

Greater Whitbourne Parochial Church Council Annual Report April 2026 for the Year 2025 Parish of Greater Whitbourne

St. Mary - Edvin Loach



St. Michael and All Angels - Upper Sapey



St. James - Tedstone Delamere



St. John the Baptist - Whitbourne



Priest in Charge report for 2025-2026

This has been a busy and very exciting year April 2025 to April 2026

Throughout the Parish there have been 3 baptisms, 3 weddings and sadly many funerals of big characters from our communities. There were 2 confirmations of parishioners.

The grant seeking of funding for the Schools and Young People's worker came to fruition and nearly £80,000 was offered. The interviews were held and an excellent candidate found. Alessandra Nicholas began work on 2nd January 2026. In order to show our support for Aless and her work each church is making an annual donation of £312.50 towards her salary each year for 5 years. This is also so for the other benefices in the deanery who are making contributions which in total will amount to an uprise of £5000 per year to the employment costs for 5 years.

Aless has made an excellent start visiting the schools, the churches, some of the clubs and organisations and has met many of our young people in Greater Whitbourne. She has been working mainly during school hours to start with, but this will shift to after school activities when she is known to the children and their families.

Our Administrator Steve Curtis has taken on additional hours for Bromyard Benefice from September and from April 2026 will also take on the Bredenbury benefice secretarial tasks. This means he works 3 hours a week each for Frome Valley Churches, Bromyard Benefice, Bredenbury benefice and for Greater Whitbourne as well as 3 hours a week for the deanery secretarial work. This means that each benefice has taken a quarter of his salary to be found each year. Steve has taken a great deal of the work from our wardens including faculty applications, he has service rotas ready each month, produces service booklets, orders candles and palm crosses etc and a great deal more.

Friendship Lunches have during this year had to move to a Friday as Janet Roger's working timetable has changed. There still remains a good number of people attending but the day change has meant we have some people who can no longer come but again we have gained some new people too. Number remains around 20 each time.

The service pattern in our four churches has been discussed since November 2025 and after a great deal of consultation and producing some new material with insights from our liturgists, February 2026 saw the beginning of Community Worship. Our trained worship leaders Mark Maddock and William North will lead some of these services as well as Alexandra Bullock and Chris Evans. We continue to seek God's will for any further worship leaders who will first receive training for service leadership.

Deanery Synod rep report will give you more details, but it has been decided to hold synod meetings in as many churches as possible in our deanery.

I would like to thank and offer my appreciation for the hard work and support of the Greater Parish offered by the ministry team - Andrew, Alexandra, Chris and Jan.

For our hard-working churchwardens, who hold the churches at a high level of maintenance and readiness.

For the people who do the flowers in the four churches.

The people who keep the churches clean and the gardens maintained so beautifully.

The people who provide refreshments after services.

Those who welcome worshippers.

Those acting in the role of Sacristan, to whom I am very grateful.

The DCC members from each church who work tirelessly to maintain each church and to fund-raise for the ongoing expenses.

To our young people's worker and the team who support her on Fun Days and in other ways and also our new Schools and Young People's worker.

The administrator who is making the day to day running of the Greater Parish much more manageable. Also, for his ongoing work across the deanery.

The PCC secretary who among other things keeps us all informed of what the diocesan office has for us to take on board.

Our safeguarding officer who regularly updates us on changes that may need our attention.

Well done to all for your work.

Report prepared by: Revd. Preb. Dawn Hyett

Churchwarden Reports

St John's Whitbourne Annual Report for 2025

We start, as usual, with a word of gratitude for those members of the congregation who are no longer with us – Muriel Jones, Maureen Williams and John Ransley. Each one contributed generously, over many years, in bringing their talents to the benefit of both the church and wider village community.

Congregation numbers have risen through this last year, and we regularly have an activities table for children where they can sit and draw, complete an activity, write a prayer or if invited rush up to the front of the church to assist during the sermon. Choir numbers are rising too. We appreciate their contributions during the services and for all that Hilary Markland, our choir director is achieving.

