

# St Laurence Church, Foxton



Annual Report and Financial Statements of  
The Parochial Church Council  
For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

Incumbent:

The Revd David Lee

Independent Examiner:

Chris Neild

## Contents

1	Rector's Introduction	3
2	Aims and Purpose	4
3	Objectives and Activities	4
4	Achievements and Performance	5
5	Church Buildings	6
6	Financial Review	7
7	Reserves Policy	8
8	Risk Management	8
9	Structure Government and Management	9
10	Administrative Information	10
	Independent Examiner's report	11
	Financial Statements 2024	12

### Rector's Introduction

As I write this, it seems hard to realise that, at the end of 2025, I had only been rector of the 4 Churches for a period of just over a year – this church of ours feels so much like home to Kate and me that it feels like I have been here for a lot longer. But 2025 was my first full year at the helm, and to me at least, it feels like a very good year.

The Church of England does get rather obsessed by numbers sometimes, and we are regularly having to submit some return or other to Ely. But numbers do have their benefits. Without the regular counting of people attending worship each Sunday we could not accurately say that the size of our worshipping congregation has grown between 2024 to 2025 – but it has. Not only that but the number of children and young people attending church has grown – although we do need to be attentive to the fact that those numbers fluctuate enormously. And again, in 2025, as a 4 Church Benefice, we managed to pay our ministry share to Ely in full. But before we even think about getting complacent on that one – it was jolly close!

Overall 2025 felt like a consolidating year. Since I first turned up in the 4 Churches in 2020, in the middle of a pandemic, it has often felt that we are simply trying to keep going. But now it feels to me like we are all moving in the same direction – and enjoying doing so.

There have been some real highlights in 2025. The crafts mornings for children at Easter and Christmas continue to grow – both in terms of numbers and the size of the team helping. The carol services were really well supported this year – and on Easter Sunday, one of the small number of Festival Sundays when we revert to more than one service, numbers everywhere were very encouraging. We are gradually filling spaces on our PCCs. The churchyard in Foxton has been transformed by a weekly team of volunteers. And our churchwardens continue to steer us in the way only churchwardens can, and I am hugely grateful for all that they do and the support they give me. We are now regularly livestreaming our worship on Sunday mornings, and thanks to her amazing sales of second-hand books, Jane Atkinson has raised enough money to buy a keyboard for Foxton – and the Shepreth one is not far away. Finally, in Laura we have found a Benefice Administrator who not only is taking a huge amount of administration away from me, but she is also bringing innovation into the way we work. The Church Office in the Dorothy Pluck room in St Mary's Fowlmere is gradually becoming the centre of our activity that I had hoped for.

But, and wasn't there always going to be a but, 2026 is presenting us with some challenges. One of those is financial. We have raised a challenge to you all to help meet our projected shortfall this year and we have had a great response so far – but we are still some way short of balancing the books. We also need some more help in running our children's activities on Sunday mornings. Gradually our strategy for our children's work is paying off. First we attract children to a twice year craft morning. Then we encourage those children to join us at Messy Church. And then, hopefully, some of those families may join us on Sunday mornings – although we also recognise Messy Church as a worshipping Community in its own right.

There have also been some sad moments. In Foxton we lost three stalwarts of the church in Barbara Gaskin, Monica Hunter and Geoffrey Wells, and in Thriplow we lost Colin Fuller. All four have given so much to the 4 Churches over the years, but we now know that they are all with their Lord.

Finally, a huge thank you from Kate and me to you all for all the support you have given us this year. In the same vein that I started this review, I will close it, by saying what a privilege and joy it is to serve you all as we all work together to build this amazing church.

Every blessing, Revd David Lee, Rector, the Four Churches, April 2026.

The members of St Laurence's Parochial Church Council as trustees are pleased to present their report for the year which ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

## 2 Aim and Purposes

St Laurence's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend David Lee, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. We aim to promote the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England.

## 3 Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our church community. In association with the Four Church Benefice, the PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. In particular, we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus Christ.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of St Laurence's Church.

Regular activities during 2025 included:

- 1 service per month, we encouraged the congregation to use the four churches and join the other services when there was no service at Foxton.
- Each week the benefice church service was recorded and made available online
- Morning prayer available on Zoom every week,
- The website providing communication of all our activities.
- Opening the church on a daily basis to enable private prayer.

