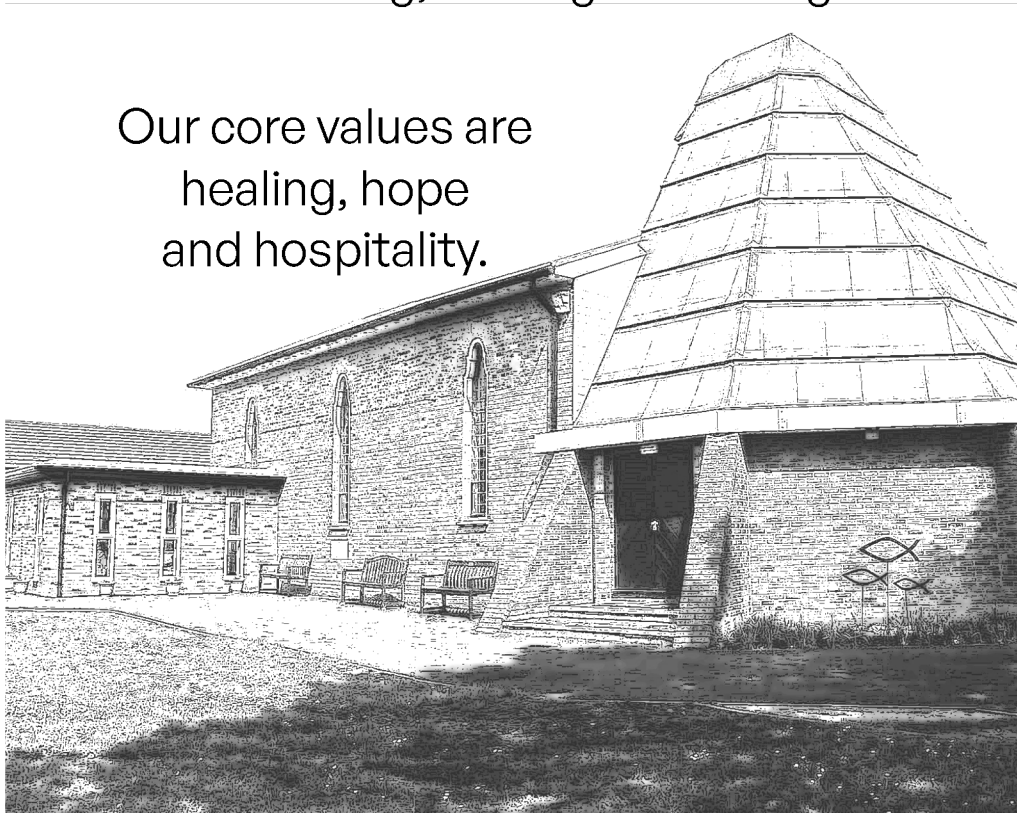




2025 - a review

Our Parish purpose is to worship God and show that Jesus makes a difference in reaching, serving and caring.

Our core values are healing, hope and hospitality.



This booklet contains information and a review of church activities in the parish during 2025.

It is in two parts:

- Pages 4 to 30
Reports on the running of St Catherine's beginning with the Churchwardens report.
- pages 31 to 39
Reports on activities managed by St Catherine's

The annual meeting is on Sunday 26th April and follows the 10.00 am Service.

The meeting consists of two parts:

- The Annual Parish Meeting to elect Churchwardens to which anyone living in the parish is entitled to attend and vote.
- The APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) to conduct other parish business only those on the Church electoral roll may vote.

Reports on the Running of St Catherine's

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Vicar

*"Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies."*

Psalm 36:5

Looking back on 2025 reminds us again that our God is faithful. We have seen God at work in so many ways, and our response should be to give thanks.

Our 3 priorities for last year were:

1. Reaching out to children and young people
2. Raising St Catherine's profile in the community
3. Deepening our prayer and worship.

It has been a joy to have children and families attending our Sunday morning services so we now have a children's group with children there almost every week. A big thank you to our Sunday morning kids group team for making that a fun and welcoming place for our children to learn more about God and to grow in their love for Him and relationship with Him.

There is still work to be done. We would love to see more children and families joining us. We pause to be thankful for all that God has already done, and we ask Him to carry on leading us, guiding us and being at work among us.

It has also been a joy to have some of our St Cat's Lite families coming along on Sunday mornings when we have All Age services and when we have special events.

The St Cat's Lite services have been growing, and we now regularly have

around 18 children coming along with their families. There are more details about that in a separate report.

The other area which has really expanded this year is our schools' work. We have continued to build connections with Birch Copse, Springfield and Little Heath. We have been into the schools, and the children have come into St Catherines. We are very thankful for Reach and all of their support as we reach out to local schools. The Reach team will be coming in to speak at one of our services later in the year, so that the wider congregation can put faces to the name and hear more about Reach's work across Reading.

As the work with children and family grows and we see God at work, we are aware that there is a lot of potential here, and that we need some extra help in this area. We are also aware that Carol, our Curate, will be moving on later this year, which will leave us with less people in the children's work team.

Thinking about the way ahead, we are working on a funding proposal to the Diocesan Development Fund for 3 years funding to employ a Children and Families worker. Our congregation at St Catherines will need to be willing to make a contribution to the funding. We trust that if this is where God is leading, He will provide for us in this, like He faithfully provided for the new skylight.

There are a few more things I would like to highlight looking back on the year.

(Continued from page 5)

The Alpha Course in September went well, and we are thankful that a couple of people who did the course are now joining us in church and in a Life Group. We are looking at running Alpha again in the Autumn.

It is good seeing our Sunday morning congregation gradually growing, and our mid-week ministries being well attended. People tell me how much they appreciate those groups. It is so good for us to welcome in people from the community so they can get to know people here and experience God's love and welcome.

Our Christmas services saw a huge number of people attending. It was encouraging to see people there from the Toddler group, the after-school club, connections through schools and St Cat's Lite as well as people who come along to the café and other groups.

The holiday club in the summer was another highlight of the year. We saw God's faithfulness through the large team of volunteers who gave of their time and energy to help out. Over the week we had around 30 children who really enjoyed it, and we had a good number of the families who came along to our Holiday Club service.

We are looking at raising our profile in the community by getting a new notice board. It is important that people in the community can see clearly what is going on at St Catherines and know that they are invited and welcome.

Carol has done a lot to raise our profile on social media.

In order to encourage prayer we had a couple of Prayer Rooms during the year. This gave us as the opportunity to come in and spend time in prayer. We also had a Prayer Walk around the area as well as our monthly Saturday morning prayer times and the Thursday community prayers.

Lifegroups and the Mother's Union have encouraged people to share life with each other, support each other and grow deeper in their faith as they serve God together.

All of the ministry here would not be possible without each of you faithful, committed volunteers. I want to say a huge thank you to all of you who help in so many ways - some which are obvious and noticed, and others who serve behind the scenes and yet are crucial to the running of everything. The church is the body of Christ and each member plays its part. We all need each other for the body to function properly.

So, thank you to each of you. Let us carry on praying, seeking God and listening to God as we look to God for the way He is leading us this year. Let's join in with God where He is at work, and we pray that people in our Parish will have the opportunity to experience God's love, hear the Good News and to see it lived out in our lives.

"The One who called you is faithful and will do what He promised."

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Rev Jackie Fountain

Curate

My husband and I joined St Catherine's on February 9th 2025, with me as the assistant curate.