Through the year we received a number of requests from bell ringer teams to ring our church bells. In June a group from the Traherne Association visited for a tour of the church and talk.

Annual safety inspections have been completed, and our mowing contractor is doing a tidy job mowing and strimming both the flat areas of the lower churchyard and the much trickier terrain of the upper churchyard with all its anthills.

We want to acknowledge and thank all the volunteers for their time in keeping both the interior and exterior church grounds tidy and welcoming. Alongside those who contribute financially via the Parish giving scheme, or in cash, or on the newly available machine in church for contactless giving. All these financial and practical ways help maintain the ability to have a church here in Whitbourne.

Thank you,

Anne Evans, Churchwarden

Gayle Clark and Phil Bailey, deputy wardens

St Mary's, Edvin Loach Annual Report for 2025

A churchwarden and a deputy churchwarden were in place for the year.

The year saw a continuation of the regular church service attendance of around 11 people, again as in previous years an excellent attendance given the population and location of Edvin Loach.

Services continue to be held on the third Sunday of each month and included our usual and very popular stir-up Sunday service, our carol and Christmas services were held on the 21st and 24th December respectively. 13 services were held in 2025.

There were no weddings or baptisms and one funeral service and burial held at the church in 2025.

One fund raising event was held during the year, this being our popular cake decorating.

The only work completed on the church was the removal, refurbishment, and re-installation of the 10 large plain glass leaded light windows situated on the north and south facing sides of the church at a considerable cost of around £17,500.

Normal planned health and safety checks on the church were completed.

The churchyard continues to be kept tidy and litter free and the standing headstones regularly checked for wobble. The stock fence is being regularly checked.

Additional altar cloths were obtained from Bishops Frome church.

A break-in to the church vestry occurred on the 7th November and was reported to the local police, nothing was taken and there was no damage except a broken door clasp which was put back in place.

Report produced by Lis Morris, Churchwarden and Jeff Salt, Deputy Churchwarden

St James, Tedstone Delamere Annual Report for 2025

We had two weddings, one baptism and one funeral. The services averaged between four and nine attending. The remembrance service was held jointly with St John the Baptist Church in Whitbourne and the names of Tedstone Delamere fallen were read at the Whitbourne War Memorial. The Christmas Eve Carol service was very well attended.

The planned concert was postponed.

Mark Maddock had fixed the new tiles each side of the organ. Trevor Marshall had done some work on the electrics and tested the appliances.

With effect from 1st October, British Gas will be supplying the electricity.

Through the year, a working party has been working in the churchyard, mostly strimming. We were granted a faculty to cut three wild cherry trees down. This has been done and cut into large and small blocks. David Harris then piled up the blocks and cleared the remainder. Bishop Richard has had some of the cords of cherry wood for wood turning.

Report produced Kathleen Harris – Churchwarden

St Michael & All Angels, Upper Sapey Annual Report for 2025

We had our regular service on the second Sunday of each month but attendance now struggles to reach double figures. The regular festivals were well attended. It is lovely to have our own organist and a willing pair of hands to help where help is needed.

To mark the 80th anniversary of the ending of World War II we had a very successful WWII event, which was well attended, at the Upper Sapey Village Hall with 1940s music, dancing, spitfire making and outdoor games and BBQ on the cricket field.

There was a magnificent array of cakes which proved very popular as well as an 8 minute film about what it was like living in London during the blitz. Our thanks for the display by the Bromyard History Society and to the Carpenter's for the use of the cricket field. This event was in lieu of our summer garden party. We would like to thank all those who helped so willingly to make the event a success.

We had a Singalong event singing Carols round the tree at Christmas with mulled wine, mince pies and cakes.

These are both Community events which raise a small amount of money for future events but are enjoyed by all who came.

We had a Carol service this year with some excellent music and singing.

It was our turn to have holy communion on Christmas day. My fellow churchwarden Mark Maddock is now a Local Worship Leader and helps out with various services in the greater parish too. He also carries out general maintenance work.