Specific Objectives this year:

To progress ongoing work with the church building particularly the plaster work and the re-ordering of the churchyard, and to plan the work required following the Quinquennial Inspection.

To continue to develop our Morning Worship services across the benefice to make them more attractive to families.

To continue to review options for an area in the church suitable for a Children's Church group on a Sunday morning.

To continue to improve the physical welcome given to visitors to the church, for example by up-to-date noticeboards and information for those new to the parish.

## 4 Achievements and Performance

### Worship and prayer

The PCC aims to offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community finds both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. During 2025, in St Laurence's, we held a combination of All Age services with Holy Communion and Communion services with Children's Church and Toddler Toys, on the fourth Sunday of the month. We also held extra services at Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday and on Remembrance Sunday.

Parishioners are encouraged to attend a service at the other churches in the Benefice when there is no service at St Laurence's. On the fifth Sunday a Four Church Communion, with provision for children, is now held in Fowlmere.

During the school summer holidays, the "Summer Sunday" services in the Benefice were more relaxed and included talks from members of the congregation.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. The regular average attendance during 2025 was 61. The Benefice service each week was recorded and made available online; the average number of views was 52. In December our carol service was well attended by 98 adults and 5 children. Our Christingle service was attended by 32 adults and 32 children. This year we held one marriage service, six funeral services, two burials of ashes and one baptism.

There was a Benefice Service of Hope and Remembrance at All Souls tide.

We also hosted the Foxton School Easter service and their Nativity service. (see below).

### Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll was renewed in 2025. After this in April 2025, the number of persons on the Electoral Roll of St Laurence, Foxton was 41, one of whom resides outside the parish.

### Children's Work

We continued to be accessible to children with children's activities available at our services and toys for toddlers. The Christingle Service on the Sunday before Christmas was well attended. The proceeds of the collection from the Christingle service were given to the Children's society. In the benefice two very successful children's activity mornings were held in St Mary's Fowlmere on Good Friday and a Christmas one in early December. The Rector continued to visit Foxton School for assemblies and worked with their Head teacher, Janet Muir to build and extend our relationship with the school. The School came into Church for their Easter service at the end of March, and their Nativity Service before Christmas.

### Deanery Synod

The Shingay Deanery continues to struggle for various reasons. Some progress has been made regarding the bank account, however it is still not finally resolved. The rural dean has now moved on.

### **Pastoral care**

The Benefice Team of Pastoral Visitors continue to visit the elderly in the village every week and we are most grateful to Sheila Andren who has offered her support and company.

The Rector and Pastoral Visiting Team have supported those who were bereaved by visits, telephone calls and our annual Service of Hope and Remembrance. The Pastoral team is currently being formalised with a lead member in each village. We are pleased to say that Sue Jeppeson has taken on this role in Foxton.

### **Social awareness**

The Benefice Men's Breakfast meets monthly offering a cooked breakfast and a chat and then a guest speaker. The Pancake Day event in the Sports Pavilion on Shrove Tuesday was enjoyed by a very good attendance, proceeds went to church funds. The Laurentian magazine continued to be delivered regularly to nearly 400 houses in Foxton, and to every household in the village in December. This continues to be an important channel of communication.

The biennial Scarecrow Festival was held in October. It was very well attended and much enjoyed raising a good sum for the Church, the School and Preschool.

### **Mission and evangelism**

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. We continue to support a child in Guatemala. Barbara Coates of St Mary's Church, Fowlmere coordinated the annual Shoebox Appeal in November and support for Christian Aid was given in May by holding a coffee morning and collecting envelopes.

### **Community and Ecumenical relationships**

Members of the Methodist church continue to be welcomed to worship with us at St Laurence's. Remembrance Sunday was well attended.

## **5 Church Buildings**

### **Quinquennial Inspection**

A Quinquennial Inspection was carried out by Ashley Courtney in November 2025. As we expected the report concluded that the building is in a relatively poor state and there is much that needs to be done immediately, in the near future and in an ideal world. In March the Rector and the Churchwarden met with Holly Robinson, the Historic Church Buildings Support Officer and Samuel Pedlar, the Church Communities Support Advisor to discuss the findings of the report and to discuss a way forward. This was a productive meeting and it was agreed that after Easter, the Rector and the Churchwarden would contact as DAC advisor in order to set a plan. This will appear in next year's report.

