

Priest in Charge Report

APCM 2026 – Reflecting on 2025

2025 has been a significant and formative year in the life of our churches, marked above all by the creation of **The Milborne Benefice**, which became effective on 1st April 2025. My primary focus throughout the year has been on welcoming the three churches of Blackford, Compton Pauncefoot, and Maperton into a benefice that already included Milborne Port, Milborne Wick, Goathill, and Charlton Horethorne with Stowell, alongside the joining of Goathill with the Parish of Milborne Port.

Any process of change brings both challenge and opportunity, and I am delighted to report that this year has felt very much like the coming together of a *blended family*. There has been generosity of spirit, patience, and a genuine willingness to learn one another's traditions and ways of worship. I am deeply grateful to retired clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC members, and congregations across all our churches for the grace with which this transition has been embraced.

Among the highlights of the year have been several Benefice Services, particularly those held in Compton Pauncefoot, Goathill, and Blackford, which have helped us grow in confidence as one benefice while remaining rooted in our local communities. A particular highlight was the Easter Concert of music and reflections in Compton Pauncefoot, which was superbly supported and warmly received.

Alongside our regular pattern of worship and pastoral ministry, it has been encouraging to see new initiatives take root. In Milborne Port, the Baby and Toddler Group, "Little Jays," has quickly become popular, supported by helpers from across the benefice. The Julian Group, meeting weekly for quiet prayer and reflection, continues to offer a valued space of stillness. In April we started "**Memory Lane**," a Saturday afternoon café-church-style service which creates a welcoming space where the whole community can come together to support and walk alongside those living with memory impairment, and those who care for them. It has been warmly received.

Our pastoral ministry has remained central to our shared life. We regularly take Home Communion to people in their own homes, as well as to Gainsborough House Chapel, Elliscombe House, and Elliscombe Park, maintaining vital links with those unable to attend church regularly. 2025 also saw a significant increase in funerals, particularly in Milborne Port, as we lost some of the real stalwarts of our churches — people who were not only faithful servants but dear friends. Among those we lost was our Magazine Editor Linda Mumford, whose contribution over many years was deeply valued. We are extremely grateful that Felicity Johns has since stepped in as editor.

Alongside times of loss, we have continued to celebrate baptisms and weddings, and were delighted to be invited to lead Marriage Preparation sessions at The Clockspire restaurant, which proved a creative and hospitable setting. Morning Prayer continues as a faithful daily offering in Milborne Port, forming a quiet backbone of prayer for the benefice.

Our engagement with children and young people remains strong. I lead weekly Collective Worship in our Church of England school in Charlton Horethorne, and it is a great strength that the Chair of Governors is drawn from our benefice church community, while two other parishioners also go into the school weekly to teach singing. This shared involvement is a real gift and has helped deepen the relationship between church and school.

In Milborne Port, the rhythm of the church year continues to be well supported. Each year the church hosts a beautiful Choral Lenten Compline on Friday evenings, alongside weekly Lent Lunches, both of which are well attended. Throughout the year, a very successful Tuesday Lunch Club continues to offer hospitality, friendship, and practical care.

Advent and Christmas were marked by a particularly joyful moment when we welcomed the whole village of Milborne Port into the church for the Christmas Light Switch-On on the weekend of Advent Sunday. We were also delighted to unveil a Star mobile hanging above the altar, with stars made by parishioners across various groups, and I would like to thank all involved, especially those who ensured it was safely installed.

Behind the scenes, much faithful work continues. Graham Sharpless maintains the benefice website, for which we are very grateful, while recognising that additional help would be welcome in this area. A small group has begun exploring ways to improve our Facebook and online engagement. The smooth running of the benefice office is due in no small part to Helen Solomon, whose dedication and organisation are deeply appreciated.

I also continue to engage fully in the life of the Deanery of Bruton and Cary, valuing the support, shared learning, and wider sense of mission this brings.

