 and continuing into 2026. We must also mention the success of [Breakfast@Frosts](#) which is organised by our own Chris and Fay.

In the weeks before Advent, Cristina and Oscar led a group of singers in rehearsals that culminated in three Sundays when the singers and a group of supporters took God's word into the streets and delivered leaflets advertising our Advent and Christmas Services.

In the first months of 2026 we have been opening the church on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. These are convenient days as the church will have been used in the morning for services, the Revive Prayer meeting and our coffee morning. It's difficult to know how many folk come in; but we consider this to be an important ministry in, and to, the community.

The Garden of Rest has taken longer than anticipated but by the time of our ACM we should have finished the planting. Conscious of the poor condition of one or two trees in the churchyard we commissioned an audit of the trees which gave us a good view of the action that needs to be taken. As a result we have recently had work done to a number of trees in accordance with the recommendations. Every five years we should have a Quinquennial Inspection (QI) of the fabric of the church. With one due this year we have commissioned Henry Sanders, who knows the church well, to undertake a QI in the summer. It's usual that a QI contains recommendations of work that should be carried out.

St Mary's is a thriving, growing, vibrant, supportive and loving community of God's apprentices. We thank so many of you for being so willing to help grow the Kingdom by taking on various roles of stewardship, hospitality and during services. It makes our role so much easier.

And all this is not possible without the guidance and leadership of Matt and Alise whom, on your behalf, we give grateful thanks for the tremendous amount of commitment and work that they give to us all.

Roger and Jonathan

Churchwardens

March 2026