It took me a little time to find my feet, but everybody has been very welcoming and tolerant. Jackie and Stuart were particularly helpful in answering my many questions as I started.

It has been a wonderful church to be a part of.

2025 was a busy year for St Catherine's that saw growth in both the children's work and the number of new people connected to the church in some way, which was a joy to see.

Highlights of the year for me have included:

- leading a funeral with 300 mourners in attendance at St Catherine's,
- leading (alongside Jackie) monthly services at Stoneham Grove, the new residential care facility that opened in our parish in December 2024,
- working with the local schools, going in to do assemblies, RE lessons and pitstops for staff, and having school visits to the church, often in association with REACH, who I'd worked with before.
- Community events such as the Carol singing up at the Triangle and here at St Catherines – Scout Carol services and round the Oak Tree
- meeting new people in the café and Tuesday get together.



The team after a RE Lesson at Little Heath

I have also enjoyed learning to use Canva more (a publishing software tool) and in the second half of the year, have helped Stuart with putting posts on Facebook for the church, using the new branding that Christie and Dan designed for us before they left.



An example of the new branding

We now have over 400 followers on our church Facebook page, 84% of those live in the Reading area which means we are getting the word out to people in the local community.

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St Catherine's is slowly becoming more visible, one of our aims for 2025.

There is so much potential for further outreach into the local community here, but as is often the case, the limiting factor is finding enough volunteers.

As people get older and those in work find little time for volunteering, the challenge is what to keep going and what to stop.

We sensed during the prayer week in February 2025 that some things would have to stop and so it proved, with litter picking in Calcot, the ministry at York House - the sheltered housing accommodation in Calcot - and the childminders session of 0-5's all stopping this year.

While there is always sadness when ministries end, new ministries have already started up - Alpha, the bereavement journey course and having a Children's group on a Sunday morning.

These have all brought new people into our church orbit which is great to see. It will be exciting to see what changes in 2026.

I have now submitted all my paperwork for sign off as a curate and I am now discerning where my next job will be.

I would value your prayers as we work out where that is. My husband and I will leave the church sometime in 2026.

Rev Carol Atkins

Churchwardens

It has been a privilege for us both to serve as churchwardens in 2026. We have seen God at work in so many ways, as evidenced by the annual reports and more besides! *“From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another”* (John 1:16). Yes, there have been moments of progressing mundane tasks, but also moments of great joy and blessing.

Many highlights stand out for us – too many to list here. The various annual reports all give testimony to God at work.

One such highlight relates to the maintenance of the building. The urgent repair work on the skylight was completed successfully. Not without its challenges but we saw God continuing to give to overcome them. The money was raised through the generosity of both the diocesan grant and donations from church members.

Just after the scaffolding was erected, our contractor informed us as he was due to start work, that he was unable to go ahead. Another contractor was quickly identified, and they undertook the work, albeit as some extra cost which again was met and indeed overprovided for!

It has also been a thrill to see God’s kingdom extending over the year, with new people coming to our services and activities, including children and families. Whilst some may find the actions associated with the children’s song that

is now a regular feature at our Sunday service too energetic and demanding on a Sunday morning, it is insignificant compared to the encouragement and learning we receive from the children as they join us in our worship. And our St Cat’s Lite monthly family activity sees a significant number of families and children worship with us.

Many people joined us in our celebrations of the Christmas message. Over one thousand people heard the story of Christmas! Memories include seeing an array of seated children sitting on the church floor, on one occasion from Birch Copse and on another from Springfield School enthralled by Jackie and Carol’s talk.

The subject a Chocolatey Christmas, full of a number of chocolate jokes based on types of chocolates that some of us had long forgotten but not the children – the three kings bringing their ‘Bounty’ and the ‘Celebrations’ on Jesus’s birth to name but a few! I suspect the children will long remember the story.

This increasing contact with schools has also been encouraging, often working in partnership with Reach. We have seen a St Catherine’s team going into the schools as well as the schools coming in for special services or attending Year 6 events.

Our activities were not limited to children. In addition to our ongoing activities, an Alpha course was held – the

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first one at St Catherine’s in our memory! It provided an opportunity for those attending to explore the Christian faith and we have enjoyed a few continue attending our services and activities.

All of the activities at St Catherine’s, only a few of which are mentioned in this report, have only been possible through so many giving faithful service in a myriad of ways, guided by the Spirit. So, a huge thank you to each one of you. It has been a great blessing to be church members alongside you all.

This year is tinged with a little sadness. After her election as churchwarden in May 2022, Lynn has discerned it the right time to stand down. Her other churchwarden will miss her faithful service greatly!

Her patient pragmatism, an eye for detail, her listening ear, her willingness to serve and her love of God will be sorely missed. However, there is some good news! Lynn is not going far, so we will all be able to continue to enjoy and benefit from her gifting.

Thank you Lynn for all you have given and above all for you just being you!

We look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in 2026, remembering the words of Isaiah 40:31 *‘But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.’*

Lynn Stevens and Caroline Heron,
Churchwardens

Buildings & Equipment

This group is responsible for making sure that everything in the Centre, i.e. the Church, Hall and narthex, works and is regularly serviced, for making improvements, and also for keeping an eye on our overall carbon footprint.

With the help of generous Diocesan grants, we were able to complete two large projects last year -

- Following the discovery that the Sanctuary rooflight needed urgent replacement, fundraising went into

overdrive - you all responded magnificently so that by August we were able to complete the replacement, thanks to AllScaffold and Rooftek Advance, with some spare change left over. Even the weather behaved itself.

- In November, Burden Electrical completed our LED lighting project – this involved replacing all our remaining old-style light fittings,

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inside and outside, with modern LED fittings. Not only is it a lot brighter in certain parts of the car park, but we should also be saving nearly £1,000 in electricity costs from now on.

Replacement electricity and gas supply contracts started on 1st October with Smartest Energy (24 months) and Pozitive Energy (63 months). There have been numerous problems in getting these accounts set up correctly – they apparently have not dealt with charities before – please pray that things settle down soon.

Over Christmas, one of our boilers started making disturbing noises, leading Chris Addison and Paul Fountain to spend many hours trying to work out what was going on, with the aim of mitigating significant repair costs.

I am pleased to report that there has been no recurrence since they put their theory into practice, and that there is a growing belief that, only ten years after the system was installed, we are finally beginning to understand how everything works.

Other tasks undertaken this year include

- Replacing the leaking valve in hot water cylinder (MHG)
- Re-staining the high-level triangular window frames in the west face of the Sanctuary (Chris Addison),
- Repointing the six brick Sanctuary buttresses (B&B Builders),
- Installing an additional cupboard in Church kitchen (Chris Addison).

- Deep cleaning the Church floor and sealing tiles (Jay Wilde),
- Repainting the Hall external window frames (Graeme Cleghorn),
- Regularly maintaining the building, including fire safety equipment (RES Fire), emergency lighting with occasional repairs (Optimal Fire & Security), kitchen equipment, waste disposal, and clearing gutters,
- Annual servicing of boilers (MHG),
- Ongoing upgrading of the Church sound system (Paul Fountain),
- Regularly testing the fire alarm system and emergency lighting (Chris, Paddy, Roy, & Stuart), and
- Many other small jobs that would take too long to describe and would have cost a lot of money were it not for Chris Addison and his dedicated team.