On a personal note, as Priest in Charge, I would like to say how very much I have enjoyed getting to know the three new churches of Blackford, Compton Pauncefoot, and Maperton. They have brought their own character, faithfulness, and gifts, and have genuinely enriched the life and witness of this benefice. It has been a joy to discover how much we already share, and how much we continue to learn from one another.

As we look back on 2025, I am thankful for the faithfulness, generosity, and resilience shown across the benefice. While there is still much to learn as we continue to grow together, this year has laid strong foundations. I look forward with hope to what God will continue to do among us as we deepen our worship, our relationships, and our service to the communities we are called to love.

With love, Rev Rona

St Peter's Goathill, Accounts Summary Year Ending 31 Dec 25

The 2025 End of Year Accounts were signed off by the independent auditor on 7th January 2026 with total assets as follows:

Non-Restricted Fund: £10654.65

Restricted Fund: £6940.56

Total: £17595.20

From a financial perspective the main focus has been on how to secure sufficient funds to meet the costs associated with the urgent work identified in the Quinquennial Inspection report. With the successful award of a grant and a very generous donation, funds to address a subset of the immediate and urgent work are available. However, the maintenance costs for the longer term should be identified and financial provision made accordingly.

The fundraising efforts of the St Peter's, Goathill community continues to excel with the total raised over £2000 for a second consecutive year. In summary, 2025 has seen St Peter's finances remain stable allowing the PCC to continue holding regular services.

With the Parish of Goathill now forming part of 'The Parish of Milborne Port with Goathill' the role of a dedicated Treasurer for Goathill is no longer required. The management of the funds now comes under the auspices of 'The Parish of Milborne Port with Goathill' Treasurer. Therefore, the transfer of Goathill funds from the Nat West Bank to the Co-op Bank, that reflects the end of year 2025 balance, has now been completed. Please see below:

Nat West Bank - Transfer of Funds

Nat West Bank balance as of 31 Dec 25 was £7572.59. These funds have been transferred to the new account for St Peter's, Goathill as follows:

02 Jan 26: £10 BACS Payment to prove link to new account.

02 Jan 26: £7562.59 BACS Payment to new account.

NOTE: The above BACS payments were authorized by Mrs T West and Mrs B Buckland (Nat West Bank signatories)

CCLA Deposit Account: New correspondent: Mr P Springett

Updated Authorised Signatories: Mr H Hayward, Mrs T West, Mrs A Bennett

N J Bunt Account Manager 15 Jan 26

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APCM Chairperson

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c:goathill/APCM Treasurer Summary 150126

Milborne Wick

This year we have had an average of 7 at our monthly services with a full house attendance for our festival service which has been very encouraging.

The fund-raising events have been the Cream Tea held on the Sunday of the Bank Holiday in August and our Harvest supper which 45 attended for a wonderful evening – both events being very much of a rural theme and commemorative bringing the community of Wick together to help keep our little church on the road.

There was a beautiful vigil service held for the late John Sprake, Chairman of our church, and we have also had a couple of christenings in the church. Our in-house pianist, as we like to call him, and his wife both of whom organise the musical side of our services created the most beautiful service for the Carol service which included a choir and a trombonist and was enjoyed by a large congregation of all ages. It was the most wonderful way to start the Christmas festivities.

We are presently having to replace the electric heating in the church, and I am delighted to say that shortly we will have an individual QR code for Wick Church.

Amanda MacKintosh

The Milborne Benefice Website

The Benefice website (<https://milborneportchurches.org.uk>) was created in February 2016 and has been developed considerably since then. In 2025 some significant changes were made following the addition of three more churches and parishes. The list of regular services also had to be changed and new people, including churchwardens, added to the **About Us** section.

Also in 2025, the Milborne Port Electoral Roll was put online. An application form was added to the website allowing people to apply online without having to complete a paper form. This coincided with the need to create a new Electoral Roll where everyone, including those on the old Roll, had to apply. The Electoral Roll is now available on the website to those with login details. This ensures that it is secure and only one up-to-date version is available. In 2026 all parishes will be able to put their Electoral Rolls online and make use of the website application form.

