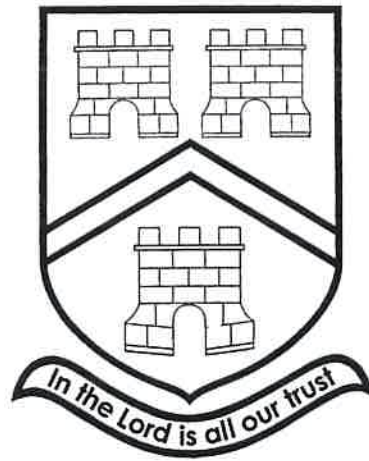




St Catherine's Church, Towersey

Annual Report

1st January to 31st December 2025



Aims and purposes

Our general aims are the same as every Church of England church, namely: To promote the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The focus of our ministry in Towersey is to witness to the love of God and the hope that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Objectives and activities

As part of the Oxford Diocese we share the vision of the Diocese to be a more Christ-like Church; Contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Specifically, we work towards the vision, mission and values of Thame Church. Our vision is to see our local community transformed through the radical love of Jesus. Our mission is to:

- **Worship God** and grow in our faith through his Word and by his Spirit.
- **Proclaim the Gospel** of Jesus through words and how we live.
- **Follow Jesus** to become like him and then do what Jesus did.
- **Love everyone** as Jesus loves, as the united body of Christ.
- **Care for God's creation** as we promote good stewardship of the earth.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit including the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

Focus on corporate worship

The PCC would like to express its thanks to the visiting retired clergy who have led our Sunday worship during the year, particularly Rev Tony Price. It is always a pleasure to have them in Towersey to spend time with us, along with our Team Vicar, Andy McCulloch.

In 2025 we held **monthly services** at 9.30 on the third Sunday of each month, with a mixture of Morning Worship and Holy Communion.

In addition to the monthly cycle, we held:

- **Communion services** at the key seasons in the church's year: Christmas and Easter.
- **Gospel proclamation opportunities** for all ages: May Festival and Carol Service.
- **Harvest Festival** an all-age celebration of God's goodness and supported by the village
- **Remembrance Sunday service** in conjunction with the Parish Council and Memorial Hall Committee.
- **Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance** on a Sunday afternoon for those who have lost loved ones in the recent past.
- **Baptisms, weddings, and funerals** as required.

Around 16 people attend a typical monthly service, with around 42 at a typical service with baptism. We see a larger number of worshippers at our special services, with 105 adults and 25 children at the Carol Service. 52 people attended services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. When there is no service in Towersey we meet as part of Thame Church at St Mary's in Thame.

Growing integration with the Thame team

The Thame team has developed significantly during 2025, with Barley Hill Church, St Catherine's and St Mary's Thame increasingly working and worshipping together under the name of "Thame Church". The informal Joint Church Council continues to meet to discuss our vision and ways of working, present and future. Currently the three PCCs continue to produce individual accounts and be legally responsible for their own church but the finances are managed across the three parishes.

Reaching out to our local community

St Catherine's has a special place in the heart of many in our community and those who have grown up here; the place to which they turn in times of celebration and crisis. The Carol Service is filled with all ages, and the people who live in the village comprise the majority of the congregation.

High points in the year included our May Festival and we are grateful to all those who work hard to make this a success, including a new group of younger families who together mastermind the event and Andy McCulloch who was our speaker. The all-age Harvest Service was another, where different organisations from the village decorated a windowsill and a good number of families also came along to join in the service.

Using the church building for God's glory

We keep the church building open daily for private prayer and reflection. We aim to cater for locals, who value the peace and presence of God they find, and for visitors passing through the village. An open building is a form of Gospel proclamation, which we reinforce through the provision of free literature designed to challenge, inform, and encourage visitors.

We had to purchase a new organ this year, as the old one finally gave up and there were no more spare parts left to repair it. (The proceeds from the Fete in 2024 provided us with what we needed to afford this significant item.) In October we dedicated the organ at our monthly service and Richard Coulson put it through its paces after the service with some demanding pieces, while the congregation enjoyed coffee and cake.

We continue to do the various building works that were specified in the 2024 Quinquennial Inspection to keep it in shape both for the present and its future use as the Lord intends.

We believe that the 2018 development and refurbishment of St Catherine's was only made possible through God's provision. We believe, therefore, that the church building has a continued place in God's plan for our area as the three parishes belonging to Thame Church develop our relationship.

Thanks

The PCC takes this opportunity to thank all those who serve God and the church family in any capacity: playing the organ, arranging flowers, baking cakes, bellringing, cleaning, running fundraising initiatives, preparing for services and all the other work behind the scenes in so many ways that enable the different aspects of ministry to flourish in Towersey.