We have had one baptism and a well attended healing service this year.

Film-nights in Olly's Friendship Room have continued with some excellent films being chosen. Attendance is around 10 and thanks to a grant negotiated by Dawn of £380 from the Addenbrooke, Nash and Winnington United Charity. Some excellent and stimulating films, which would not have been seen by many, were shown and were enjoyed by all who came.

In addition to the monthly coffee mornings Mike and Marion Symmons have held a number of very successful children's and adult fun days in Olly's Friendship Room at half terms and holidays. We have now provided a shed for their materials with help from the Mustard seed grant and various donations including a generous donation from Mike Symmons.

Broadband is now a reality and John Grove has installed a Sum Up device which we would like to see used more.

The boiler house is being regularly monitored for dry rot and treatment when required.

The Quinquennial Report items that are urgent have been attended to and the gutters and downpipes painted, but there are still small items that need attention.

The churchyard has continued to be kept in a tidy condition by Andrew Wilde and Bruce Eddie, and others in the gardening team, and we are grateful to them for doing this.

Chris Amphlett and Val Burness continue to do a great job in keeping the church clean and tidy and we must mention Kathleen Harris who provides the most beautiful flower arrangements for all the services, from her own garden.

Our DCC secretary Julie Smart has done a wonderful job researching and recording all the graves in Upper Sapey churchyard and this is available on the website and this is very valuable for future reference.

Mentioned should be made to thank Gayle Clark, our PCC secretary, for keeping the DCC's on their toes.

As well as those just mentioned we would like to thank all those who have helped in various capacities during the year with the working parties, general maintenance and cleaning.

We would also like to thank all those, behind the scenes, who support our services and the general running of the Church but especially Revd. Preb. Dawn Hyett who is a regular supporter at all our events, and of course the supporting clergy and many others.

We now have a fence on church land between Numbers 2 to 4 Church Close and the churchyard, the cost of which was covered by two grants, but have been waiting over a year for Land Registry to record these changes. We are now required to register the church and this is proceeding so we hope 2026 will finally see completion of this Settlement.

We have not managed to honour our commitments to Parish Share for 2025 as we are now showing an annual loss as our regular income is not sufficient to meet the costs of running and maintaining the church without substantial additional funding. So no guarantees can be given over the amount of Parish Share for 2026.

Several new people have moved into the Parish and are taking an active part in the Church, so the future looks bright.

Thank you.

Report produced by David Roberts and Mark Maddock - Churchwardens

Electoral Roll

Greater Parish total: 119 of which 92 are residents and 27 non-resident

Edvin Loach	19
Tedstone Delamere	19
Upper Sapey	22
Whitbourne	59

4 names removed since 2025 APCM

4 names added since 2025 APCM

Anne Evans, Electoral Roll Officer

Financial Report 2025

Overall, expenditure in 2025 was £89,871, while income was £73,192 – a ‘deficit’ of £16,626. This was mostly thanks to the use of historic legacy income in Edvin Loach to do a once-in-a-generation repair to the church windows (£17,425).

Aside from this, regular income, excluding one-off grants, held more or less steady. Decreases in plate collections and planned giving were almost offset by an increase in ‘other voluntary income’, the overall difference being £628. We have much to be thankful for, but should also recognise that allowing for inflation, “more or less steady” is in real terms going gradually backwards.

Does this mean that patterns of giving are changing a little? Anecdotally, less cash may be put in the collection plate and more given electronically; and also long-standing donors who supported the church through standing orders may be being replaced by more recently arrived people who give on a more ad-hoc basis. Time will tell.

In 2025 we financed outreach activity - notably the Fun Days and the Deanery-wide production of “Joseph” at the Conquest Theatre in October - from grant funds received in 2024. This also added to our cash deficit in the year.

The parish magazine made a healthy surplus of £957 – printing costs were £3,013 and advertising income £3,970. This was due to a new lower-cost printing contract.

Warmest thanks go to all whose generous support, whether financial or in kind, makes all this possible.

