

PARISH OF FARNBOROUGH
ST. GILES THE ABBOT and ST. NICHOLAS

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
SUNDAY 26th APRIL 2026 - 4.30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYERS

May this meeting be in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us bless the Lord

Thanks be to God.

READING: James 1: 1-8, 17, 22, 25

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

But be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

PRAYERS

Leader: O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith: bless our Bishops Jonathan and Simon, and other clergy, and all your people. Grant that your word may be truly preached and truly heard, your sacraments be faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: God our Father, graciously hallow with your blessing our Parish churches of St. Giles and St. Nicholas. May they be places where the sorrowing find comfort and the tempted strength; where the lonely find fellowship and the sinner forgiveness; where the faithful find grace, and all offer you a holy worship; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Almighty God, we pray for your blessing on all who share in the life and work of the churches of St. Giles and St. Nicholas: in the ministry of word and sacrament, in teaching and pastoral care, in service to the diocese, the community, and those in need, in ecumenical fellowship and co-operation. We pray for all members of the congregations, that in their varied callings they may advance your kingdom and bear witness to your love, shown in you Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, as you have called the Church out of the world to bring the world to yourself, so we pray for your Churches in this Parish; that all may worship you with singleness of mind, that all may hold the faith in sincerity and love, and all may witness for you with courage and assurance for the glory of your name.

All: Amen.

Leader: Father, we seek the guidance of your Holy Spirit in all the business that lies before us. In planning for the future, give us vision; in matters of finance, give us responsibility; in dealing with people, give us love. Help us in all things to honour your name, to advance your kingdom, and to carry out your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS AND DEPUTIES

Churchwardens	Andrew Bailey	(St. Giles)
	Claire Couldridge	(St. Nicholas)
Deputy Wardens	Peter Russell) St. Giles - 8.00 a.m.
	Sue Rennie) St. Giles - 10.00 a.m.
	Sally Attwood) St. Giles - 11.15 a.m.
	Sheila Munns) St. Giles - Thursdays 10.00 a.m.
	Nick Jolliffe) St. Nicholas

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** held at St. Nicholas on Sunday 11th May 2025, *(pages 4-6)*
3. **Matters arising**
4. **Reports**
 - (a) Electoral Roll, *(page 6)*
 - (b) Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council, *(pages 6-8)*
 - (c) Churchwardens' Reports including St. Giles Churchyard Report, *(pages 8-12)*
 - (d) The Parochial Church Council Consolidated Accounts for the year 2025 including Financial Statements for St. Giles the Abbot and St. Nicholas *(pages 12-16)*
5. **Safeguarding**
6. **St. Giles Centre**
7. **Election**

Members for the P.C.C.

St. Giles - The current St. Giles PCC Members have now completed their mandatory three year term on the Church Council but have requested to stand for a further term of one year so that they can continue to see the refurbishment of the St. Giles Centre to its completion. Therefore they will be offering themselves for re-election at this year's AGM. However, this does not preclude any new people from being proposed. If you would like to stand then please contact the Rector to obtain a Nomination Form.

St. Nicholas - there are **TWO** vacancies.
8. **Appointment**

Independent Financial Examiner.
9. Goodbyes and Thank-you's.
10. **Any other business and date of next A.G.M. 2027.**

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Rector, *(pages 17-19)*
Associate Rector including St. Nicholas Children's Report, *(pages 20-22)*
St. Giles Music, *(page 22)*
St. Giles Family & Children's Worker, *(pages 22-23)*
St. Giles Safeguarding Report, *(pages 23-24)*
St. Giles Flower Arrangers Report, *(pages 24-25)*
St. Giles Bell Ringers, *(pages 25-26)*
St. Giles Social Committee, *(pages 26-27)*
Mothers' Union, *(pages 27-29)*
St. Giles Website, *(page 29)*
Friends of St. Giles, *(page 29)*
Parish Magazine, *(pages 30)*

The Accounts are on the Notice Boards of both Churches.

2. MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 11th MAY 2025

PARISH OF FARNBOROUGH ST.GILES THE ABBOT and ST. NICHOLAS

Vestry Meeting

1. Election of the Churchwardens and Deputy Wardens:
Churchwardens Andrew Bailey (St. Giles)
Claire Couldridge (St. Nicholas)
Deputy Wardens Peter Russell) St. Giles - 8.00 a.m.
Sue Rennie) St. Giles - 10.00 a.m.
Sally Attwood) St. Giles - 11.15 a.m.
TBA) St. Giles - 6.30 p.m.
Sheila Munns) St. Giles - Thursdays 10.00 a.m.
Nick Jolliffe) St. Nicholas

Thanks to Andrew and Claire for their continuance as Churchwardens.

Rector: Thanks to Andrew for his outstanding patience and diplomacy.
Vote of Confidence and thanks:

Associate Rector: Thanks to Claire.
Vote of Confidence and thanks:

Deputy Wardens are all continuing.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY 11th May 2025 - 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT

The Revd. Matthew Hughes (Rector), The Revd. Stephen Broadie (Assoc. Rector), Andrew Bailey, Claire Couldridge, Roger Allard, Carol Fryer, Mary Compton, Helen Roberts, Edward Roberts, Sheila Munns, Sue Rennie, Pam Butcher, Irene Dancer, Alison Reynolds, Nick Reynolds, Gill Knapp, Richard Healey, Gail Low, Sylvia Addison, Chris Hallett, Lindsay Barnes, Paul Barnes, Julia Hoadley, Sally Attwood, Stewart Hutson, Jayne Calvert, Ralph Barlow.

Apologies for absence: Valerie Bailey, Paul Bailey.

2. **MINUTES**

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in St. Giles Centre on Sunday 28th April 2024.

Proposed: Irene Dancer
Seconded: Sheila Munns
Approved.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

4. **REPORTS**

- (a) Electoral Roll.
- (b) Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.
No comments.
- (c) Churchwardens' Reports including St. Giles Churchyard Report.
No comments.
- (d) The Parochial Church Council Consolidated Accounts for the year 2024 including Financial Statements for St. Giles the Abbot and St. Nicholas.

Hon Treasurer, St. Giles, Carol Fryer:

All the information is in the report. It's been a difficult year with rising fuel prices and pressures on cost of living. We have seen a fall in income from funerals and in general giving. We need to concentrate on involving the community and hence income, and keep a hold on overall expenditure, especially with the Centre project now coming into focus. Ralph Barlow asked if we could borrow for the Centre project. Carol: It's possible but as charity our sources are limited and interest rates would be high. We shouldn't rule it out but it should not be high on the list.

Hon Treasurer, St. Nicholas, Roger Allard:

Referred to the Report, it is a good summary. Last year we reached rock bottom showing a deficit. Difficult decisions to make, i.e. Administrator and Family Worker redundant. The only way now is up. Going forward showing a surplus. Paul Barnes asked what is the situation of Diocese payment. Roger: About a third not paid, but hope to meet Diocese commitment in full in the future. Stephen Broadie (Assoc. Rector) said it was first year since Covid that a surplus is seen. Nick Reynolds asked if there were any other churches in same situation. Stephen: There are other churches in difficulties. Roger: Definitely a commitment to pay in full; previous outlays for roof, which may need more attention. Matthew Hughes (Rector): previous expenditure on concrete problem - £10,000 on repairs. Roger: Church House - worst condition in road; new fence and new fascia and guttering and brought attention to problems with the soakaway and drainage (covered by insurance). Matthew: Treasurers have an onerous task and responsibility.

Thanks to Carol, Roger and the St. Giles and St. Nicholas Finance Teams.

Adoption of the Accounts:

Proposed: Stewart Hutson

Seconded: Julia Hoadley.

5. **SAFEGUARDING**

Irene Dancer, Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter.

6. **ST. GILES CENTRE**

The Rector met with four contractors. Variety of trades in project. Cost to date - £12,000 approx. Cheapest quote £186,000 including VAT - comes with good references. Everything is signed off and ready to go. Anticipate start in May 2026 which gives a year to maximise fundraising. Looking at grants and maybe loans.

7. **ELECTIONS**

(a) Members for the Parochial Church Council:

St. Giles: David Stokes.

Proposed: Julia Hoadley

Seconded: Ralph Barlow

Approved.

St. Nicholas: Assoc Rector will co-opt someone during the year.

Thanks for all current members with special thanks to the late Rosemary Fordyce who served the Church and the PCC for many years.