The website includes the calendar of services in the Benefice plus news, information and events. The text of the Bible readings can also be seen. Other content includes the Pew News, Magazines and slideshows of events. The website has been designed to allow pages to be viewed using a mobile phone as well as a computer. Around 1,000 pages are accessed each day; in December the site reached 350 clicks from Google Search and 18 other websites include links to the Milborne Benefice website.

In 2026 the website will be 10 years old. To ensure that the website continues beyond 2026 it will need more people to help in its maintenance and updating the content. The software does provide a considerable amount of automation making updating much easier. It also provides tools which are used, amongst other things, to facilitate adding the services to the Pew News and Magazine, saving some considerable time and reducing the possibility of errors.

Graham Sharpless, January 2026

Bell ringers' Report 2025

Fourteen ringers paid their annual subscription to the Bath & Wells Association of Church Bellringers in January 2026. Jill, Frank and Gill continue to contribute and be part of the group, although are no longer able to ring.

Our practice nights continue to be well attended. We are able to ring on a Sunday morning, although sometimes we do not have enough ringers to sound all eight bells. We remain heavily reliant on four ringers who also support the Stalbridge team, and at the time of writing (February 2026), we are training seven new adult ringers. It is hoped that they all make the progress needed, and that they soon become fully-fledged ringers so that our bells can continue to be rung.

Members of the team continue to support other towers and regularly attend branch and training practices. The group enjoyed a Christmas meal at The Camelot Inn, South Cadbury.

As always, I would like to thank the contribution that each and every member of the band gives to the church, and also to thank the church and villagers for their support in return.

Susan Wales, Tower Captain

Charity and Mission

Once again we are grateful to the PCC for their monthly gift of £350.00 to support our chosen monthly charities. The charities supported in 2025 were:

January	Church Army
February	Shelter Box (provides emergency accommodation and aid to families who have lost their homes due to disaster or conflict.
March	Ripple Effect (help for small farms in Uganda to become self-sufficient)
April	Julia's House Children's Hospice
May	Rendezvous Sherborne
June	Parkinson's UK
July	The Roost (drop-in centre run by Yeovil Community Church)
August	Tearfund
September	Mary's Meals
October	Dorset Youth for Christ
November	Compassion UK (supports children who have the responsibilities of parenting)
December	My Time (provides young carers 5-15 years old with support and friendship)

During the year we gave £300.00 each to Milborne Port Foodshare, and Partners for Progress who support the educational needs of children in Nepal. From this years' Christmas services we gave £270.00 to Christian Aid. We do thank everyone for their generosity towards coffee in Church House and at the Christmas Services, which made these donations possible.

Richard Redman

Report of Events Committee Activities 2025

- Quiz Night with Fish and Chips May 24nd net amount raised £579
- Promenade and Prosecco Cream Teas June 7th 6 gardens opened plus cream teas [weather was very wet!] net raised £200.
- Michael Bawtree Organ Recital July 8th raised £1226 [including Gift Aid]
- Church Fete and Grand Draw 19th July net raised £2602 plus £150 donation from Magazine
- Quiz Night [no food] Nov 15th net amount raised £618

Committee members are Anne Briggs, Margaret Curtis, Sandra Nichols, Anne Salkeld, Jan Sharpless, Gillian Topp.

Sadly last year we lost Linda Mumford and John Fanning, 2 long standing members of the committee.

We are also lucky to have lots of help from family members and friends, other members of the congregation and the wider village community.

Dates for your diaries:

Yeovilton Volunteer Brass Band March 14th

Quiz Night planned for May 2nd

Promenade and Prosecco June 6th

Church Fete July 4th

Anne Salkeld

CHURCH HOUSE FINANCE

The overall position for 2025 was total income of £11,135.94 (2024: £9,719.71) and total expenditure of £17,670.02 (2024: £13,140.57), resulting in a deficit of £6,534.08.