Looking ahead, we need to find ways to increase our overall revenue, so as not to undermine the great things that are happening. By giving more? By more fundraising? Let's talk about it and pray about it. Ultimately it is a personal decision for each of us.

Chris Evans. PCC Treasurer.

Safeguarding

The transition of Safeguarding Officer responsibilities was successfully completed by September 2025. Revd. Jan Webb continues to serve as Deputy, ensuring continuity in the verification and approval of DBS applications during any period of my unavailability.

Regarding the recent data breach involving the external provider *Access Personal Checking Service (APCS)*, I am pleased to report that no Greater Whitbourne PCC members or parish volunteers were affected. While the breach caused initial processing delays, these have now been resolved. Since registering the parish as a subunit of the Diocese under our new provider (31:8), the backlog has been eliminated and all DBS checks are currently up to date.

The Safeguarding Hub is now fully operational. It is being utilized effectively to assign roles, monitor DBS eligibility, and track the completion of all required safeguarding training.

During this period, one safeguarding concern was reported to the Diocese. I can confirm that this matter was managed successfully and has been satisfactorily concluded.

Report prepared by Julie Smart - Parish Safeguarding Officer

Deanery Synod Report for 2025

Deanery Synod met: 2025 – 12.06.25 Bishops Frome; 24.10.25 Bromyard

22.01.26 Stoke Lacey (my apologies given)

The Deanery has been working together and agreed a legal basis from our own parishes for a Group Ministry acceptable by the Diocese. This followed a consultation presentation from the Diocese regarding the need to reorganise according to change and resources by merging into the Ledbury Diocese. This has led to much interactive work between the churches-

- a. encouraging further the training of Worship Leaders. These have been introduced at the meetings.
- b. supporting and building activities together more especially regarding ministry with young people and children. Reports have been given.
- c. the expansion of the Administrator role completed across the Deanery.
- d. obtaining a mustard Seed Grant for the year aimed at continuing for a further two years.
- e. a joint 'scratch production of Joseph' completed and performed at the Conquest Theatre. This event receiving support from the local communities and groups.
- f. the shared appointment of a schools and children worker for 50% employment terms managed by the Diocese and line Managed by Rev. Prebendary Dawn Hyett.

The Parishes shared for the end of the year these activities a worship service at St. Peter's which responded to the Bishop and the Year of Engagement. At this further expression was given to complimentary mission activities from the Parishes with Bishops Frome.

This coming year will build on the momentum.

The Diocese has responded to a request for a presentation and opportunity for questions from PCCs from Rosa at the next Synod in Collington 7pm, 30th April 2026. This offers ideas about grants, funding streams, maintenance beneficial to all churches. It would be beneficial for some questions to be received in preparation.

Report prepared by Mike Symmons - Synod Rep Greater Whitbourne Parish

Children's and Youth Work Report for 2025

Over the year I have continued to work in Bredenburg and St Peter's Primary schools.

I have taken 6 assemblies in St Peter's and helped by hearing readers.

At Bredenburg I have taken 15 assemblies, taken part in their Christingle and attended the Nativity. I hear class1 readers and have helped in other classes.

There have been 3 Fun Days (2 days each), a summer scheme in collaboration with St Peter's Church (3 mornings), and involvement in the Joseph production. Fun Days attendance varied between 6 and 13. The helpers team has really come together, and I thank them all for their time, skills & enthusiasm.

The Parish Christingle was at Edwin Loach in January this year, which was much enjoyed although the weather caused reduced numbers. It would be good to hold the next Christingle in December '26, which of the 4 churches would like to host it?

The much-anticipated shed is now in use at Upper Sapey. Situated on a concrete base in the church carpark with proper guttering installed and shelving being fitted. There will be solar powered inside and outside lights and a handrail for the ramp. I would like to thank Mark Maddock for all the hard work he has put into this. The craft, games and sports equipment are from various sources, donated, loaned, bought from fun days takings or from grant money. It will be stored there, sorted and labelled to be used for children's and youth work across the deanery with a signing in & out system in place. There are 4 key holders.