(b) Deanery Synod Members - vacancies for St. Giles and St. Nicholas

8. **APPOINTMENTS**

Independent Financial Examiner.

Chris Jones of Baxter's to continue

Proposed: Mary Compton

Seconded: Chris Hallett

Approved.

9. Goodbyes and Thank-you's.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

11. **TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT AGM 2026**

Provisionally second Sunday in May (10th) 2026.

12. **CLOSING PRAYERS**

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

4. **REPORTS**

ELECTORAL ROLL

The figure for the Electoral Roll stands at 322 (St. Giles - 262, St. Nicholas - 60). Our Electoral Roll membership continues to offer a solid base for the ongoing life of the Parish.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2025

ST. GILES THE ABBOT, FARNBOROUGH With ST. NICHOLAS, ORPINGTON

OBJECTIVES

The Parochial Church Council ("PCC") has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Matthew Hughes, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church Centre complexes of St. Giles at Church Road, Farnborough and St. Nicholas at Leamington Avenue, Orpington.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting ("APCM") in accordance with Church Representation Rules. Members of the PCC who served from **11 May 2025** until the date that this report was approved by the PCC were: -

Ex-Officio:

<u>Rector</u>	The Revd. Matthew Hughes	Chairman	
<u>Associate Rector</u>	The Revd. Stephen Broadie		
<u>Assistant Priest</u>	Archdeacon Paul Wright		
<u>Reader</u>	Mrs. Chris Hallett		
<u>Wardens</u>	Mr. Andrew Bailey	until APCM 2026	St Giles
	Miss Claire Couldridge	until ACPM 2026	St Nicholas
<u>Verger</u>	Mr. Peter Russell		
<u>Deputy Wardens</u>	Mr. Peter Russell	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mrs. Susan Rennie	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mrs. Sheila Munns	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Miss Sally Attwood	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mr. Nick Jolliffe	Not on PCC	St Nicholas

Elected:

Hon. Secretary

<u>Hon. Treasurer</u>	Mr. Roger Allard		St. Nicholas
<u>Deputy Treasurer</u>	Mr. Richard Butterworth		St. Nicholas

<u>Hon. Treasurer</u>	Mrs. Carol Fryer		St. Giles
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<u>Gift Aid Secretary</u>	Mrs. Carol Fryer		
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Members

Mr. Stewart Hutson	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Mrs. Gill Knapp	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Mrs. Lynn Kelly	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Mr. John Kelly	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Mrs. Irene Dancer	until APCM 2026	St Giles
Mrs. Carol Stokes	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Miss Julia Hoadley	until ACPM 2026	St Giles
Mrs Jayne Calvert	until APCM 2026	St Nicholas
Mrs Adele Cooke	until APCM 2027	St Nicholas
Mrs Diane Stiff	until APCM 2027	St Nicholas

The United PCC met 2 during the year with an attendance of 65 per cent. In addition, the members representing St. Giles met 6 times (with an average attendance of 75 per cent) and those representing St. Nicholas met 6 times (average attendance 79.2 per cent).

COMMITTEES

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between meetings of the PCC:

- Standing & Finance Committee – this is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between PCC meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC
- St. Giles' Fabric Group
- St. Giles' Churchyard Group
- Ad hoc groups.

CHURCH ATTENDANCES

There were 322 names on the Church Electoral Roll for the Parish as at 31st December 2025.

As a Parish, we are available at times of birth, marriage and death. In 2025, the Parish and its ministry were involved in the following occasional offices: -

7	Baptisms
3	Weddings
35	Funeral services held in Church followed by burial in the churchyard or Cremation
13	Funeral services held at a crematorium
34	Burials of ashes.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Aggregated parish income for the year was £399,232 (2024-£344,040) and aggregated resources used were £318,862 (2024-£323,690). Net incoming resources amounted to £80,371 (2024-£20,350). St. Giles recorded net incoming resources of £69,847 (2024-£27,239) and St. Nicholas recorded net incoming resources of £10,523 (2024 £-6,889).

RESERVES POLICY

It is the PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds (less fixed assets) which equates approximately to six months unrestricted expenditure. This was achieved as at 31st December 2025.

THE CHURCHWARDENS' REPORTS

ST. GILES CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT INCLUDING CHURCHYARD REPORT

This is my fourth and last report for my second 'tour' as Churchwarden for St. Giles, something that I see as both a privilege and a great responsibility.

This has once more been another busy year at St. Giles.

As Churchwarden I have enjoyed a good working relationship with Matthew. I believe that is part of my role to have a good relationship with the incumbent of St. Giles in order to advise and support him in the exercise of his ministry. The Churchwarden is there to bring to the attention of the Rector any issues raised by the congregation, and to represent the interests of the Parish to him and the PCC. I enjoy working with Matthew and appreciate the mutually supporting roles that we share together.

In 2025 we again had a full set of services across the whole year. The Parish observed the seasons of Lent and Easter. At Easter we held the usual services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday - both inside and outside the Church (where my brother once again was able to toast prestigious quantities of hot-cross buns for the congregations in the Churchyard). We held the full set of services for Harvest, the Pets Blessing and Remembrance Sunday, with lots of flowers (courtesy of the Flower Ladies) and singing (courtesy of the Choir). We also commemorated the fiftieth anniversaries of both 'VE Day' & 'VJ Day' with special services and a Flower Festival at St. Giles, where members of the Parish were able to remember the contributions of loved ones with photographs and narratives of their experiences during the war.

This year at Christmas we once again did the (now usual) three Nativity services on Christmas Eve. This appears to be the optimum number as we still have 'room in the inn' for everyone who wished to attend. Numbers in attendance were roughly the same as in previous years, it also makes it easier to organise logistically. We also had the Advent Carol and 9-Lessons & Carols services beforehand, the 'Midnight Mass' and the Epiphany Carol service in January.

We continue to enjoy a full calendar of Parish events. June saw the Parish Fete, which was well attended and (unlike last year) not plagued with. Everybody enjoyed themselves (thanks in no small part to the small army of volunteers who helped organise it). We once more had a good range of individuals and organisation who contributed to the day to make it a great day for all. This is always an excellent opportunity where the wider Parish 'family' was able to get together and participate in an event outside the Church. The following month we had the Seaside Coach excursion to Broadstairs in July. The coach was full and once more I would like to thank Carol Fryer and her team in organising this and all the other events across the year.

In October we held our usual Churchyard Saturday Morning where members of the congregation of the Parish turn up with a whole array of gardening tools to scarify the grass, rake up the moss and seed the lawn. This year it was very well attended.

In terms of goods and ornaments we have purchased new items for both inside and outside the Church. Over the past year we have obtained a new Processional Book for use in church services. We have also replaced (and updated) the lighting over the Altar in the Sanctuary and for the Pulpit. This is stored by the new cupboard in the Clergy Vestry above the safe, which is being used to store items used in Holy Communion. The 'big' purchases for new items are as a result of the Fire Inspection in December 2025 (for more see below). This has resulted in an additional water fire extinguisher by the Organ, and a fire blanket by the Font. We are also purchasing a large number of fireproof bags and larger cases to safely store the combustible items held in the church. This will drastically reduce the chance of them catching alight in the unlikely event of a fire occurring.

2025 saw the continuation of the rolling program of 'deep cleaning' within the Church. A common theme is monitoring the use and distribution of storage space around the Church, what is located where and who is using it. This has been a recurring issue in previous years as we only have a finite resource in space, and we need to use it in the most efficient way.

As part of this, the Rector and Churchwarden continue to monitor the North Aisle where there was a fungal buildup that was treated in 2024. So far we have not seen a return of the fungus, although further treatments will be applied in the future as and when necessary.

We also took the opportunity in December to re-hang the 'decorative' ball in the Organ Chamber which had fallen off the guiding wheel causing it to jam, making it increasingly difficult to hoist up and down. This involved sending the Churchwarden up the ladders to manually re-set the line back onto the wheel (with 3 volunteers and a Rector holding onto the bottom of the ladder). I must personally thank everybody involved in the operation.

I can report that all the Church's goods and ornaments are in a good state of repair.

We had the Quinquennial Inspection in May 2025, which luckily did not find any new major maintenance tasks for us to do. We also had a Fire Assessment carried out in December, which has identified a number of issues that need addressing. These are being acted upon, and we hope to complete this mid year.