We have now completed all the feasible energy-saving measures set out in our 2019 Energy Audit. Replacing the rooflight was not included, but converting the remaining old-style lighting to LED was and represents a major step forward. Our ten-year old gas boilers are the last major hurdle to achieving net zero carbon but there is still no obvious way forward to replacing them.

In the meantime, there is always plenty to do so please speak up if you would like to know more about what we do. There is great spiritual satisfaction in making things work more efficiently and last a bit longer.

Richard Canning

Café Siena

Café Siena continues to provide a warm, friendly space to meet and eat on Thursdays and Fridays for everyone in the community. We have many regular customers whom we know well, as well as customers who visit just occasionally.

It is the meeting space for individuals but also groups like the monthly Book Club and coffee and quiz groups from both the Afternoon and Evening WI's.

The Children's Corner is also well used with mums, grandparents and carers being able to enjoy a coffee whilst the younger ones enjoy the toys and books on the carpet.

Freshly made Fair Trade coffee and teas are always available as well as delicious home made cakes - thank you bakers! Sandwiches, hot snacks and a hot meal at lunch times are on offer - the menu is varied and dependent on what is available through our subscription to the Fareshare Charity.

Fareshare works to reduce food poverty and food waste and to further our Eco Church mission, we make every effort to minimise wastage in the café, composting, reusing and recycling as much as possible. Fareshare items are also put to good use in other outreach and activities like Tuesday Together, Friday Friends, Cat's Lite and after service refreshments.

A newly designed menu was issued in January, thanks to the expert skills of Christie and Dan. Menu prices were also increased in January but customers report that what we provide is still extremely good value and importantly a

comfortable, welcoming space to be with friends.

The Café only continues to operate with the help and support of our much appreciated church and community volunteers. We are a friendly team with many different skills but people are always willing to help where they can, whether that is vegetable chopping, serving, washing up, cleaning, doing the laundry, technical support or managing the finances. Café Siena WhatsApp groups continue to be helpful in messaging information and rotas to everyone, but also to appeal for help when we are short staffed.

We have lost some volunteers for a number of reasons, including ill health, so we are actively seeking new volunteers, either kitchen helpers, servers or to help with washing up for an hour or two. Even once a month would be extremely helpful.

If you, or someone you know, might be able to help do let me know!

Jo, our manager, unfortunately had a hospital procedure at the end of last year which meant she was unable to work for several weeks. It was lovely to see Jo back at work, and we continue to pray for a full recovery from what has been a very difficult and painful time for her.

We give thanks to God for the Café, for Jo, our volunteers and everyone who supports the café in strengthening links with our community. May all of us shine Your Light with our neighbours

Sonia Ludford - Café Line Manager

Centre Manager

We thank God for his continued blessing and provision for us all at St Catherine's as we seek to serve him and love and care for our local community. There are so many people who contribute to the life and work of this community, so thank you all!

Once again, this has been a busy year for the church and hall. Many different activities take place as the calendars show, both church and community events. Hire of the hall and church space continue to contribute significantly towards Parish finances. Most regular hirers continue to use their sessions and are extremely appreciative of the facilities we offer. The Age UK choir is the most recent hirer, meeting on Mondays in the hall and they are also very happy with our facilities. Weekend bookings, mainly children's parties or family celebrations occasionally take place, more often in the summer months. All hirers are regularly reminded to follow the booking terms e.g. use resources carefully, turn off lights when not needed, recycle where possible and leave hired spaces as they found them.

Eve Combes works extremely hard with managing the many booking enquiries and keeping the monthly calendars up to date-sometimes a difficult task when last minute changes happen. Jean Almond continues to do a great job with the invoicing of hirers and liaises with Sean, our Treasurer.

Maintaining the standards of our

building and making improvements is both a continuing and demanding task, which while often unseen, involves a great deal of planning and work by many different people. Fire safety checks and fire alarm testing is done regularly, minor (and not so minor!) repairs are completed and quotes sought and work arranged for larger jobs such as the roof replacement, lighting, and maintenance of the church floor.

Issues with regulating the heating system have been a particular difficulty this year and we are grateful to Chris and Paul for working so hard to solve the problems.

Also thanks to Richard for all the work that he does to ensure that our maintenance and service contracts are up to date and offer best value for money.

The small but devoted band of gardeners also help to keep the grounds beautiful, whilst offering space and habitats for insects and wildlife. The Saturday garden work parties in the Autumn year were particularly successful with several folk joining to weed, pick up acorns (masses of them!) and to enjoy coffee and cake provided by Jo.

All of these tasks take a huge amount of time, effort and skill so thank you to everyone who offers their service to God and our church in these ways. You know who you are. If anyone else can offer their help please do come and talk to me!

Sonia Ludford - Centre Manager

Ecumenical

Events organised by Churches Together in Tilehurst and West Reading were:

- Sunday 19th January 2025, service for the beginning of the week of Prayer for Christian Unity. St Michael's had hosted the event, and preacher was Fr. Ian Graham from the Orthodox tradition.
- Good Friday Act of witness at Tilehurst Triangle led by Helen Watson of Tilehurst Methodist, around 100 attended. In Southcote a walk of witness.
- Carol singing: Tilehurst Triangle: Tuesday 23rd December at 12noon & 4.00pm, as in previous years in partnership with Pangbourne Rotary Club Sleigh and Santa. Hundreds attended especially at 4.00pm when 'Fun & Frolics' donated Glo-sticks for us to give out. Coronation Square, Southcote organised by Southcote Alive where the event went well with the help of a group of musicians and as with the previous year drinks were served outside.

Our AGM was on Tuesday 24th September at St George and was attended by just five ministers and reps. with apologies from another three. Rev Dr Adam Carlill announced that he would be retiring in June 2026. The 2026 AGM will therefore be Tuesday 22nd September at St Catherine's. We don't have a chair or structure, we are a subcommittee of Churches Together in Reading, and I organise an

annual meeting and rotas for any joint events.

Tony Bartlett

Link Report

The Link Café is opposite the Co-op car park in Recreation Road. You can drop in there for lunch, sandwiches, homemade cakes, drinks and a friendly welcome. Also there is a good range of seasonal greetings cards at very reasonable prices.

This ecumenical project has been running for years and is much enjoyed by its regular customers and those who have just found it! Our grateful thanks go to the volunteer café staff, cake and soup makers and those who wash and iron the aprons and tea towels. At the AGM in September Tony Bartlett retired as treasurer after 12 years and Martin Eglin, a member of Tilehurst Methodist Church, was elected treasurer.

Donations of £500 from surplus funds were made to CIRDIC (now includes the Women's Centre) and CCA.

The present opening hours are 10.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday. Unfortunately we cannot open on a Saturday because of the lack of volunteers.

Working with members of other churches is fun and so worthwhile so anyone considering offering their help in any way do call in and speak with the Team Leader of the day.

Sheila Bryant (St Catherine's rep)

Electoral Roll

Officially, the church's Electoral Roll is a list of those who may vote at the Church's APCM. However, in reality, being on the roll is a way of saying you're a member of St Catherine's, and you're happy to stand up and be counted as such.

As this report is written, the process of updating the roll and getting forms back is still taking place. This means I will only be able to give a final figure at the APCM itself.

Last year the electoral roll had to be completely renewed in accordance with the Church representation rules.

This meant that last year's roll was down as not everyone returned their roll application in time.

While it is natural that people leave the roll over time, I am hoping that many new names will appear this year – reflecting the many new faces we've seen joining us.