This has proved more expensive than we expected when we applied for mustard seed grant money for a shed, much of the shortfall has been made up by kind donations but we're not quite there yet. All donations gratefully received.

Report prepared by Marion Symmons

Choir Report 2025

I am pleased to report an increase in numbers! We now have 13 regular singers with a good balance of 2 basses, 2 tenors, 4 altos and 5 sopranos. The tone and general standard of singing have improved beyond measure and we have developed a robust and varied repertoire.

Highlights of the past year include the Good Friday meditations; our concert "Afternoon tea with the Whitbourne Church Choir" on the 22nd July 2025 and the Christmas celebrations where we sang at Edwin Loach and Whitbourne. We have also sung for funerals and weddings.

The choir commissioned its first work, "Sweet babe", a Christmas carol by Nathanael Newitt, one of our tenors. This was premiered at our carol service on the 14th December. We have asked Nathanael to compose a modern take on the "Venite", psalm 95, which will be used on a regular basis as part of the new Community Worship service.

Some of our new members are instrumentalists and it is my intention to use their skills to enhance our regular services, particularly for the Community Worship services. I have asked them if they will contribute to our 2026 concert, scheduled to take place on Sunday 17th May. The theme is "A pilgrimage through the Church's year" and we will be exploring, through music, the major festivals in the Christian calendar.

On behalf of the choir, I am delighted to be the recipient of Bromyard choral society's unwanted black folders which we can re-purpose for the Whitbourne choir, hopefully using the artwork supplied by NN for the Community Worship booklet. Thank you, Gayle, for coordinating this.

I am in discussion with Gayle regarding having a dedicated choir presence on the Greater Whitbourne parish website with a view to posting the monthly music lists so that members of the congregation can see the monthly music lists with details of the weekly hymns and anthems.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the church for its support of the choir.

Choir members March 2026

Basses Chris Evans, Andy Stephens

Tenors Nathaneal Newitt, Patrick Calthorpe

Altos Ruth Calthorpe, Gayle Clark, Gillie Stormont Darling, Liz Matthews

Sopranos Karen Stephens, Trish Lees-Milne, Myrtle Kneen, Kathleen Harris, Claudia Buxton

Report prepared by Hilary Markland

2025 Belfry maintenance report

The Belfry was inspected 7th March 2026.

All appears in good order, excepting some nesting material that has been pushed in through the window mesh.

The Whites (of Appleton) Service report from 2023 is yet to be acted on regarding oversized stays which could potentially cause damage to the bells if the stays don't break appropriately. Whites can provide a pattern (correct sizes).

The Chimer was tested too and sounds weak on the Treble (Bell N°1) and is double or multiple chiming on the Tenor (Bell N°6). You may recall that I have mentioned this, and emailed it, during and after a wedding earlier in 2025.

The Chimer still functions, to a fashion.

Some Chimer adjustment may still be required to prevent the N°4 bell hammer from chiming erratically after a period of use. Whites are also able to advise.

I also rang the Sanctus bell, which functions as usual. I am uncertain when its bearings and clapper were last oiled or greased, because it is too high in the Bell Chamber to access.

Report prepared by Ady Taylor

Report on Bible Study Group at Gladstone House

At Dawn's request, we began meeting in Lent 2024. We established a pattern of one week prayer and worship and one week of Bible Study. One couple started coming immediately and a second person came intermittently to begin with. We studied Peter's first epistle.

A neighbour then joined us for Bible Study, as did someone from the Saltmarshe area. We are now studying the gospel of St John and have got to chapter 7.

Following discussions within the group, it was decided to focus on Bible Study, so this is what we do every week now. We do still pray and, more rarely, worship at the end.

It is a very fruitful way of getting to know one another and the Lord more deeply than Sunday services allow and I think it is fair to say that those who attend, appreciate it. It is open to anyone at whatever stage on their faith journey.

Report prepared by Alexandra Bullock