The (really) big challenge for 2026 will be the refurbishment of the St. Giles Centre. A note for your diaries is Saturday 16th May when we will be doing a 'Skip Out'. We will need to empty the building of its contents, and for that all volunteers are most welcome. I am confident that we will rise to the challenge, and that eventually we'll have a decent place for us to use for parish meetings and activities.

I am always grateful for my fellow Churchwardens/Verger and their total commitment and support over the last year. We would not be able to do what we do without their efforts. I thank them for their time and for the kind support they have shown me. As Churchwardens you have to do lots of things behind the scenes which the congregation do not always see. However, I do have to say that being a Churchwarden is a most satisfying undertaking, and I have enjoyed being one in 2025.

Andrew Bailey
St. Giles Churchwarden

ST. GILES CHURCHYARD REPORT AS PART OF THE CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

The St. Giles Churchyard Volunteers continued to meet regularly on Tuesdays throughout the year, concentrating upon general and routine care and maintenance throughout the Churchyard. Although no major projects were undertaken, a replacement water standpipe was installed and minor brickwork repairs were performed both to the Garden of Remembrance walls and the War Memorial. The summer "drought" also meant that many additional visits were required for several weeks to maintain and water the rose beds and planters. An Annual Work Programme was drafted and circulated to all volunteers to regulate some of the works that are conducted periodically on a yearly basis.

PRO continued as the main works contractor during 2025. They provide grass cutting, some strimming and hedge cutting, waste removal, supply of woodchip and other occasional services as required. They make 20 visits per year between March and October. In October, our neighbouring farmer kindly assisted by cutting the long hedge bordering Church Fields.

Volunteer staffing and resources became problematic during the year. For a variety of reasons, the number of regular volunteers had diminished markedly by mid-year. This situation improved during the second half of 2025, with one returning volunteer and four new recruits. However, the biggest issue impacting the ongoing maintenance of the Churchyard remains the retention and recruitment of sufficient volunteers to fulfil current standards of delivery.

Additionally, it is with great sadness to report that Paul Raison passed away during 2025. Paul was a long standing, respected and stalwart member of the Tuesday Volunteers' Group and is sorely missed. RIP.

In July 2025, Eddie Bellamy and Bob Kimber took on the duties of 'foreman' of the Tuesday Volunteers' Group.

In September, there was a re-organisation of the “St. Giles Churchyard and Fabric Committee”. It was expanded to include Andrew Bailey (Churchwarden) and Peter Radburn (PRO Contractor) with the aim of widening the involvement of ‘stake holders’ and improving efficiency of the Committee’s work. The Committee will meet twice yearly and focus upon strategic issues. Additional meetings may be convened on an ad hoc or specialist basis with additional members, if required (e.g. The redevelopment of the St. Giles Centre).

There were 56 burials of all types during 2025, 3 more than in 2024. Of these, 28 were in the Garden of Remembrance, the remaining 28 being in the graveyard. These totals are both below long term yearly average.

8 new adult graves were used, which compares with 4 last year and the long-term average of 12 per year and with a high of 22 graves in 2020. Circa 245 grave spaces are available, excluding the area used for outdoor services and the potential for small-scale infilling of spaces and paths. Based on long term annual usage, potential capacity should last around 22 years but, as the number of new graves required is usually now lower than in previous years, the actual capacity in years is likely to be longer than this.

During the past calendar year 31 new inscribed plaques have been ordered and installed, as well as 8 new blanks, a decrease on the previous year totals of 43 and 18 respectively. 7 blanks were removed and replaced with incised plaques. The Garden of Remembrance Memorial Walls have space for a further 388 plaques. A yearly average of 46 plaques will give the Memorial Walls approximately 8 years and five months remaining life span. The annual spring cleaning of plaques was completed by the end of March.

The maintenance of the Church and Churchyard to its current standards has only been achieved by the dedication, diligence and service of all our volunteers. Heartfelt thanks must be expressed to everyone who has contributed during 2025. Our volunteers do what they do because they care and make a difference 52 weeks a year. They seek no reward nor praise, but are simply there looking after all attended or unattended graves, whilst presenting the Churchyard at its best. The Gardens of Remembrance continued to be kept impeccably by our small team of ladies with work that goes largely unnoticed. Thank you everyone for all you do.

***For and on behalf of the St Giles Tuesday Volunteer Team:
Eddie Bellamy, Bob Kimber & Nick Reynolds***

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCHWARDEN’S REPORT

It has been another busy year at St. Nicholas. Croissant and Crafts continues to be popular with our young families, with new families joining us usually by word of mouth which is encouraging. To this we have now added a small communion service at the end in the Leamington room . This is also much appreciated

Our other groups continue to thrive especially our tea and chat and our community larder.

Another thing we can now offer our community is a defibrillator which was donated by a very generous donation by one of our congregation and has now been placed on a wall in the kitchen. We hope that it never has to be used, but it could be a life saver to someone.

Services continue to hold their numbers. We have now gone back to our usual 10.00 am service after holding a survey with our congregation

With Easter fast approaching, we will be holding our usual range of services and Easter events which will include our Passover meal and our Easter activity morning. It is always a busy time but one we always enjoy.

As with all families we have experienced our loses, each one unique and will be missed by us all.

My thanks to everyone for their encouragement and support especially the PCC, Nick and Stephen

Claire Couldridge
St. Nicholas Churchwarden

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2025, INCLUDING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR ST. GILES THE ABBOT AND ST.NICHOLAS

ST. GILES

2025 has been a demanding year, with much of our energy focused on fundraising for the renovation of the St Giles Centre. The response has been tremendously encouraging, and we are now well on course for our anticipated start date of June 2026. We look forward to the creation of a well-appointed, purposeful building that will enable us to serve our community in more meaningful and creative ways.

In 2025, our total income was £292,906.41 (2024: £234,861.73), which exceeded our total expenditure of £223,058.99 (2024: £207,622.71), resulting in a surplus of £69,847.42 (2024: £27,239.02).

St Giles continues to benefit from the generous support of a wide range of donors and sponsors, both large and small, as well as the dedication of hard-working volunteers whose commitment helps us to keep expenditure under careful control. Donations and legacies received in previous years also continue to provide valuable security against future costs and unforeseen expenses.

We are grateful for the support we receive against the backdrop of continuing cost-of-living pressures. That our community continues to give so generously of both time and money, despite these challenges, is a testament to the shared commitment to St Giles and its future.

Income

General giving such as standing orders and envelopes is down slightly on last year but we should bear in mind the generosity of our donors to the centre renovation fund as this may have changed a donor's mode of giving temporarily.

Gift Aid provides a valuable additional boost to our income, enabling us to increase the value of eligible donations at no extra cost to the donor. Even the smallest amount from a taxpayer enables us to claim 25% of the donation directly from HMRC.

Expenditure

We try to keep firm control over expenditure, but cost of living increases are hard to balance especially those for heating. We are lucky to have good financial support from many givers.

The Diocesan share in 2024 was £70,600 as opposed to £67,948 in 2023. Our offer for 2025 being £70,600. In the coming year our offer has been reduced to £60,883 allowing us to allocate the £10,000 saving to our Centre Renovation Fund.

St Giles Centre Renovation

The decision to renovate the Centre will significantly enhance the quality and flexibility of space available for church activities. These activities will help foster connection, comfort, and a sense of belonging for people of all ages. We aim to offer a warm, welcoming environment to combat loneliness and social isolation, and to foster opportunities for young people to gather and thrive. It will also enable us to provide much needed and modern toilet facilities for all who use the Church.

As at 31.12.25 the funds raised for the Centre Renovation are:

£91,094.95 from various sources

plus

£19,500 from the National Lottery

£11,000 from the Benefact Trust.

Totalling:

£121,594.95

In addition, we have committed funds to be received on completion of the work from:

£15,000 Congregational & General Trust

£10,000 Bernard Sunley Foundation

Further donations are in the pipeline. To date £15,000 has already been spent on plans and fees.

We are looking at low carbon alternatives for the centre, such as an air heat source pump and solar panels, so consideration will need to be given to finding additional sources of funds for this purpose.

Summer Fete

The Summer Fête is a highlight of community life at St Giles and remains one of our most successful fundraising events. With the continued generosity of our sponsors and donors, together with the hard work of a dedicated team of volunteers, we were delighted to raise £6,222.