Financial Review

Reasons to be thankful

We are thankful to God for the continuing generosity of our congregation and the wider community. We are thankful, too, for excellent support for our fundraising activities during the year. We are thankful, specifically, for:

- Committed donors who have maintained, and in most cases increased, their giving throughout the year – despite the cost-of-living pressures that everyone continues to face
- Warm support from the wider community for our fundraising initiatives.

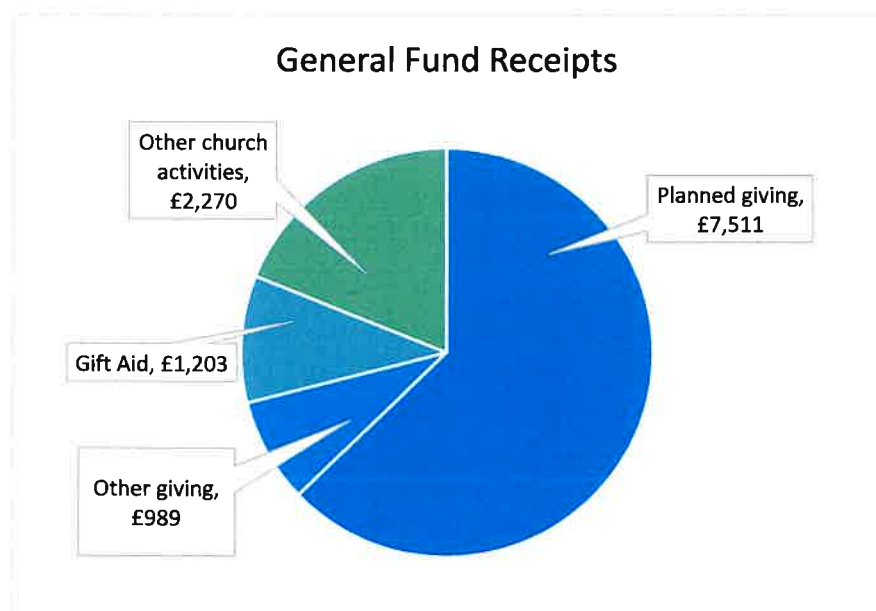
Our finances are split between the **General Fund** and the **Designated Fabric Fund**. The General Fund receives income from voluntary receipts and various church activities. Expenditure covers our Diocesan Parish Contribution, including the cost of the clergy, and church running expenses. It also includes a contribution to the costs of Thame Church. We aim to break even on the General Fund.

The Designated Fabric Fund receives income from various fundraising activities and covers the cost of maintaining the church building and the churchyard. Income and expenditure for this fund is highly variable because the proceeds of fundraising initiatives are unpredictable, and maintenance of the church building can involve some significant items of capital expenditure. We, therefore, maintain a high level of reserves if possible.

There was a deficit of total unrestricted income over expenditure of £1,527 (2024: £8,027 surplus). This overall total is comprised of a deficit on the General Fund of £1,148, and a small deficit on the Designated Fabric Fund of £379.

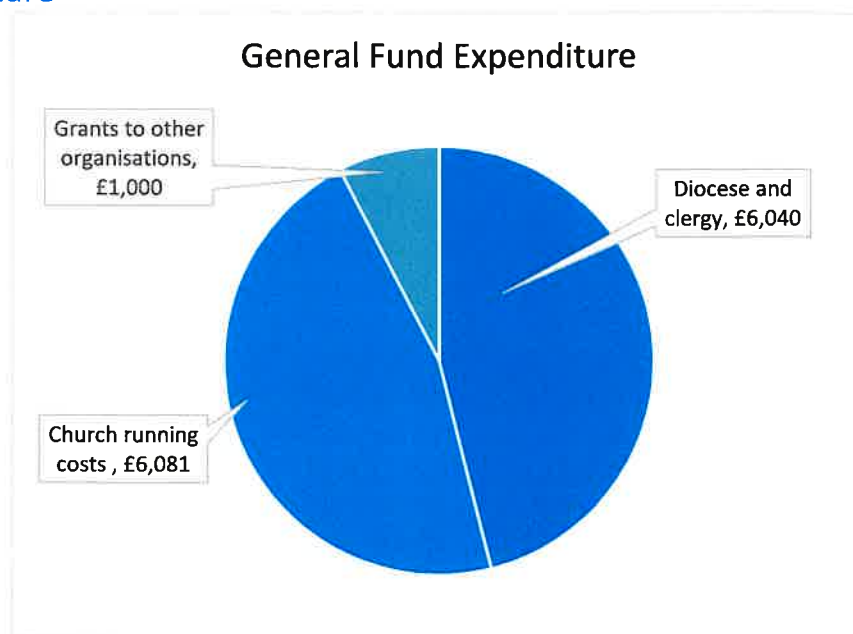
General Fund receipts

Unrestricted voluntary receipts from parishioners, visitors and grants were £9,703 (2024: £10,518). Within that total, planned was £7,511 (2024: £7,439). Inflationary increases from parishioners were offset by deaths in the congregation and others moving away from the parish. Other giving and Gift Aid provide valuable additions.