Last year's Electoral roll total was 101. With new members and the inclusion of longer standing members who didn't get on the roll in time last year, I am hopeful of higher numbers this year.

Stuart Poore
Electoral Roll Officer

Finance Action Group

The Finance Action Group helps and supports the Treasurer with the financial running of the Church. The group met in 2025 on 4 occasions.

Each meeting begins in prayer before we discuss the current position of the bank accounts and look forward to any projects or expenditure.

During the year the items discussed were the setting of hall rental rates, wage increases for the hall cleaner and café manager and setting the annual budget.

Additionally, there was the issue of funding for the skylight project.

We also talk about the day to day

running expenses and may recommend issues to the PCC.

The Treasurer also brings to the meeting the annual accounts, where questions may be raised before the figures are presented to the PCC for final approval.

The Finance Action Group is unable to make decisions. It can only recommend a course of action to the PCC.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the Finance Action Group for their ongoing support, their sometimes challenging questions and for their friendship. We finish each meeting by saying The Grace.

Sean East – Treasurer to the PCC

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations)

This law introduced in 2018 governs how organizations handle our personal data. It aims to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to their personal data. As a church we must process such data fairly, lawfully, and transparently.

Anyone filling in a contact or registration card must give consent as to how and for what purpose we may use that information. Physical records must be kept under lock and key, computer data password protected.

Here at St Catherine's, two forms of computer data exist:

An excel spreadsheet with limited access covering those who've attended, or whose children attended, Holiday club,

0-5s, and historic data from Messy Church and Tot's Praise. These email addresses are used via 'Mailchimp' to publicise suitable events and recipients have the option to 'unsubscribe'.

A commercial church data package module in 'ChurchSuite' which, to keep costs down, we restrict to just a few categories, e.g. The electoral roll, regular worshippers, those wishing to receive the weekly notices email, and volunteers.

New church members are encouraged to fill in a blue contact card as well as applying to go on the electoral roll. The latter has a special status under GDPR.

Tony Bartlett

Grounds

In 2025, we have: -

- maintained the grounds looking good as far as possible
- kept the lawns mown, with the kind assistance of Rachel (under Paddy's guidance)
- maintained the lawn mower thanks to Paddy
- allowed an area of the north lawn to grow without being cut during May
- cleared weeds from some flower beds

- dead headed and pruned the roses and spread manure on the soil around them
- kept the car parks free from litter, leaves, acorns and weeds as far as possible
- attempted to keep brambles from obstructing the public pathway around the church grounds
- trimmed the perimeter hedges, thanks to the kindness of our neighbour, Darren, using his professional equipment

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- removed many of the thick stems of Ash and Oak in the perimeter hedge thanks to Chris and Paul, so that Darren was able to bring the height of the hedge closer to its original height
- kept the bird feeders on the silver birch on the South lawn outside the church hall clean and topped up, thanks to Sue Burston
- used the buttress bed next to the door to the sanctuary for an Easter Garden, Remembrance and a Nativity scene
- put up a Christmas tree and lights
- bought some secateurs and telescopic loppers with donations from the Bowls Club.

We would like to: -

- bring the circular bed on the South lawn into better shape, with little pathways between the shrubs for children to run through, so that it needs minimal maintenance
- keep more of the flower beds weed and bramble free
- continue clearing dead wood and invading saplings from the perimeter hedge, and plant more Rosa Rugosa in the gaps which have been revealed
- bring the hedge between the lower car park and the oak tree lawn down to a manageable height, removing all brambles
- improve the North East facing buttress by reducing the size of the shrubs

- replace the clematis which have died on the fence at the back of the North lawn
- maintain the corner bed on the North lawn
- maintain the wild flower meadow area
- erect a new strong support for the climbers behind the gardeners' bench near the metal shed
- maintain and improve our eco church status by taking more care of all the wild life living in or visiting our church garden
- continue to keep the bird feeders on the silver birch on the South lawn outside the church hall clean and topped up

To achieve these aims we would appreciate: -

- Prayers for existing gardeners, Jo, Rachel, Paddy, Hazel, and our new volunteer, Anne, to be well and strong and able to continue working in the church grounds
- Prayers for more volunteers to share the work
- Prayers to thank God for Rachel, who has been mowing the lawns with Paddy's guidance, as well as doing many other gardening jobs, and Anne, an experienced gardener, who has started working with Jo this year
- Prayers for a wildlife enthusiast to help us to make our church grounds more welcoming to wildlife.

Jo Day

Leaders & Preachers Action Group

The leaders and preachers group continue to organise our services to help us worship and serve God, grow in love to another and to build and extend God's church here in Tilehurst. God has richly blessed us this year as we have seen new people join us and children becoming part of our worshipping community.

We have missed the insights provided by Aaron Devaney and Mike Heather for the latter part of the year. Aaron is now at university and Mike's health has reduced his participation – we pray for God's blessing on them.

Carol Atkins became an active member of the leaders and preachers group when she joined us as curate, and it will be challenging when she leaves us sometime in 2026. We have continued to learn from Paul Fountain's talks. And we were delighted to have Chris Atkins join Mike Heather in providing the Good Friday reflection.

The changes introduced during 2024 have now become established and served us well during 2025. These included the simplification of our service cycle to one type of Sunday service, with Holy Communion included twice a month; the addition of the informal monthly evening worship session, Dwell, and the monthly Saturday St Cat's Lite service for families; and our Sunday services adopting a theme-based approach.

During our outdoor summer services we introduced two stations for communion, not only to aid the flow of people but also to administer the sacraments on the solid asphalt rather than on the grass, terrain that can be difficult to navigate!

This practice was then continued in our indoor services. At first one station was positioned at the back and one at the front of church. However, after the experience of a few services and feedback received, this was changed to two stations at the front of church, providing a simpler choice to communicants but necessitating the use of side aisles for people returning to their seats. This is now working well.

It has been a real joy to see our numbers growing, and we have all learnt from the children and families joining us in our worship. A children's song is now regularly included in our Sunday morning worship – often providing us all with an opportunity to get off our seats and energetically join in the actions! – and the children leave us for their own activities during the service.

Our Easter services included a Good Friday reflection and an action-packed St Cat's Lite activity in the morning. We repeated the St Cat's Lite service at the Calcot Centre on Easter Saturday. It was not as well attended, and we noted that at that location we needed to take better account of the lack of familiarity with the Gospel message.

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Our Christmas services adopted the same pattern as in previous years with the only significant change being the Christingle taking place during the St Cat's Lite December service. An amazing number of people heard the Christmas message.

With the inclusion of the school and scout services over one thousand people attended our Christmas services, including some 650 children! We pray that they may have been touched by the message.

We have been richly blessed by the wide range of teaching in our sermon series which have included a wide range of topics including Ruth, Creation, Simply Jesus, Colossians, and New Beginnings.

We are thankful for all the people that are key to making this all possible. Not only the members of the leaders and preachers group, but also those who support our worship through a wide range of activities, including the AV desk and camera, music, reading, intercessions, serving refreshments, welcoming and running the children's activities. Many thanks.

Carol Atkins, Tony Bartlett,
Jackie Fountain, Mike Heather,
Caroline Heron, Sonia Ludford
and Stuart Poore

Missions Giving

As a church we continue to support our four chosen missions.