We are truly fortunate to have so many people willing to give their time and energy in support of St Giles. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who contributed, helped on the day, and came along to enjoy the occasion.

Wentworth property

The Wentworth property, acquired through a past legacy, has provided St. Giles with a dependable source of income. In 2025, however, we lost a tenant who had occupied the property for many years. As relatively little had been invested in maintenance during that time, it was decided that substantial renovation works should be undertaken before arranging a new letting.

As a result, income from the property in 2025 fell to £10,844.53 (2024: £21,417.57), while expenditure rose to £21,584.83 (2024: £4,784), reflecting the necessary improvement works.

We are pleased to report that a new tenant has now been secured and installed, and we look forward to the resumption of a steady and reliable income stream.

Weddings, Funerals & Plaques

We continue to see a decline in wedding bookings, reflecting what appears to be an ongoing trend. The number of funerals has also decreased, which may be due in part to increased competition from alternative providers and, regrettably, a growing preference among some families for more secular services.

In 2025, we conducted 19 burials, 20 cremations, and 34 burials of ashes.

The number of memorial plaques has continued to rise albeit slowly, increasing from 643 in 2023 to 692 in 2024 and 723 in 2025, of which 160 remain blank.

Many people comment positively on the appearance of the Remembrance Garden, and our dedicated churchyard team of volunteers deserves great credit for the care and commitment they show in maintaining it so beautifully.

Choir

At present, we have one Organ Scholar but no Choral Scholars. We were delighted to receive a grant of £4,000 from the Ousley Trust to strengthen and develop our choir, and to encourage new members.

Both our Junior and Senior Choirs continue to play a valued role in supporting our choral services, maintaining a strong musical tradition at St Giles.

Magazine fund

Advertising	£1,888.75	£2,557 L/Year
Hard copy	£3530.80	£4,400.50 L/Year
Email	£66	£59 L/Year
One off sales	£409.50	£520 L/Year
Total Income	£5,895.05	£7,536 L/Year
Total Expenditure	£6,721	£6,822 L/Year
Profit/Loss	£825.95	££714 L/Year

Funds held: £13,565.85 £14,391.80 L/Year

Magazine subscriptions have declined slightly; a trend which inevitably affects advertising revenue. Reduced circulation makes it harder to grow our advertising base, but Gill Knapp continues to work tirelessly to counter this and seek new opportunities.

In previous years, the magazine generated healthy profits, reflected in the funds still held in reserve. We are fortunate to have an excellent editor in Gail Low, who maintains the consistently high standard of our Parish Magazine. However, public attitudes towards printed magazines appear to be changing, and this presents an ongoing challenge.

We are also extremely grateful to our delivery team, whose dedication keeps postal costs to a minimum by hand-delivering the magazine each month. Our thanks go to Paul Barnes, Lee Bellamy, Nick and Jenny Wilkins, Eddie and Helen Roberts, Danielle Carle, Catriona Lee, Angela Leake, and Margaret Haffenden.

There is no immediate threat to the magazine's future, but it may be prudent to review its long-term direction. If we view the magazine as an important part of our outreach, the existing reserves will sustain it for some time. Nevertheless, increasing subscriptions must be a priority, and we would welcome someone with the time and enthusiasm to help grow our readership.

Flower fund

Income	£5,058.92	£4,110
Expenses	£3,250.76	£2,692
Profit	£1,808.16	£1,418
Funds held:	£6,082.22	£4,140

The flower fund remains self-funding. They have 2 fund raising projects per annum along with a variety of donations throughout the year. It is always nice to see the church beautifully decorated and thanks need to be given to our dedicated flower team.

Funds

We have two types of funds: Designated which are allocated to certain areas but may be used for other purposes as needed and Restricted which are allocated by the donor or St Giles and may not be used for other purposes without permission.

We hold £192,267.58 (£216,452.49 L/year) in Designated funds to which for accounting purposes is added the Wentworth property at its initial valuation of £540,000. We hold £416,950.23 (£311,571.37 L/year) in restricted funds (including the Centre Renovation Fund); a total of £1,426,592.12 (£1,356,747.70 L/year).

Conclusion

2025 has been a challenging year, yet we have remained resilient and successfully maintained our position. It is pleasing that our Wentworth property is now fully operational once again, restoring a reliable and steady income stream.

Our fundraising efforts for the centre's renovation have been highly encouraging, and we look forward with optimism to work commencing later this year. While there are still funds to be raised, we are committed to sustaining this momentum and ensuring the creation of a welcoming, accessible space for all.

We are especially grateful for the continued loyalty and generosity of our supporters. The dedication of our volunteers and the commitment of our donors make our progress possible, and we extend our sincere thanks to each of them. We move into the coming year with confidence and purpose.

Thanks must go to:

Linda Crisp and Mary Compton as part of the Financial Team

Eddie Bellamy as administrator of the Memorial Wall fund

Liz Diamond as Parish Secretary

Adele Cooke for office administration

Pam Stacey as Planned Giving Envelope Scheme Secretary

Lee Bellamy as insurance administrator

Chris Jones of Afinia (previously Baxter's), our External Examiners

Carol Fryer
Hon. Treasurer, St. Giles

ST. NICHOLAS

In summary this is a good news report. St Nicholas year end balances were at their highest level in the sum of £95926 at 31 December 2019 immediately prior to Covid. It has been a bit of a roller coaster since, but now at 31 December 2025 balances are just over £96000 (£96008), meaning we are back to where we were pre Covid with a few pounds extra, a new highest ever level. The balances comprise £44827 in Repair Funds at the Diocese and General Funds of £51181, which is in line with parish policy of maintaining balances in General Funds equating to 50% of annual revenue expenditure.

In the years before Covid St Nicholas had always paid the Parish Share in full and we did so too in 2020 as we did not feel we should renege on our offer to do likewise in 2020 made in November 2019, sometime before we were hit hard with the Covid rules and regulations. As a result our year end balances fell to £73001. We have been recovering since.

The Parish Share/Indicative Offer is made up of three elements, the Ministry Costs, the Per Benefice Cost for Diocesan Support and the Wider Diocesan Mission. For the period 2021 - 2025 St Nicholas has not been contributing to the Wider Diocesan Mission for the simple reason that we could not afford to, only paying the Ministry Costs in full and our share of the Per Benefice Costs. St Nicholas and St Giles usually share the Per Benefice Cost on a 50/50 basis but for one year only, 2024, St Giles paid two thirds and St Nicholas one third. This is the only financial help St Nicholas has received from St Giles and we are financially independent. We have also in 2025 made a small contribution of £500 to St Giles towards the St Giles Centre refurbishment. On the administrative side Carol Fryer does help us in claiming Gift Aid monthly for us at the same time as she makes the St Giles claim. We do appreciate that, Carol, and thank you very much.

Year end balances rose each year from 2021 to £92374 at the end of 2023. During 2024 a consultant reviewed the administrative and financial processes at St Nicholas, the conclusion of which was that the paid roles of Church Administrator and Children and Families Worker could no longer be afforded and the report recommended that they should be made redundant, a recommendation the PCC agreed but with sadness. One off redundancy payments were the main reason why year end balances fell back to £85485 at the end of 2024.

2025 has been a good year with income exceeding expenditure by £10523, but not just financially. We have been able to make improvements at St Nicholas with replacing the Fire Safety Equipment at a cost of £1389, installing new water heaters in the toilets at a cost of £1668 and replacing all the lighting with new LED at a cost of £4548. We have been helped with grants from the Diocese of £830 for the water heaters and £3270 for the LED lighting.

At this stage 2026 is looking good too. The budget, approved by the St Nicholas PCC on 27 January, is projecting an increase in balances of £8250 (General Reserves £4050, Repair Funds £4200) at 31 December 2026 and includes for the first time since 2020 a contribution towards the Wider Diocesan Mission of £1200, £100 per month.

As many of you will know I am standing down as the St Nicholas Treasurer at the APCM and it is good to be able to hand over my responsibilities to the new team at a time when year end balances are at highest levels and the 2026 financial position is very promising. On a note of concern the St Nicholas roof is beginning to show signs of wear with the original roof replaced in the mid 1980s and this is likely to be an issue the St Nicholas PCC will need to address in the not too distant future. That said I would like to end on a positive rather than a negative note by saying that St Nicholas does have substantial reserves which will stand us in good stead when that time does eventually come.