All gutters have been cleared and vegetation removed by contractors in February.

Plans to replace the South Aisle roof have been put on hold because, according to the QI, its urgency is not as great as previously believed; there are other, more urgent repairs needed.

### Churchyard

A team has met weekly and made a tremendous difference to the churchyard. Overgrown trees have been pruned, hidden graves cleared and hedges tamed. Many people have commented on how good the churchyard is looking. Jon Cairns has organised this and the PCC have thanked him and his team.

During the summer the churchyard will continue to be maintained while ensuring that wildlife is allowed to flourish. In agreement with grasscutters, we will allow patches of grass to grow along with some wildflowers.

## 6 Financial Review

The financial outcome for 2025 was an overall deficit of £61 (2024: deficit of £2,186). The following points are noteworthy:

Overall income increased by £4,237 driven by an increase in Laurentian Magazine profits and well-respected residents whose funeral collections were donated to the parish; it was also flattered by incidental accounting effects whereby several grant payments (Scarecrow and Christmas Windows events, along with the VAT rebate for Listed Places of Worship) fell into the 2025 accounting year. Overall expenses increased by £2,132, partly due to one-off Clerestory repairs but more pleasingly by an increase of £2650 in our Parish Share contribution, raising our percentage payment from 83% to 91%. Paying the whole of our Parish Share remains elusive; it would require a sustained further increase in annual income of over £2,000.

With this background, the 2025 summary outcome is again “approximately in balance”.

Church attendance: in 2025 we moved to a “peripatetic single joint-communion service for the four churches in the Benefice” pattern. In October (the Diocese benchmark) 2025 the service held in Foxton attracted 52 adults and one child. The change of service patterns makes comparison with previous years difficult, but we note that the 27th October 2024 service in Foxton attracted 31 adults and one child; we also note the pre-Covid remark that “Attendance ... on a typical Sunday in October [was] 18 in 2019”.

Regular Giving (from Standing Orders and the Parish Giving Scheme) remains our single largest source of income. We had 15 regular donors on 31st December 2025 (2024: 13 donors); the 2025 total amount donated was £10,376 (2024: £9,786); remarkably in 2025 every such regular donation benefitted from Gift Aid, making the grossed-up 2025 total £12,970 – impressive but still only 67% of our requested Parish Share.

The ongoing Clerestory repair work (identified in the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection) was completed in 2025 with a final invoice for £2,222. The results of the 2025 Quinquennial Inspection were provided to the PCC in 2026; early indications are of significant maintenance costs.

The PCC held restricted reserves of £75,945 as of 31st December 2025 (2024: £80,852). These funds are held in our bank balance (Fabric and Special Funds), and equity investments (Yeoman Bequest, reserved for the church building). The Fabric Fund holding includes £1,030 reserved for churchyard purposes, derived from the closure of the Gifford Grave Trust.

## 7 Reserves Policy

In 2021, following Covid, the PCC approved a reserves policy of holding free cash reserves of £1,700 in unrestricted funds (General Funds). It is time to consider adopting a more conventional reserve of £5,000, two month's income, following parishresources.org.uk advice. The balance of the General Fund at end-2025 was £7,282.

## 8 Risk Management

The PCC recognises its responsibilities for managing risk, and regularly reviews its policies. The principal risks facing the PCC fall into the areas outlined here.

### Asbestos

An Asbestos survey was undertaken in 2022. A small quantity of asbestos in the lining of the organ blower box, was removed in 2024.

### Governance

Loss of records - registers and historic records are stored in a fireproof safe.

### Operations

Much of our ministry is centred around our church building, so it is important that our building is safe and fit for purpose.

The Church is warmer since new heaters were installed in 2023. We are working towards better lighting and improving disabled access as well as undertaking the necessary works outlined elsewhere in this report.

We carry out routine safety checks including 5-yearly electrical inspections, annual fire appliance maintenance, and portable appliance testing. The electrical inspection took place in 2024 and minor faults were resolved in 2025. The lightning conductor is checked every year. We have a plan for evacuating the premises in the event of fire and fire notices are displayed at both exits. We have an active roof alarm system to prevent theft of lead. The churchwarden takes the lead on Health and Safety.