The Church House 100 Club continues to support the running costs of the hall, contributing just over £500 net to our income. However, there are now over 30 vacancies in the 100 Club. With a full complement of tickets, we would be looking at around £780 net income.

Our overall lettings income increased by just shy of £600 over 2024. Income from regular bookings was up £250, and income from one-off lettings increased by around £350. We also benefited from relatively good interest on a fixed-term account which ended in 2025. This contributed around £1,100 to our income.

Costs have generally increased, as is expected. Our income from lettings was not quite enough to cover the “costs of trading” (utilities, insurance, cleaning, etc), and we are having to increase our hire charges this year to cover the increasing costs.

Aside from our usual expenditure, we also spent around £9,300 on roof works, with probably the same again expected in 2026. It is this expense which is the cause of the deficit. We are very grateful to the Tuesday Luncheon Club and to the Spirit of Milborne Port, both of whom made generous contributions towards the replacement dishwasher, without which the deficit would have been greater.

The end-of-year balance was £22,988.78.

Ben Grundy

The Church House, Milborne Port. February 2026

Church House continues to be used by a good number of regular users and by private bookings for parties, wakes and other events as well as providing the venue for various Church functions.

From September 2025 the Little Jays Baby & Toddler Group regularly meets on Friday mornings during term time and this is a welcome addition to the regular bookings.

The Foodshare group also continues to use the hall regularly for food storage and distribution. Use was also made of the building and gardens at the Village Christmas lights switch in December again and this is proving to be a really successful event.

In late 2024 we repaired a section of the roof due to slippage of tiles, and we are now looking at what might need to be done to the rest of the roof to maintain it in good condition.

During the past year the upkeep of the garden has been undertaken by the Grasshoppers group, who maintain the Churchyard, and we are grateful to them for their support.

As a result of recent retirements from the Management Committee, we would like to recruit one or two additional members, so if you are interested in joining then please let us know.

Trevor John. Chair, Church House Management Committee

Milborne Port Parish Magazine

The Magazine's hard-working committee consists of Robin Bawtree (Finance and advertising), Richard and Liz Redman (Distribution), Felicity John (editor), and Jacquie Hall. As you all know, Linda Mumford continued editing the magazine until she was no longer able to do so. Felicity took over in September and Linda sadly departed this life in December. I would like to pay tribute to the way in which she guided the content, image and – above all – the highly literate standards of our parish magazine. Regular readers will already have noticed that these high standards are sometimes a little lacking with the new editor – apologies, and I shall continue to strive to maintain the standards Linda set.

The Milborne Port Magazine is run by St John's members as a service to the Milborne Port Community. While containing regular notifications of our church services, church events, and always a letter offering reflection from Rev Rona or other church leaders, it also includes as much information as possible from the wider community, with reports from the Parish Council, the Primary School and many other groups. We also have articles of general interest, for example the popular Birding and Sky at Night features. The Magazine also carries small ads for local businesses, which are much appreciated.

Much of our work throughout the year is behind the scenes, but people would soon notice if it wasn't done! We are also very grateful to the team of distributors who get the magazine out to households every month, come rain, come shine. Village businesses also sell for us, and we thank Wayne, the Co-op, Charlton Horethorne shop and the Post Office for their support. Some are left at the showhouse for Redcliffe Homes on Wheathill to hand out. We sell in the region of 600 magazines per month – a significant contribution to village information in the social media age. Many people prefer the printed word, and like a physical magazine to read rather than trying to find the information online, although Graham Sharpless kindly uploads the monthly content onto the benefice website around mid-month, so there is an electronic record there too. I have had comments from visitors from outside the village that they have picked up a copy and wish that their community had something similar.

We would like to sustain and even increase our sales level, so please help us to promote the magazine by showing a copy to any new neighbours you may acquire and telling them how useful the magazine is! Contact Liz and Richard on 251145 to let them know any new delivery possibilities. The cost of the magazine is now at 50p per copy, partly in response to the difficulty of finding cash in an increasingly financially remote way of life. We are able to make donations from profits raised, and this year have donated to the PCC, SOMP and the Food Share.