Roger Allard
Hon Treasurer, St Nicholas

5. SAFEGUARDING

6. ST. GILES CENTRE

Redevelopment update.

7. ELECTIONS

ST. GILES P.C.C.

The current St. Giles PCC Members have now completed their mandatory three year term on the Church Council but have requested to stand for a further term of one year so that they can continue to see the refurbishment of the St. Giles Centre to its completion. Therefore they will be offering themselves for re-election at this year's AGM. However, this does not preclude any new people from being proposed. If you would like to stand then please contact the Rector to obtain a Nomination Form.

TWO MEMBERS FOR THE ST. NICHOLAS P.C.C.

8. APPOINTMENT

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINER

Acting under delegated powers (A.G.M. 2001) The P.C.C. appointed Mr. Christopher Jones, F.C.C.A., Baxter and Co. as independent examiner for the 2021 accounts.

The PCC recommends Mr. Jones's appointment for the year 2026 accounts and the A.G.M. is requested to approve this proposal.

9. GOODBYES AND THANK YOU'S.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To be notified at the beginning of the meeting.
Date and time of next A.G.M. 2027

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

RECTOR'S REPORT

In his letter to the Church in Philippi, St. Paul writes:

'I thank God upon every remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine for you all making requests with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel until now.' (Philippians chapter 1: 3-5)

These words reflect my own feelings as I come to consider another year of ministry as Rector of Farnborough since our last AGM. I do indeed remember and thank God for all the wonderful people that we have at St. Giles and for the fellowship that we enjoy together in the service of Christ. It is somewhat difficult to convey to you just how much is needed to run a parish church today and we are so fortunate that we have many people who give very generously of their time and abilities for the life and mission of St. Giles. To name them all would risk forgetting someone, but if you help in any way please be assured of my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for all you do not just on behalf of myself, but on behalf of our whole Parish who I know appreciate the presence of St. Giles and all it stands for.

I would now like to highlight some important parts of our Church's life and my vision for the immediate future.

ST. GILES CENTRE

We have now been fundraising for the refurb of St. Giles Centre for almost two years and I am delighted to say that we are well on target to not only reach the actual costs of the building work, which will be in the region of £210,000, but have enough to cover any unforeseen eventualities, and even to have some left over for a future upkeep fund. The response to this appeal has been simply amazing and has proved to me once again how much the life of our Church is valued by so many people. The building work is set to begin in June of this year. This will also be time for me to don my hard hat along with our Architect Dora so that we make sure that we end up with the Centre that we have worked so hard to envisage. I have full confidence in the builders that we have selected to accomplish this work. For me the refurb of the Centre is not just about revitalising a tired building, but is central to the reinvigoration of our social life, mission and ministry.

MISSION

Everyone involved in parish life across a range of parishes would easily acknowledge that these are not easy times for the Church of England. Much has changed, and much has declined, in the nearly forty years that I have been involved in parochial ministry. People no longer see the CofE as the go to place for weddings, baptisms and funerals. Children's sports and activities have made traditional Sunday Schools sparsely attended, if even viable. Church attendance and membership is generally modest and variable. In conjunction with this, mandatory compliances around Safeguarding, Risk Assessments, finances and good practices are considerable as are the ongoing costs of running St. Giles which are annually in the region of £160,000! We need at least 160 volunteers to run St. Giles, so forgive me for all my arm twisting! I appreciate that we can all get a little demoralised when it seems that the Church is not attracting more people.

It is worth bearing in mind, however, that the world in which we live is fast changing, and for some, has changed beyond all recognition. Culture, leisure time choices, technology, the stress of modern life, can all create a dissonance between what we offer as a church and what people outside the church recognise as important and valuable and have time for. Nevertheless the message of the Gospel is a timeless and essential one and I firmly believe that a loving church, which offers good worship and good music, intelligent and relevant preaching and a peaceful haven away from the stresses and sorrows of life will also be attractive. Bearing this in mind my vision is as follows:

- Refurb the Centre to a high specification. Then use the Centre for social activities, meetings and outreach activities.
- Relaunch our children's work against the backdrop of a new and attractive Centre. With Sunday activities we may have to think outside the box in terms of the activities and times that we run our children's work.
- Continue to build up our choir and musical life of our Church.
- Once the Centre is refurbished to move on to the redecorating St. Giles and to revisit the lighting provision in the Church.
- In the long term, look at the bank just above the lower carpark which is sliding away and may need some structural brick work.
- To build up our online presence and to extend our contact with as many people as possible through a variety of ways so that we can advertise and highlight the life of our Church.
- To continue to make sure that St. Giles is a safe place for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- To make sure that we have enough finances to meet all our obligations and to build up reserves for the future.

IN CONCLUSION

Back in November I attended a Deanery Confirmation in Beckenham where 23 people from six different churches were Confirmed. I was struck that in St. Giles and St. Nicholas we were able to present 13 candidates for Confirmation last year, just from our one Parish. So, even though times are difficult, there is much to give thanks to God for and much that we are getting right. Indeed, I remember some lovely services where everything came together in a wonderful way. I think of happy times and shared events where everyone pulls together and the quality of the friendships and love is palpable. I constantly experience St. Giles to be a solid and well run Church where people who come to us receive the best that we can give them. I have a profound sense of St. Giles being a loving and caring community, which works very hard to be a beacon of light and hope in an unstable and at times bleak world. Thank you to my colleagues in the Gospel, Stephen, Paul and Chris and especially to Paul whose support and wise counsel is a constant source of encouragement and support to me. To my Churchwarden, Andrew, whose friendship and support is utterly invaluable and very much appreciated by myself and all of us. To our Treasurer, Carol, who works indefatigably for the good of St. Giles without whose service St. Giles would struggle to function. For Irene who does so much to make sure that we run a safe and compliant Church with a full programme of Christian education and care of our children and young people. For Ralph whose dedication, skill and devotion gives us the gift of wonderful uplifting music week by week, and Clive for his faithful playing at so many services. For Peter, our dedicated and wonderful Verger, for flower arrangers, brass cleaners, website and plaque mangers, magazine editor and magazine team, cleaners, servers, Sunday school teachers, Churchyard workers, financiers, musicians, and pastoral visitors. For our organ and choral scholars, many of whom have gone on to prestigious colleges and appointments, for our bell ringers as well.

I particularly want to thank the Friends of St. Giles, they have been very aware of the difficult financial circumstances that St. Giles is operating in at the moment and also of the significant challenge of fundraising for the Centre. In the face of this, their support and generosity to St. Giles has been fantastic. They have been true Friends. They have also kindly offered to pay for the repair of our Church clock and once again on behalf of all of us I express my sincere gratitude to The Friends.

Finally I would like to remember with love and gratitude all those from our Church family who came to the end of the earthly journey this past year. Every year it is with sadness that we lose dear friends and fellow worshippers, in doing so we give thanks to God for their faithful witness and service and entrust them in hope to the eternal life that Christ has promised to those who believe in him. Thank you to all those whose work no one sees but is seen and valued by Christ who is the one that ultimately we all serve. To him be all praise and glory now and forever. Amen

I thank you and remember you all with deep gratitude and love.
Matthew

Matthew Hughes
Rector of Farnborough Benefice

ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT INCLUDING ST. NICHOLAS CHILDREN'S REPORT

For St. Nicholas Church, 2025 was a year when a number of significant changes took place within our building. We finally installed high quality, up-to-date water heaters in our washrooms. These now ensure the supply of hot water on demand. Although this may seem a small thing, it is of course hugely significant for the hundreds of people who use our building on a weekly basis, and who in this day and age need the regular supply of hot water to thoroughly wash their hands. In addition, we replaced all the Fire Extinguishers throughout St. Nicholas Church, ensuring that every single room in our building is now equipped with the latest and most suitable fire extinguishers in line with the latest regulations and requirements. Undoubtedly the biggest project we undertook last year was to replace every single light fixture with LED lighting, from the smallest cupboard light bulb to the extensive ceiling lights covering our main hall. By one estimate, this will reduce our annual carbon footprint by approximately 2.7 tonnes a year. At the end of the year, we installed a defibrillator on the outside of our building for use by the church and the community. The British Red Cross state that 'quick use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) can lead to survival rates of 50% to 70%' for victims of cardiac arrest'. As a church we are very grateful for the individual donor who made provision of this defibrillator possible. In addition, we were grateful to Rochester Diocese for the provision of two significant grants towards the cost of the water heaters and LED lighting.