From September 2025 it was decided to replace our support for Novi Most and to start supporting Ripple Effect on a regular basis to build on the longstanding involvement we have had with the charity through Cornwell Community Crafts.

So we now support The Children's Society, CCA, The Leprosy Mission and Ripple Effect who all receive a monthly donation from us.

We thanks to Heather Addison for being our link person for Novi Most and we welcome Val Poore who will be the link for Ripple Effect.

At the monthly Saturday Prayer meetings one of our charities is highlighted and prayed for by Paddy Barret (CCA), Hilary Smee (The Children's Society), Tamsin Harrison (The Leprosy Mission) and Val Poore (Ripple Effect).

You can also find prayers for our chosen charities on the weekly pew sheet and other information on our Missions noticeboard.

Additional donations were collected by giving envelopes for Christian Aid and

The Leprosy Mission, and at our St Cat's Lite Christingle for The Children's Society.

We are looking forward to having a speaker from The Leprosy Mission and hope to have a speaker from The Children's Society later in the year. We will also be hosting the Christian Aid quiz this year.

We continue to collect food and other items throughout the year for the Readifood Foodbank including special items at Christmas and Easter. We filled shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse at Christmas.

Through Compassion some members continue to support Ashini in Sri Lanka and through Tearfund the World of Difference project.

We have also collected a variety of items for Ukraine on an ongoing basis and Cornwell Community Crafts continue to raise additional funds for Ripple Effect.

A huge thank you to everyone for their generosity and on- going support of all our missions through prayer and financial giving helping to make a difference to the lives of many.

Hilary Smee

Music group & Singers

We were blessed with the talents of Christie Lee, Jackie's daughter, on keyboard and guitar until she and Dan moved to Aldershot in September. We were delighted that David McMahon joined us.

With David Stevens playing guitar or keyboard, we have some flexibility. Rebecca Devaney plays Cornet and sometimes flute most Sundays and Joseph is often able to join us on French Horn, Daisy too when she's home.

David Harrison and Anna Jukes have been able to join us from time to time; almost a full orchestra!

Whilst the composition of the music group and leader varies from week to week, the choir is a constant and its members have faithfully attended practice and coped with the demands of

the new songs that Christie, David and I have introduced as well as our differing styles.

Christie organised a social evening for choir and musicians. We asked church members to nominate their favourite hymns and songs to help us draw up a core repertoire and to limit the number of new songs that we introduce.

David Stevens introduced the monthly service of Prayer and Worship, now titled 'Dwell' and in this setting we have been able to introduce new songs and times of extended sung worship.

Paul has introduced several upgrades and worked hard to balance the sounds in church and on the livestream and it is always comforting to see him making subtle changes as the service progresses.

Tony Bartlett

PCC

The PCC (parochial church council) has the responsibility, along with the incumbent, to promote the mission of God in its parish. PCC discussions will include reflection on the forms of service used and the ways in which the church is seeking to be involved in mission.

Legally, the PCC is responsible for the finances of the parish.

The PCC also has ultimate responsibility for the care and maintenance of all church buildings and their contents. Although these responsibilities are

executed by the churchwardens, all PCC members must share in the oversight.

PCCs need to ensure that their parish community maintains high standards to ensure that the many important matters discussed including financial affairs, safeguarding, mission, health and safety are dealt with appropriately.

The PCC may make representations to the bishop on matters that affect the welfare of the parish.

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All PCCs are charities. Therefore, every member of a PCC is also a charity trustee. If a PCC is registered with the Charity Commission, (and St Catherine's is) it must comply with the Charity Commission guidance and legislation in relation to charities.

While it is the incumbent's role to provide leadership concerning safeguarding, the PCC as a whole must have 'due regard' to guidance issued by the House of Bishops on all matters relating to safeguarding (including obtaining DBS checks for volunteers, training, following safer recruitment guidelines, etc.)

Members of the PCC are listed in the reports and accounts booklet.

The PCC met 7 times in 2025, Each meeting began prayerfully with 'dwelling in the word' and sharing 'what God has been doing.' The agenda for each meeting calls for reports from the Vicar and treasurer together with reports on: Building & Maintenance, Health & Safety, Green matters, Deanery Synod, Safeguarding and GDPR.

The main items discussed, and decisions made during 2025 were:

14th January – The news that Carol Atkins will be joining us to continue her training. We broke into groups to consider our aspirations for 2025.

3rd March – Carol Atkins was welcomed to her first PCC meeting. A 'Sunday school' rota has been drawn up. Agreed in principle to replace the skylight in the Sanctuary roof.

Good Friday event will be repeated at Calcot the following day.

24th April – Appeal for Sanctuary Skylight has reached £3k and £4k grant application submitted. Review of planned fundraising events. Steph Walklate has completed her term on the PCC.

9th June – York House services will be discontinued. Feedback on Inspection. Grant from Diocese towards upgrade of lighting to LED.

24th July – Hilary Smee was welcomed as new PCC member. Dan & Christie Lee presented their designs for the new 'branding' including a logo, font and colour palette. It was agreed that 'The Ripple Effect' would replace 'Novimost' as one of the four missions we support with monthly payments. Skylight appeal at some £6k will cover increased cost.

8th September – New energy contracts agreed. We split into 3 groups to review the three priories identified: Prayer & Worship, Raising the profile of St Catherine's, Reaching out to younger families & Calcot.

13th November – Small group to be formed to investigate the employment of a children's worker. Trial of 2 communion stations to continue. It was agreed that Caroline may stand for another term as Church warden as Lynn will not be standing in 2026.

Once the minutes of a PCC meeting have been approved, they are displayed on the Notice Board.

Tony Bartlett PCC Secretary

Parish Administrator

The main purpose of the Parish Administrator is to alleviate Jackie, Carol and the Church Wardens from many of the routine admin tasks that naturally occur in the running of a medium sized Parish.

The tasks are wide and varied and include: -

- Assisting in preparation of service materials - such as on-screen slides or printed service booklets. This includes the words, videos and images you see on the screens every Sunday morning.
- Designing & printing of posters, banners, flyers & tickets. These are many and varied, including both regular services and special events.
- Assisting in obtaining course materials - such as videos and course handouts.
- Updating websites - both our own, and where our details appear on other people's websites.
- Being one of the first points of contact for enquires from the public or external organisations – mainly by mail, both physical and electronic.
- Handling banns of marriage and baptism enquiries and some funeral arrangements, including invoices.
- Keeping noticeboards up to date with both our own and external material.
- Keeping electronic records up to date – mainly using the ChurchSuite software package.

- Updating, returning and generally keeping track of the ever-increasing amount of bureaucratic paperwork, including annual returns to the Diocese and the Charity Commission.

However, not all the Administration tasks are currently done by the Parish Administrator. Some of the tasks currently done by other people include:

- Carol has been re-energizing our on-line presence on Facebook.
- Dan and Christie helped redesign some of our logos and graphics, which are slowly being rolled out across our printed and on-line material.
- Tony produces the weekly Notice Sheet and the annual review you're reading right now.
- Eve and Sonia handle all the Hall Bookings – a significant job in itself.
- Jean produces the Hall Hire invoices.
- Caroline & Jackie fill out many grant application forms.

I'm very grateful for all the help I receive.

Stuart Poore
Parish Administrator

Prayer Ministry

At the end of the 10am service on Sundays it is usual for someone to announce the availability of prayer for anyone feeling in need of it, and to invite them to come to the front of the church at the end of the service.