We thank all our contributors for their thoughtful and interesting articles throughout the year. Anyone can contribute to the magazine by emailing magazine@milborneportchurches.org.uk We also enjoy all the photos which are sent in, and use the twelve cover photographs to create a village calendar each year. Please continue to take and send in photographs to the email address above.

Felicity John

MILBORNE PORT MAGAZINE

Financial Statement for the year ending 31st December 2025

Magazine Receipts and Payments Accounts

Income	2025	2024
Advertising Sales	£3125:00	£3253:00
Magazine Sales	£2881:88	£2942:93
Calendar Sales	£700:00	£1190:00
Incorrect payment (Upstairs Downstairs)	£700:00	£0
Bank Interest	£97:63	£140:48
Total Income:	£7504:51	£7526:41

Expenditure

Printing (Magazines)	£5940:00	£5940:00
Printing (200 Calendars)	£754:80	£754:80
Sundries		
(Audit, Stamps, Dollery & cheque)	£197:73	£227:27
Church Raffle tickets & First Prize	£0	£211:14
PCC Donation	£300:00	£400:00
Food Bank	£200:00	£150:00
Spirit of Milborne Port Donation	£100:00	£150:00
Upstairs Downstairs reimbursement	£700	£0
Total Expenditure:	£8192:53	£7833:21
Excess		
(Shortfall) of Income over Expenditure	(£688:02)	(£306:80)
Bank Account as at 1st January 2025	£4755:95	£5062:75
Bank Account as at 31st December 2025	£4067:93	£4755:95

Robin Bawtree

Choir

As ever, the last twelve months have been busy ones for the choir, with the regular services at St John's as well as occasional services across the Benefice.

The choir continues to have a good number of singers, though new members of any age are always welcome and we would particularly like more basses. We continue to rehearse weekly, now up by the organ rather than with the piano, a change which we made during the pandemic, but which we all prefer.

During the year we tackled a wide variety of music, both traditional and modern. We sang Compline throughout Lent, and, in another lesson from lockdown, now sing in the crossing, under the tower, which gives us more space and has proved a much nicer spot to sing in. It's a lovely quiet and reflective service with which to end the week.

The choir also sang Bob Chilcott's lovely settings of hymns from his St John Passion during Sunday services in Lent, and during the year we have enjoyed working our way through a number of anthems in the 'Flexible Anthem Book', which is very useful for the inevitable occasions when some parts might be missing. We have also started work on two new (to us) congregational mass settings. More on that in due course!

At Christmas we sang for the carol service at Stowell and of course at St John's.

I continue to be grateful to all the members of the choir for their dedication and time, not only each Sunday, but also for weekly rehearsals and the extra services both at St John's and at other churches in the Benefice.

Rachel Willetts

Milborne Port Christian Aid Committee

Historically we are an anachronism as we were a sub-committee of Churches Together, which no longer operates in Milborne Port, and when our parent body was dissolved we decided that we would continue to raise funds for this important charity. As most of our support is from St John's (with representation from the Roman Catholic and ReBorne churches) it is appropriate to provide an annual report here. Our committee members are Anne Salkeld (chair), Felicity John (secretary), David Johnson (treasurer), Sui Ching Chan, Margaret Curtis and Clare Silk.

The highlight of the year was the series of Lent Lunches which raised an astonishing £1,064.45. This is an increase of some £300 on the previous year. We are most grateful to Ven House for providing the food for two of the lunches, and to ReBorne for hosting another in their new coffee shop. Additionally, the PCC donated the loose cash from the 2023 Christmas services (£585.00 and received early in 2024), Christian Aid week raised £884.04, Hot Cross Buns on Good Friday yielded £61.00 and our Harvest Supper £411.50. The total that we sent to Christian Aid was £2,664.04, just slightly less than in 2024. Thank you to everyone who supported us either financially and/or with help – it is very much appreciated.

David Johnson (Hon. Treasurer)