All these improvements to our 'fabric' helped ensure that St. Nicholas Church continued to be a welcoming space for our community as well as a place of worship. 2025 saw the Monday 'Tea, Cake and Chat' group begun by Val Richardson in 2024 continue to go from strength to strength, drawing in more and more members of our local community, and providing a vital space for friendship and companionship. In addition, the weekly games of 'Rummikub' have become increasingly competitive!

The St. Nicholas Community Larder continues to play a vital role in the lives of the many people who access this service. We gave out over 1032 food parcels in 2025, and in February 2026 we will have celebrated our 5th anniversary. We now have a large team of between 15-20 volunteers, collecting from Waitrose, Sainsbury's, the Co-op, Greggs and Brothers bakery. As grants and government funding for food banks have been cut over the years both at national and local authority level, we now do our own fundraising, including a very successful Quiz in 2025, and as of 2026 are contributing funds on a quarterly basis towards the running of the Transform Bromley Borough Food Hub.

A new initiative that was begun in May 2025 was a 'Gardening Club'. We are very grateful for the work of the 'Leamington Ladies WI' who for many years helped maintain the grounds at St. Nicholas Church. As they finally had to step down from the role towards the beginning of last year, we managed to pull together a small team of able volunteers who now meet fortnightly during the warmer months and less frequently during the winter, to help maintain our grounds. It has been a great pleasure to gather together with 4 or 5 other 'gardeners' of varying abilities, to take part in pruning, weeding, planting and generally helping keep the borders and grounds of St. Nicholas Church looking respectable. We have been grateful for the advice of our professional resident gardener, Ian Gillies, who helped advise us in the successful planting of daffodils around the edge of the car park. We finish each Gardening Club session with a short time of reading from the scriptures and prayer, while we recharge our batteries with a cup of tea or coffee. I am sometimes reminded that the Bible begins (in Genesis 1) and ends (in Revelation 22) in a garden! As it says in Revelation 22, 'the leaves of the tree are for ... healing' and there is certainly something therapeutic about gardening, at any level.

On a more sobering note, I was asked in 2025 to conduct 13 funerals. This is certainly more than I have normally conducted in recent years, but it is always a huge privilege to be alongside families at such a critical time, and I continue to believe that this is a vital service that the church can offer to the local community, remembering that God is 'close to the broken hearted' (Psalm 34). At the funerals of three of our own Church members, we sadly had to say goodbye to three people who had each played a key role in the life of St. Nicholas over many years – Beryl Couldridge, Rosemary Fordyce and Carol Gibbons. As we consider the faithful service of these saints, we are very aware of how much our current ministry is built on their legacy. During 2025 we also had our first service of 'renewal of baptism vows' for one of our Community Larder volunteers, and in September were delighted to see three of our young people confirmed at the parish Confirmation service at St. Giles. Throughout the year the seasons were marked by our usual activities – a Passover meal and the usual Easter Services, as well as the long-awaited return of the 'Pet Blessing' service in June, our ever popular 'Light and Bright' party, and a packed Christingle service at Christmas Eve with over 200 people in attendance.

As ever I owe a huge debt of gratitude to so many for their invaluable help at St. Nicholas. In particular I would like to thank Claire Couldridge, our indefatigable Church Warden, and Nick Jolliffe, Deputy Warden. A huge thank you is owed to Roger Allard, who after decades of service to St. Nicholas Church is finally stepping down as Treasurer. Thank you also to our Finance Team who will now be taking the reins - Richard Butterworth, Deputy Treasurer (and soon to be Treasurer), Brian and Lynda Allen our book-keeping team, and Jenny Fu, the most recent member of this team. I must also thank our lay ministers at St. Nicholas: Ian Gillies, our Reader with PTO, and Diane Stiff, our Pastoral Assistant. Thank you also to Jayne Calvert, our pianist, MU leader and lead volunteer at the Larder, to Val Richardson and the Tea and Coffee team, to Jackie Mason, Margie Gillies and the flower team, and to everyone who helps at Just Babies. Thank you to Katie Spreadbury who continues to oversee our social media presence with such dedication. Thank you also to the many volunteers who help with the children's work and the administration, giving up their free time. I am reminded of the words from Hebrews 6:10, 'God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them'.

Stephen Broadie
Associate Rector

CHILDREN'S REPORT AS PART OF THE ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

As mentioned in the Associate Rector's report last year, we are now hugely reliant on volunteers for much of the ministry of the Church. We continue to be incredibly grateful as a PCC to those volunteers who have been running Kids Club in particular. In 2025 we continued to use teaching materials based on Scripture Union's 'Splash' series, and as mentioned in the Associate Rector's report, we were delighted that three of our young people were Confirmed last September. 2025 also saw the beginning of our monthly 'Croissants and Craft' service. This is our All Age worship service where we serve pastries and enjoy a short time of song, story and prayer followed by crafts. We now include a short time of celebrating Communion as part of this service, and have grown a great team of willing volunteers, including two who now get to practise their skills of puppetry with our resident puppets 'Bill and Jill'! We have been delighted to welcome so many families and young children from around our community to this service, seeing an average attendance of over 50 during the Winter term, with around 80 people attending our Christmas 'Croissants and Craft'.

We once again saw excellent attendance at our Light and Bright party, and saw over 200 people attend our Christingle service in 2025, once again enjoying the spectacle of our very own 'human Christingle' (aka Michelle Felstead) in a bright orange blow up sumo suit along with assorted 'christingle' paraphernalia! The youth group 'Ignite' continued to meet during 2025, enjoying trips to Pavilion Bowling in Bromley, delivering leaflets around the parish, and one memorable visit to the 'all you can eat' buffet at the Bombay restaurant, Green Street Green. At the beginning of 2026, we have taken the Youth Group to visit HTB Onslow Square, a church connected to the 'Alpha Course' and we are looking forward to further planned church visits and social events, including a barbecue in the warmer months. The Just Babies group continues to provide a vital space of welcome and support for young parents and their babies.

As ever, I am incredibly grateful to the wide variety of people who help in so many ways at St Nicholas Church with the various babies, children's and youth activities. None of what we do would now be possible without volunteers, so there is no doubt that you are our most valued resource. We are continuing to pray that God will continue to lead and guide our children's and youth work going forward.

***Stephen Broadie
Associate Rector***

ST. GILES MUSIC

This year has seen another year of wonderful church music and I am enormously grateful to Ralph Barlow our Director of Music, for his inspiration and hard work in delivering beautiful and high quality music across a wide range of services. Needless to say this is all due to a creative partnership between Ralph, our choir members, and our organ scholar, Tom Blew. As a Parish we are very fortunate to have such a deep and rich partnership at work. I am also very grateful to our Organist, Clive Brearley, for his reliable and versatile playing at our 10.00 a.m. and 11.15 a.m. services plus at funerals and weddings as well.

I am pleased to say that this year we have gained three new members to our church choir and we are continuing to explore ways in which we can further attract people of all ages to participate in the musical life of St. Giles. As Rector of this Parish Church the maintenance and growth of music and the Anglican choral tradition continue to be a central priority for me. I am also delighted to say that a number of our young musicians have gone on to notable music careers and course of study at Oxford and Cambridge. This is a testament to the nurturing environment that St. Giles is proving to be for young musicians. It is good to know that St. Giles is make an important contribution to the wider musical life of the Church.

The Rector

ST. GILES FAMILY & CHILDREN'S WORKER

Our team of leaders continue to offer Sunday school sessions on a regular basis. They work collaboratively on a rota basis on a scheme of work that is sent out to them every term.

Last year I reported that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and maintain attendance of children and young people, as we compete with other offers on a Sunday morning. However, we do get positive feedback when children are able to attend, and it is good to know that families do feel welcome and valued at our church. Children and young people are an important and integral part of our congregation. They serve on our reading rota at the 10am and other major services and help by taking the offertory at 10am.

The main change to our Sunday morning offer since September, has been to run an 'All Age' Sunday school for anyone aged 3+. The scheme of work mentioned now includes extension activities for older children who may attend. We meet every Sunday morning except for 1st Sunday of the month.

Our last Youth Group meeting was a December meal at Ephesus in Orpington. At present we are looking forward to the Good Friday Family Service held in the churchyard. This is usually well attended by a large number of families.