Usually two members of the prayer group will pray together for anyone in need of prayer at that time.

The person in need of prayer can be accompanied by someone if they so wish and it makes them more comfortable.

There have been no formal meetings of the Prayer Ministry Team during the last twelve months.

If there is anyone who would like to join in this ministry, please contact one of the clergy.

Michael Charles

Reading Deanery Synod

These are the highlights of our quarterly meetings.

April Meeting at Trinity Church Earley

Molli Cleaver, Community Engagement Manager (External Relations) & Bethany Brown, Senior Student Community Coordinator (Volunteering and Fundraising) from Reading University, talked about the principles of volunteering.

Revd Mike Smith, Area Dean, presented the draft Children and Young People (CYP) Deanery Plan, which is based on the vision of churches engaging with CYP across all age ranges, with trained and equipped volunteers and employed

ministers, working with schools and other partners to disciple young people across Reading

At the end of the discussion the following motion was approved -

"This Synod commits to

- ensure ministry to children, young people and families is a high priority in our deanery life, through prayer and ensuring our agendas reflect this priority
- agree to establish a clear intentional leadership team that meets regularly, initially through the Deanery Leadership Team but kept under constant review as to its composition

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- establish a clear baseline of the number of children in our churches and in the deanery including schools
- agree the draft Children and Young People Plan 2025-2029 as our deanery strategy
- agree to keep the plan under constant review and development.”

Revd Rachel Bedford was inducted as vicar of Greyfriars, and Revd Mark Laynesmith, currently University Chaplain, was inducted as vicar of St Nicolas Earley.

July Meeting at St Barnabas Emmer Green & Caversham Park Church

Revd Nick Hill, Rector of Reading Gateway Church, explained that Reading has eleven of the most deprived parishes in the Berkshire Archdeaconry, and that there is hidden deprivation within parishes that appear to be affluent. The Estates Ministry Network aims to be an advocate for those who are deprived, in estates, in areas of housing of multiple occupancy, in cities, and towns or rural areas, with the vision for a vibrant Christian worshipping community across all areas affected.

The following motion was passed -

- “This Synod agrees to encourage parishes, with the support and guidance of the Oxford Estates Ministry Network to:
- Map their parishes for areas of deprivation, and

- Pool and share findings across the Deanery.”

Mark Burton (Lay Chair & Treasurer) outlined decline in church attendance, adding that Reading Deanery always pays its full share allocation. The proposed 2026 Parish Share Scheme demonstrates an average 4% increase allocation with a 2% minimum and 6% maximum, and was approved at this stage subject to a re-visit before final approval in November.

September Meeting at Greyfriars Church

Revd Paul Cowan was introduced as the new Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire.

The Area Dean said work continues on identifying a CYP leadership team; establishing a clear baseline of the number of children in our churches and schools, in conversation with REinspired; and facilitating the apprenticeship scheme for training professional youth workers.

Revd Nick Hill (Reading Gateway) presented his paper on Mapping Deprivation, noting that Reading is the poorest deanery in the Oxford Diocese. There was general agreement to follow his instructions and submit data by the end of January 2026.

Revd Mark Laynesmith was inducted as vicar of St Nicolas Earley and Revd Rudy Tan was inducted as vicar of St Matthew Southcote.

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November Meeting at St Mary Magdalen Church, Tilehurst

The revised 2026 Parish Share Scheme, with a few minor reductions from the figures presented at the July meeting, was approved.

The 2026 Reading Deanery Budget was approved.

The Area Dean said the Diocese is offering annual high-quality CYP training to incumbents whose churches have fewer than six children, so that they can make a start on increasing numbers. There is also a lay training scheme called Youthscape Essentials for secondary age children, and another course in the pipeline for churches with more children.

Revd Dr Kajsa-Stina Longuere, curate at Earley St Peter has filled the clergy vacancy on Oxford Diocesan Synod for the 2024-2027 triennium.

February 2026 Meeting at St James Church, Woodley

Hannah Mann, Oxford Diocese Environment Programme Manager, explained how the Church Buildings Team (CBT) can support parishes, drawing attention to the Eco Hub and Toolkit, the Net Zero website and various webinars.

Hannah said 50% of churches in the Deanery have had an energy audit and she encouraged parishes to sign up with EcoChurch saying that there are currently 272 EcoChurches in the

Diocese with 136 awards (1 gold, 51 silver and 84 bronze).

Bishop Mary said the archdeacons will support parishes facing closure or loss of mission due to heating challenges, and she will review the concept of “due regard to Net Zero targets”.

Hannah said updated guidance on acceptable heating, solar PV, and battery solutions is coming soon, including case studies, along with new funding for reviewing Mechanical and Electrical proposals.

Bishop Mary said it is useful for Parish Safeguarding Officers to be able to share their experiences and to involve people from outside the normal church circle if they had the appropriate background.

She noted that the handbook has been withdrawn and is not likely to be reissued, with the e-manual and toolkit becoming the official guidance.

Bishop Mary said Revd Andrew Blyth, Director of Mission and Ministry, will be organising some vacancy training for churchwardens, and added she would be inviting wardens to tea in July to get more feedback on their concerns.

Mark Burton said he will be relinquishing his position as Lay Chair and Deanery Treasurer at the end of June.

Richard Canning

Safeguarding

So what's been happening in the church area of safeguarding this year?

Since the last report many volunteers have worked hard to gain appropriate safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

These roles include work in the church cafe, Holiday Club and work with other groups that meet outside of the Sunday services.

That means many volunteers completing mostly the Basic Awareness course. Through the early summer, all the volunteers for our holiday club who needed to update their training courses. Some volunteers completed Basic Awareness and some Foundation level courses.

PCC members have been taking on or updating appropriate level courses during the year.

Several of our church leaders have updated their Leadership level course recently. This is a far more complex course and requires much more work to complete.

This ensures that our leaders who hold positions of great responsibility are aware of current situations in the outside world, which then require additions and changes to coursework and that leads to a church leadership better able to support our church members. This leads to a church which can present a safe and supportive environment for all of us.

As Safeguarding Officer in the parish, I continue to attend frequent meetings with other Parish Safeguarding Officers to enhance my knowledge and awareness of initiatives which enable me to support our church members in both coursework and any situations that require help.

I have put much effort into supporting volunteers who need group or individual support with safeguarding courses. I find this work very rewarding.

I certainly don't just give volunteers the answers to the questions. I simply help the volunteers to search for the answers through understanding the questions asked and then I find them confidently able to give what is required.

This shows me they have understood more than they think. This enables me to ensure that many of our church volunteers have the knowledge and confidence to report if they see a person that may possibly be suffering in a way that should be stopped.

An awarded certificate is something to be proud of. It's great for me to see a happy volunteer with a new certificate.

As a Safeguarding Course Trainer, I have recently updated my training work - I know this year has seen updates of several courses. So I have to learn about those too. A busy year

Hazel Newman.
Parish Safeguarding Officer

St Cat's Lite

God is faithful and is doing good things among us.

During 2025 God has continued to be at work in the St Cat's Lite monthly services. The number of people coming along has been slowly increasing. As well as new families coming along, it is encouraging to see the few families who were there at the beginning continuing to come along and enjoying the services as well as getting to know each other better.

During 2025 we looked at Love, Worries (peace), Hope, Easter, Pentecost, Harvest (the feeding of the 5000), Light in the darkness and Christmas. We also had an outdoor session thinking about God's Wonderful World.