Risk assessments continue to be carried out where needed and national church and government guidance is carefully followed.

### Finance Risks

A large portion of the PCC's income is the result of voluntary giving. The PCC recognises that income can fluctuate. Income can be lost if a giver dies or moves away from the parish. The rector led an annual Giving Campaign at the end of 2024, which was the first for quite a while. A more low-key exercise was held at the beginning of 2026 which helped to some extent. This will be an annual exercise.

The handling of cash is subject, where possible, to dual control procedures to minimise the risk of loss or fraud. Online banking was introduced in 2013, giving the PCC more timely information, as well as speed, efficiency and security of online payments.

### External Risks

The church sits in the centre of the village and the churchyard is used as a thoroughfare to the recreation ground. This open situation and our policy of having the church open for private worship makes it vulnerable to theft and vandalism. Valuable items are all marked with Smart-water and a record is kept.

We have signs warning of uneven ground in the churchyard.

### Regulatory Risks

The health, safety and protection of all those who use our building and attend our services is regarded as being of paramount importance. The PCC has complied with the duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance in relation to safeguarding. The PCC operates a formal policy for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, in line with Diocesan guidelines, Review of Safeguarding policies, procedures and practice is ongoing and overseen by the PCC under the guidance of the Benefice Safeguarding Administrator, Rebecca Glazier and Safeguarding Officer, Lisa Turner.

Data Protection: We have Data Protection procedures and a Data Protection Policy. The PCC has an approved Personal Data Breach and Management Procedure. The PCC periodically audits its data processing activities to ensure compliance with the GDPR.

## 9 Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC has charitable status.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules 2022. At St Laurence's the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our Rector), the churchwarden, a deanery synod representative and PCC members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services and are members of the regular congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. In addition to the APCM, the PCC had five full meetings during the year and one extra meeting to approve the annual accounts. The average level of attendance was over 90%. The standing committee or the whole PCC sometimes approve actions by email when there are time constraints on meeting.

The PCC reviewed the Benefice Safeguarding Policy and confirmed it complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

The church building continues to be insured by Ecclesiastical Insurance.

## PCC Membership 2025

Name	Role	Basis of Appointment
Revd David Lee	Rector	Ex-Officio
Karen Butler-Clark	Churchwarden	Ex-Officio
Jon Cairns	Deanery Synod Member	Ex-Officio
Hilary Mycroft	Secretary	Elected 2021
Jill Buggiey	PCC Member	Elected 2022
Rosalind Meese	PCC Member	Elected 2025
Anne Pidgeon	PCC Member	Elected 2025 resigned 9/25

Electoral Roll Officer Naomi Meese  
Treasurer Alan Mycroft

Sidespeople:	David Boreham	Jean Fosbeary
	Barbara Boreham	Jean McCombie
	Jill Buggiey	Deborah Mason
	Karen Butler-Clark	Mary Matthews
	Jon Cairns	Kate Woods

Chalice Assistant Karen Butler-Clark

## Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is. In particular we want to thank Jean Fosbeary who organises the flower rota and her team of volunteers who ensure that we have beautiful fresh flowers in our church during regular services and at festivals. We thank Angela Eyre and her team of volunteers who clean the church and also all those who open and close the Church each day and Philip Fawcett for organising this.

We also wish to thank the members of our congregation who kindly take turns to help with the service rota, being sidespeople, doing a reading or intercessions, preparing the church with the altar cloths and helping prepare communion and providing tea coffee and biscuits after every service. We thank the Lay Team for their contribution to All Age Worship.

We are very grateful to our organist Stephen Glynn for his contribution to our services. We also thank Iverna Moss, Martin Atkinson, Ali Smith and the Four Church choir for provision of music.

We thank the individuals and STREAM who continue to financially support the PCC in maintaining the church building. Their support is greatly appreciated and invaluable to the PCC.

## 10 Administrative information

St Laurence's Church is situated on the High Street in Foxton. It is part of the Diocese of Ely within the Church of England.

The correspondence address is Dove Cottage, 37 Church Street, Harston, Cambridgeshire, CB22 7NP

The Church Website is [www.thefourchurchbenefice.org](http://www.thefourchurchbenefice.org)