Our Annual Children's Celebration Service is held in July and marks the end of the Sunday school year. All children and young people who attend church are thanked with either a book or small token of our appreciation. Last year the talk was about how our children are the beating heart of our church.

Christmas Eve services are always well attended and last year was no exception. The Sunday school led service included bible extracts and poems read by the children and young people. The talk, 'The Everlasting Gift' focused on the contrast between, albeit, lovely, but transient gifts we might receive at Christmas, and the everlasting gift of Jesus, Son of God. As is the tradition, the children donned their costumes and created a tableau.

On Christmas Day, children brought their presents to church to show the congregation.

This year, we look forward to the long-awaited refurbishment of the centre. This will mean a suspension of Sunday school during the period of building work. Hopefully, we will be able to relaunch with a 'big bang' when the time comes. As always, there will be children's activities at the back of church and an encouragement to take part with 'noisy silence.'

All-Age Worship, on the first Sunday of the month will continue (except for August). I am also aware that the Communion service on the 2nd Sunday of the month is being tweaked, offering a more streamlined approach for those who might struggle with children at a longer service. Our aim is to ensure that St Giles really is an 'all age' church, with something for everyone, even in the absence of Sunday school.

Finally, thank you to everyone involved in supporting our children and young people at St Giles Church. Yes, they are our today, but they are also our tomorrow.

Irene Dancer
St. Giles Family & Children's Worker

ST. GILES SAFEGUARDING REPORT

I am required to report annually to the church AGM that our churches have adopted the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. I also report that all church groups have been approved by the relevant PCCs.

Our own Parish Safeguarding Policy is updated regularly and approved by PCC's. Copies are located in both churches, in St Giles Centre and on the parish website. There is also information there to support survivors of abuse.

Safeguarding is a regular item on the St Giles PCC agenda and included at all joint PCC meetings with St Nicholas. I have strong links with Stephen at St Nicholas and am grateful for his oversight and adherence to policy there as well as for his quick responses to any questions or requests for information I may have.

As Lead Recruiter I can confirm that all those who are required to have a DBS check (which includes a police check) have done so or are in the process of doing so. Both churches comply with the relevant guidance with regard to DBS. My thanks go to Jenny Wilkins at St Giles and Chris Deeks at St Nicholas for their support in achieving this.

Safeguarding training is required for all role holders in our churches and needs to be repeated/updated every three years (as does the DBS). Most people do this individually on their computer at home, but we have also run individual and group sessions for anyone who struggles with the technology. The PCC at St Giles has agreed that visiting bell ringers and musicians and singers should be made aware of our safeguarding policies and abide by them. At the time of writing appropriate notices are being prepared.

The Safeguarding dashboard is used as a tool to help me track compliance with safeguarding requirements for our churches. It is useful in highlighting areas that need to be focused on either immediately or which can become part of a longer term action plan. An action plan is presented to PCCs annually.

This year I resigned from the SEC group (safeguarding executive committee). Having served for a number of years, the time was right to pass this office on to someone else in the diocese.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this important work over the year. Safeguarding protocols and procedures are in place, hopefully so that we don't notice them or think of them as anything unusual. They become part of our church culture. As Christians, we have a special responsibility to be open and honest about these things. We strive to be the best that we can be, serving the vulnerable in listening, active and supportive communities.

Irene Dancer
Parish Safeguarding Officer/Lead Recruiter

ST. GILES FLOWER ARRANGERS REPORT

As well as our weekly flower displays, the church is beautifully decorated for Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Posies are made for Mothering Sunday.

Organisation

There are approximately four meetings a year with Matthew when we discuss previous events and advise on future commitments.

The four teams take turns in organising the festivals when occasional flower arrangers are welcomed to help. Lynn Taylor deals with all bookings for the Book of Remembrance and special requests and Elizabeth Harriss-Orr with wedding bookings.

Accounts

Eddie Roberts has taken the role of treasurer since Autumn 2024. Congratulations to Eddie for being such an efficient book keeper for our accounts.

Recruitment

We are pleased to have welcomed several promising new members and are always looking for new volunteers.

Donations

We continue to receive regular donations from the congregation for the main flower festivals, the Book of Remembrance and special requests for windows and pedestals.

Costs

The cost of fresh flowers varies with the season. For festivals and weddings, we use a wholesale supplier. For most weeks we buy from supermarkets and occasionally a florist. To keep costs down we also make use of silk flowers when appropriate. We are fortunate that our members bring fresh foliage.

The budget for weekly flowers and festivals remains as low as can be managed and we have reduced the number of weekly arrangements to keep costs to a minimum. A budget for each festival is arranged with Matthew.

Recommendation

St Giles Church, carried out a fire risk assessment, by local fire and rescue authority in autumn 2025. As flower arrangers' equipment is inflammable, changes to storage were recommended. The advice was to buy fireproof bags to enable all equipment to be placed safely in these. The improvement has now been implemented.

Contact Details

Our details are available via the Parish website and magazine which also display photos of the festival flowers.

St. Giles Flower Arrangers

ST. GILES BELLRINGERS

2025 was a year of progress in the ringing chamber.

The bells have been rung almost every Sunday morning prior to the Family Service and additionally rung for practices approximately every other Monday evening, on most Tuesdays from 11.00am, often a quarter peal or sometimes a peal, and for weddings and funerals upon request. For a number of months in the middle of the year Chelsfield bells were out of action while spire works were carried out and so our Monday practice often hosted the Chelsfield ringers, too.

A record thirty six quarter peals were rung in 2025 (28 in 2024), and nine peals (8 in 2024).

In order to maintain a healthy band of ringers and replace those no longer ringing it is necessary to recruit and teach new ringers. Pleasingly in November 2024 we hosted an open evening for the Scouts and as a result of this we have a new young learner who is doing very well. Teaching sessions have been held on Monday evenings prior to the main practice and we now have three adult learners, one of whom is up to a standard sufficient to ring for Service on Sundays.

During the year we took delivery of a new set of bell ropes. Due to the possible stretch in the new ropes it is unwise to fit them all at once so we've fitted two at a time and now six out of eight bells have had the new ropes installed so far.

Frustratingly the Church clock ceased to work in the summer of 2025 due to a failed motor. Inspections have been carried out by clock companies and Smiths Clocks of Derby are now instructed to carry out repairs.

As ever, thanks go to the members of the band who turn up regularly and enthusiastically to ring.

Nick Wilkins

ST. GILES SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We hope that St Giles offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere that encourages our congregations and the wider community to become involved with their local church. Throughout the year, we try to provide refreshments after services, giving people the opportunity to meet, talk, and build friendships. Mother's Day marks the beginning of our regular refreshments season, with a cheerful posy of daffodils adding a special touch to the celebration, thanks to our Flower Arrangers.

The winter months can make this more challenging, when colder weather makes it less appealing for volunteers to stand outside serving tea and coffee and, of course, serving in the rain is simply not an attractive proposition for volunteers or congregation.

Nevertheless, refreshments are always served after the Thursday service, and all are warmly welcome. Our sincere thanks go to those who regularly help: Marilyn Reeves, Linda Crisp, Carole White, Sheila Munns, Eileen Dixon and Sue Rennie.

After evening services, we often offer wine, juice and light snacks, along with the opportunity to enjoy our wonderful choir in a relaxed and sociable setting.

Coach trips are always popular, and we have seen an increase in support from people who do not come to church on a regular basis. The year started with a trip to Brighton in May, followed by our annual trip to Broadstairs in July, a somewhat chilly day on the beach for some. The end of the year saw a trip to the Canterbury Christmas market to get everyone in the right mood.

Our annual Summer Fete in June is always well attended and proves to be the biggest fund raiser of the year. Although it requires a great deal of hard work, it is always worthwhile. This year we raised £6,222, helped enormously by the generous sponsorship that covered the initial set-up costs. We have continued to foster a garden party atmosphere, with plenty of tables and chairs inviting people to sit, relax and enjoy excellent food, a refreshing glass of Pimm's, and superb entertainment.

So many people help at this event that it is almost impossible to list everyone, so erring on the side of caution, I can only say that this event would not take place without the unstinting help of sponsors, donors, entertainers and volunteers.

Planning is already under way for this year's fete on Saturday 13th June, so put the date in your diary. Do look for the requests for prizes, gazebos and help. Fingers crossed for good weather this year. It makes all the difference to the performers and to our guests.