In the summer we had an All-Age Sunday morning service followed by a BBQ and it was lovely having several of our St Cat's Lite families come along to that. Many of them attended our Nativity service and other events over Christmas. We have seen God at work in people's lives.

In 2026 we are planning on holding a few All-Age services to invite the St Cat's Lite families along to (as we already did on Mothering Sunday).

At St Cat's Lite we had lots of crafting, singing and learning about God in different ways including making popcorn, making pancakes and thinking about what carving a pumpkin can teach us about our lives and God's love and forgiveness.

And, of course, as well as the fellowship, we always enjoy the sandwiches, cakes and drinks provided by the amazing kitchen team.

A big thanks to the whole of the St Cat's Lite team for all you do to make these services possible.

Jackie



St Cat's Lite



Harvest Quiz



Making Popcorn



The 'Tech Team'

The aim of the Tech Team is to help the rest of us at St Catherine's to focus on Jesus – to help reduce things that get in the way that take our eyes off Jesus.

This includes: the congregation, the singers and musicians, the leaders and preachers, everyone. If you notice the sound system, or the hearing loops, or the visuals, or the livestream; then they are getting in the way of Jesus. Our prayer is that these help us to worship better, to learn better.

We are bringing the best we can to lift Jesus up. When everyone needs to hear something we can – clearly, at the right level; when everyone needs to see something – it is there; that we don't have to worry about squeaks or squeals; that things run smoothly.

And that we have the flexibility to move where God wants to lead us – both on Sundays and during the week with all God is doing around St Catherine's.

We are continuing that journey so that our tech serves as together we worship Jesus.

Sometimes we get it right – and you forget we are even there – that is wonderful. Sometimes there are things we can improve. Please let us know. Our aim is that you can focus on Jesus.

If you, as a member of St Catherine's, would like to get involved – everyone is welcome. It's not about how good or experienced you are – it's about a heart to serve.

We each are like the boy with the 5 loaves and 2 fishes – not quite sure what Jesus can do with what we have to offer, but giving it to Jesus anyway. We are trying to simplify things into roles that are manageable and that can be learned.

Come have a chat. Come see some of the different ways you can serve. You won't be on your own - we will teach you and support you.

Set-up or running things, computers, or tablets, sound – all kinds of way to be involved. Or if you like putting together power points, or visuals.

Also – if you like taking photos – these are often really helpful to help others notice the amazing things God does.

Paul Fountain

The next pages contain reports on activities managed by St Catherine's

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Café Siena Book Club

We have read a variety of books over the year, some popular and others less so. We all like different genres and have interesting discussions about the books which we choose every month.

A book which we all liked was "Small things like these" by Claire Keegan which depicted life in a small Irish town.

Bill Furlong is a decent, hard working man who discovers a home for unmarried mothers in the town which is very much hidden away. He does all he can to help a girl in the home. The book was short but beautifully written.

A book that we were less keen on was "The Bee sting" by Paul Murray which was over 600 pages long and was about a complicated family with many problems.

Our current book is "The tent, the bucket and me" by Emma Kennedy" which depicts a rather unglamorous view of the outdoor holiday scene!

We have sadly lost one of our founder members, Mary Hudson, who always finished every book and contributed to every discussion. We shall miss her.

Rosemary Cunningham

Carpet Bowls Club

The Carpet Bowls Club, now in its 27th year, has met regularly for weekly sessions during the year on a Saturday at 7.00pm in the Church Hall.

In the summer when some of our members play outdoors, informal sessions are held, for the rest of the year we have a weekly league along with, Singles Knock Out, Pairs and Target Competitions for which we have trophies which are presented at the AGM.

The evening as well as the competitive bowls is a social evening (away from the TV) for those living on their own. We also have a Social Fish & Chip Evening

along with a game of Curling once a year which is enjoyed.

Club membership has fallen and we currently have 13 active members and 2 social members. Although we are not actively recruiting it would be good to have new members. Any one who is interested is quite welcome to come along on a Saturday evening or ring Anne Soley on 07708 486 143.

The Club Programme is now displayed on the Notice Board in the Hall and is advertised on the Entrance Notice Board.

Paddy Barrett

Community Prayer Group

We continue to meet every Thursday in the Garden Room at 2.00pm to pray for all the meetings that take place in the hall and Church and for the local community.

We also pray for any requests and give thanks for answered prayers. Please feel free to join us when you are able.

Anne Soley

Friday Friends

Friday Friends meet every Friday at 2.00pm in the hall and there is an opportunity to have lunch in the Cafe before joining the activities each week. It is a good place for carers to get support and share any concerns.

The programme each week offers a variety of activities and fellowship is shared at refreshment time.

Anne Soley

Cornwell Charity Crafts

From 2025 to 2026 we continued to raise money for Ripple Effect.

We donated £1,078 to Ripple Effect to send 15 Amazing Allotments costing £110 each and 4 Life changing Coffee costing £22 each. We were at both the Summer and Christmas St Catherine's Fairs and in Café Siena on the days before these fairs. We also held a summer house party at a friend's house.

This year we will raise money for Brilliant bee hives costing £38 each and soil savers costing £8 a time.

A Huge Thank You to everyone who bought our wares, made our stock, hosted events and gave us donations. You make this possible!

Valerie Poore, Caroline O'Sullivan,
& the rest of you!

Crafty Space

Crafty Space met each month except August over the last year; usually on the 2nd Saturday of the month from 1.30pm to 5.30pm.

We regularly have 16 people or more who join us for tea, coffee, cake, crafting, chat and more cake!

The swap box is as popular as ever for re-homing craft supplies. Folk sew, knit, colour, paint, draw, arrange flowers or

create interesting things with sheep's wool, buttons, beads or anything else you can imagine.

From April 2025 to April 2026 we donated £540 to St Catherine's towards our hall use.

Come and join the fun, there's always room for one more!

Valerie Poore & Caroline O'Sullivan

Green Team

As we write this, we see signs of spring all around us – white and pink blossom, pink and red camellias, magnolias with their showy flowers and green shots appearing on the trees. So, we are reminded that *'God saw everything he had made, and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1: 31). Indeed 'the heavens declare the glory of God' (Psalm 19:1)!*

The green team continue to encourage us all to care for God's creation in whatever way we can, joining with Jesus to work towards the restoration of His creation. Therefore, as a community we encourage one another to use energy efficiently, conserve resources, consider the environmental impact of consumer purchase and enjoy God's creation.

During 2025 the green team met regularly to encourage one another. Our meetings include prayers for The Ripple Effect, a charity that works alongside families in rural Africa to grow food sustainably and earn a living, despite the difficulties caused by climate change.

The eco notice board at St Catherine's keeps you informed of local events promoting care for God's world, and provides useful information – so do have a look.

The gardening team, St Catherine's centre and building maintenance team all continue to work hard to care for our environment.

In the garden, we operate a no mow May, avoid pesticide use, compost, provide a bug hotel, feed birds and include insect friendly plants in planting schemes.

The St Catherine's centre uses eco products, practises and promotes extensive recycling and seeks to source the café with local produce where practical or alternatively use fair trade products.

The timings and temperature settings for the church and hall are carefully monitored.

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We all were provided with a useful and informative sermon series in the summer on creation which explored some of the underlying theology and provided some practical ideas as to changes we might consider making to the way we live.

Topics included God as creator, Knowing God through creation, Caring for God's creation and Living in a consumer world. Our hope is that this has impacted all of us in however small a way to enjoy God's creation and care for it.

The PCC approved a proposal to replace several of our lights by more ecofriendly LED lighting. We are very grateful for the diocese for providing a high proportion of the funding for this work through a grant.

A non-fund-raising event is planned for Saturday, 19th September 2026 on care for creation. The intent is to have several stalls to promote care of creation through providing ideas and information on topics such as recycling, cosmetics, wildlife, food and gardening. And above all to have fun!

A number of games are being planned! Local organisations are being contacted to take part. Do keep the date free and invite friends and family to come along. And if you have any ideas for the event or would like to help please contact one of the team.

So let us all remember that *'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it'* (Psalm 24 v1) and look to see what action we can take to care for it.

Green Team: Chris Addison,
Richard Canning, Jo Day,
Caroline Heron, Sonia Ludford,
Hazel Newman

Life Groups

We are blessed to have 50 people that attend one of our 6 Lifegroups at St Catherine's. Some have been running many years, whilst others are relatively new.

Different groups choose to meet either weekly or fortnightly. Usually meeting for around 2 hours either in the Garden Room or someone's home.

Groups meet on the following days:

- **Weekly Tuesday afternoon**
2.00-4.00 pm
- **Fortnightly Tuesday evening**
8.00-10.00 pm
- **Weekly Wednesday afternoon**
2.00-4.00pm
- **Fortnightly Wednesday Afternoon**
2.30-4.30 pm
- **Fortnightly Wednesday evening**
7.30-9.00 pm
- **Fortnightly Thursday morning**
10.00am-12.00 noon

Lifegroups are so important as you can pray, support and encourage each other as well as building friendships.

It is a confidential space to share any worries you may have and pray together.

Many groups have their own WhatsApp groups, so that you can check in on each other and ask for prayer requests.

Lifegroups help with our Christian journey as we grow in our faith.

Mostly we reflect on the bible verse

from the precious Sunday service and answer questions.

Sometimes groups choose to follow another series, i.e., Lent or Pete Greig. My Lifegroup is currently studying the Bible course. This has been an amazing course.

Each Lifegroup has an allocated pastoral care list. This is to ensure that everyone from the congregation is cared and prayed for.

This year my Lifegroup was asked to support the Alpha course in September and we are now blessed with having 2 valued new members to our life group.

It is encouraging that we have had several new people joining a group since last year.

Lifegroups are fun. We often arrange social events in our small groups such as at Christmas or BBQ's, and quizzes.

Some groups support charities e.g. donate £1 each session raising large amounts over the year for a chosen charity or making hospital bags.

As the Lifegroup leader I try and organise a meeting for all the Lifegroup leaders every 4 months to share, give feedback and review Lifegroups.

I would like to thank the 6 Lifegroup leaders and their hosts for all their hospitality and time given in running a Lifegroup.

We have spaces for people to join a

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Lifegroup with a choice of days, afternoons and evenings.

Mothers' Union

The branch continues to be run by Committee but, unfortunately, Chris Jones had to step down which reduces the committee to only 5 members. However, we hope that we were still able to provide a full and interesting programme for our membership which now stands at 40 members, two of which are awaiting formal enrolment.

We continue with our prayer chain, regular monthly bible study and fellowship meetings, and our members also take on many other voluntary roles within the church.

We have also made-up emergency toiletry bags for the Royal Berkshire Hospital and knitted Easter Chicks and Christmas stockings for the Children Seen and Heard project.

Our monthly evening meetings have included talks by Claire Lewis, Christian Community Action (CCA), Jenny Morgan on Bee Keeping, Hayley Phillips on her

Please come and have a chat to me or email me seijdeacon@googlemail

I look forward to hearing from you.

Emma Deacon

job as a British Airways Dispatch Manager and Sally Leonard the Reading Street Pastor Co-Ordinator.

We again hosted a World Day of Prayer service to which other local churches were invited and we have also held our annual Quiz evening, meal at Toby Carvery, August Afternoon Tea, and Beetle Drive.

The Quiz and Afternoon Tea raised £350 which was donated to the MU Summer of Hope appeal.

The Memorial service in October and the ever-popular Christmas Carols and Readings were both well attended as was an evening of Christmas Craft in November courtesy of Val Poore.

In the coming year we hope to continue to find a variety of speakers to entertain and inspire us at our monthly meetings and to reach out further into the community

Steph Walklate

St Catherine's 0-5s

Now in our second year at St Catherine's, and it was good to welcome Doreen back with her 'new hip'. A most welcome to our team of helpers has been Kelly.

Caroline stood down and we are grateful to Mika who took over the catering as well as helping set up. Heather continues to help set up alternate weeks. The Tuesday team is Evelyn & Tony, Stuart, Mika, Liz and Kelly.

Tuesdays was for families with a maximum of 25, and Thursdays for Childminders, although the maximum was only 15 that could mean up to 40 children.

In September we decided that we should concentrate our efforts (and decreasing energies!) on running the group for families on a Tuesday. This because an increasing number of those families have been coming to St Cat's Lite and All-age services.

We gave notice to the Childminders that the Thursday sessions for them would not continue in 2026, and were glad that they decided to hire the Church Hall themselves so that they could continue meeting. We are grateful to Doreen and Lynn who'd helped on a Thursday.

During the year, the number attending on a Tuesday has reduced, we think that this is because more children go on to Nursery or pre-school, and mothers return to work once maternity leave ends.

Most weeks there are more grandparents than parents. In the past we had occasionally reached our maximum of 25, but towards the end of the year the numbers were in the 12-15 range most weeks. This does allow for a more comfortable session and gives us time to chat to those attending. We are glad that Jackie is able to pop in most weeks.

We are still in need of more helpers, especially men to help set up when Stuart or Tony are away, not only to cover absences, but to allow the regular team the time and space to talk to the families who come along each week. We are grateful to Hilary and Sonia who can be called on to help.

We agreed to take over responsibility for the garden in the outdoor play area and Liz, with the help of her daughter Rosalind and Kelly has made good progress in weeding and planting. They have also regularly cleaned the Hall windows both inside and out.

The St Catherine's 0-5s Team

Tuesday get Together

This group continues year after year, the place where old friends gather every week. We also welcome new faces that, over time, become friends as well.

Tuesday Get Together is a warm space within this parish. As the cost of living increases, many people who are living in big houses find it difficult to keep their house warm. Here we offer not just tea, coffee and biscuits, but we also listen to each other's concerns with a sympathetic ear.

Friends care about others, visiting them in hospitals as well as celebrating birthdays. Some of our Tuesday friends have started coming to our Sunday services and to the communion service on Wednesday morning.

We are always looking for volunteers, even among those coming on Tuesdays. Our hope in God is to continue strong, providing a safe, friendly and warm place within the St Catherine's church community.

Eladia Canning

Youth work

Over 2025 the Youth Bible Study Group has continued to meet on a Tuesday afternoon, in church, during term time.

Our Bible studies are fun and accessible with much discussion and questions pondered.

We have enjoyed exploring the Bible and encouraging each other in our Faith and supporting one another in Prayer.

There has been continued Youth involvement in Church Services and in the Summer Holiday Club.

In the summer we said goodbye to two of our members, who secured places at University.

We thank God for the valued time we have spent together in 2025. Strengthening our faith, seeing prayers answered, and having fun.

Lynn Stevens