Harvest Supper incorporates a Barn Dance, with the Ian Petrie band providing the music and the calling; an opportunity to join in or just watch the antics of the dancers. A two-course meal is served and is always much appreciated. It is a true family occasion, and we are building a loyal band of regular attendees.

The year concludes with refreshments in the Village Hall after the Nine Lessons & Carols service. Mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine for everyone to wish each other a Happy Christmas.

All these events help to strengthen our sense of community, and we warmly encourage those beyond our regular congregation to get involved. We are anticipating that this coming year's renovation of the St Giles Centre will offer us additional opportunities to develop and host a wider range of events for our community.

Volunteers are the key to successful social activities, and we are deeply grateful for the time and energy so generously given. There is always room for more helping hands.

Equally important are our participants. We need your support — do come along when you can, bring family and friends, and if you are unable to attend, please consider sponsoring or donating. And if you have the time and enthusiasm, we would be delighted to welcome you to the team.

Carol Fryer

MOTHERS' UNION

Another year has gone by, and Mothers' Union is still thriving in the Parish of Farnborough!

In 2026, we will celebrate 150 years since Mothers' Union was founded in the small parish Church of Old Alresford, Hampshire by Mary Sumner, a vicar's wife with a bold vision. She believed that women, regardless of class or status, could come together in faith to support one another and strengthen family life within the Church.

From that single spark of an idea, a global movement was born- and Mothers' Union has grown to 4 million members across 84 countries. As we look to the future our members will continue working to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the world. At the heart of everything we do will remain our unwavering belief that faith and compassion can transform lives.

As we look ahead to this remarkable milestone, we invite you to be part of it. Whether you're passionate about social justice, prayer, community outreach, or simply want to connect with people who care, there will be a way for you to join us and join in.

For 150 years, we have been making a meaningful difference in the lives of millions worldwide through our unique, faith-based and community-led approach to tackling poverty, injustice and violence. We understand that these challenges are deeply interconnected and as such, our response is holistic, while confronting the systematic causes and consequences of marginalisation and oppression. All these years later, our beliefs and aims are still very relevant today.

Since Covid in 2020, our monthly Monday evening meetings have again been held by zoom, which has proved very popular with our branch members, and has also enabled members from other branches, both near and far, to join in these Evening Prayers with our Farnborough branch. Sharing faith and fellowship through prayer is very important to us all, and underpins the aims and objectives of Mothers' Union we share together.

We follow the Church's year, and most of the prayers we use are taken from The Mothers' Union website, an excellent resource to share together.

In December we again held our zoom service supporting the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence entitled, "No More 1 in 3", and lit candles in our homes to show solidarity with our friends who have sadly been affected, both in the UK and overseas. Many suffer in silence and are undetected in their wider community. Mothers' Union joins each year with other organisations from approximately 187 countries who participate in this campaign to raise awareness of, and call for, an end to gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

Our group is currently participating in this year's Make a Mother's Day campaign. The 2026 theme is entitled, "Give the gift of BELONGING this Mothering Sunday." Belonging through Parenting and Community Support, and guided by faith and compassion, Mothers' Union supports parents and young mothers to build families where everyone belongs. Through community programmes and parenting training, families are equipped to grow in confidence, connection and care. Mothers' Union believes ethical gifts change lives.

Mothers' Union still supports the AFIA project, (Away From it All), funding holidays for families who wouldn't otherwise have a holiday. Due to the tremendous cost of each holiday, day trips out are now being considered.

Again, this year, Farnborough Branch has been involved with the MU Prison Project, at Rochester men's prison. We were asked to give prisoners filled toiletries bags for when they were released from prison. We have been able to provide another 20 bags this year, which were very gratefully received, and we are hoping to be able to provide more in the future. Each bag includes a card wishing them well, from Rochester Diocese Mothers' Union. We have also provided a few rucksacks which, again, were given to prisoners on their release from prison. At Easter, all 750 inmates receive a chocolate Easter egg from Mothers' Union, and we have again supported this project. At Christmas, each prisoner gets a pair of socks, and a Christmas card, which we were involved with as well. These small gifts help to make the prisoners feel loved and valued, whatever their crime.

Our afternoon meetings continue in person on the 3rd Thursday of each month at St. Nicholas Church, at 1.30 pm, where we sometimes have speakers, join in reflective services, or meet for prayer and fellowship with refreshments.

We are very pleased to have returned to St. Giles Church once a month on the 1st Thursday morning at the 10am Communion Service, where we all share the Mothers' Union prayer together.

Many of our members continue to knit colourful squares, which are then sewn up into blankets, and distributed to people in need. Again, this past year, several baby cot blankets have been given to SCBU at the PRUH, along with cardigans, hats, booties, canula mitts for the pre-term and sickly babies needing care there.

We have recently become involved with a local women's refuge. We hope to supply them with practical items for when they are rehoused in the near future.

On 10th June, we have our 150th Celebratory Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, where our World-Wide President, Kathleen Snow, and all the Zonal Trustees, will be in attendance. Several of our members from Farnborough branch will also be attending this service.

The following day, there will be an Annual Gathering in The Emmanuel Centre, next to Mary Sumner House, the headquarters of the Mothers' Union.

Closer to home, on Tuesday 23rd June, Bishop Jonathan will be giving us the use of his garden in Bishop's Court, Rochester for a 150th celebration party and family day.

If you are interested in hearing more about Mothers' Union, or coming along to our Farnborough branch, either by zoom on a Monday evening or in person on a Thursday afternoon please contact Jayne Calvert on 07780664340 or by e mail at jayne_calvert@hotmail.com We are a very friendly group and would love to have some new members!

Jayne Calvert

ST. GILES WEBSITE

Farnborough Parish website:

www.farnborough-kent-parish.org.uk

The website has continued to provide information to parishioners and others about our church, its history, and events both past and upcoming.

As well as the regular services and events taking place during the year, the website this year posted many photos taken at our VE Day 80 year anniversary celebrations and flower festival in May, fate and garden party in June. and harvest festival.

The website has around 100 pages, although this fluctuates during the year. The busiest months for access were May and August 2025. With over 300 visits per day, visits and pages accessed over the year were 5-10% higher than in 2024.

Related websites:

Farnborough Village History

www.farnborough-kent-village.org.uk

Farnborough and the Railway

www.farnborough-kent-railways.org.uk

Nick Reynolds
nickrstgiles@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF ST. GILES

The Friends of St. Giles is composed of Church members, villagers and those who have moved away. We support the Church in any way that we can.

Our annual fundraising Quiz at the Woodman was a very happy evening and raised £438.

The Committee meets regularly and we sometimes use Zoom to keep in touch with our financial advisor. We thank the Committee, and particularly Roger Alard our Treasurer and Sue Ellis our Secretary. Our AGM was held at the Chairman's house.

We have lost several of our very loyal members this year. We particularly miss Barrie Walker and Anne Vincent. We also remember Andrew Hunt.

The 250 Club is thriving. If you would like to be a member it costs £1 per annum and details are available from Sue Ellis on 07715 860504.

Julia Hoadley, Chairman

PARISH MAGAZINE

Let me start with some good news. The number of subscribers has risen by just over 3% since this time last year. We now have one hundred subscribers for the hard copy and fifteen who receive the magazine by email. We have also increased our advertisers this year thanks to some great work by Gill. So let's hope the upward trend continues throughout 2026.

I would also like to thank Paul who organises the distribution of the magazines and looks after the emailed ones and the volunteers who willingly deliver the magazines.

As I mentioned last year, I am very grateful to the small band of regulars who provide interesting articles, but there have been months recently when even with this help I have struggled for content. It would be great to have a selection of articles that I could keep in hand for quiet months, and I am sure there are budding writers out there who could share some stories but just need a little encouragement. So please put your thinking caps on or persuade a friend or relative to write something.

I wonder what you do with your copy of the magazine. Do you put it in the recycling? Try passing it on to a friend or neighbour instead. Particularly if you think there is something in there that may be of interest them.

I have a few ideas that might get us a few more subscribers, but I can't do this on my own, so if any of you have any ideas, please drop me an email to farboroughparishmag@gmail.com or leave a note in my pigeonhole. Let's try and increase our subscribers by 10% before next year's AGM. That would be a great result.

Gail Low, Editor

9. CLOSING PRAYER

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.