General Fund expenditure

The main expenditure from the General Fund was £6,040 (2024: £6,634) to the Oxford Diocese as our contribution to the costs of clergy stipends, pension contributions and housing; and to support clergy training and ministry development locally and nationally. The reduction was due to a revised allocation basis within Thame Church, which reduced our share of the total for Thame Church.



Routine church running costs amounted to £6,081 (2024: £5,471). The detailed analysis of this expenditure is set out in Note 4c. The PCC made grants of £1,000 (2024: £1,350). Details of all grants are shown in Note 4d.

Designated Fabric Fund receipts and expenditure

Once again, our thanks go to the village for enthusiastic and energetic support of our fundraising initiatives. The May Festival and Plant Sale together raised £3,056 net of expenses (2024: £2,708) and the Church Fete raised £21,203 net of expenses (2024: £19,791). All fundraising income was applied to the Designated Fabric Fund.

In addition to the routine building maintenance, there was expenditure during the year on a new organ and some rectification work required on the electrics in the church. On 31st December 2025, the fund stood at £21,875 (2024: £22,254), which will be used in 2026 to undertake stonework repairs that were identified in the recent Quinquennial Review of the church building.

Financial Reserves

The **General Fund** stood at £16,297 on 31st December 2025 (£2024: £17,445), equivalent to 15 months' routine expenditure. Cash balances above normal operating requirements are held with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund.

The **Designated Fabric Fund** stood at £21,875 on 31st December 2025 (2024: £22,254).

The restricted **Bell Fund** on 31st December 2025 was £662 (2024: £634). This is used for maintenance of the church bells.

Structure and leadership of the church

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St Catherine's all those who are members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. There are currently 28 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll.

The membership of the PCC consists of our vicar, churchwarden, and five elected members. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. The full PCC met four times during the year. One member of the PCC sits on the Deanery Synod, which provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church.

Administrative information

St Catherine's Church is part of the Thame Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford. The correspondence address is Black Horse Cottage, Manor Road, Towersey, THAME, OX9 3QR.

Parochial Church Council

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2020) and a charity excepted from registration with the Charity Commission because total income is below the £100,000 registration threshold.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2023 until the date this report was approved were:

Ex-officio members:

- Rev Andy McCulloch (Team Vicar)
- Sue Civval (Churchwarden)

Elected members

- Keith Civval (Treasurer and Deanery Synod Representative)
- Jo Gregory
- Susan Hazell

PCC Secretary

- Julie Reid

Approved by the PCC on 24th February 2026 and signed on their behalf by Sue Civval (Churchwarden)



**Independent Examiner's Report
Year Ended 31 December 2025**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Parochial Church Council of St Catherine's Towersey ('the charity') for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3. the financial statements do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



A Churchill Stone FCA DChA

Mercer Lewin Ltd
Chartered Accountants

6-7 Citibase
New Barclay House
234 Botley Road
Oxford
OX2 0HP

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2025

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Receipts					
Voluntary Receipts					
Planned giving		7,511	0	7,511	7,438
Collections at services		783	292	1,075	1,019
All other giving/voluntary receipts	4a	988	0	988	1,019
Gift Aid recovered		1,203	73	1,276	1,389
		10,485	365	10,850	10,865
Activities for generating funds	4b	30,328	0	30,328	28,655
Investment income		1,047	29	1,076	1,104
Church activities		1,223	0	1,223	2,161
Receipts from Thame Church		0	0	0	1,358
Total receipts		43,083	394	43,477	44,143
Payments					
Church Activities					
Diocesan parish contribution		6,040	0	6,040	6,634
Clergy costs		0	0	0	100
Church running expenses	4c	9,943	0	9,943	9,364
Mission giving and donations	4d	12,113	365	12,478	11,406
		28,096	365	28,461	27,504
Cost of generating funds		6,034	0	6,034	6,021
Church repairs and maintenance		10,480	0	10,480	2,521
Total payments		44,610	365	44,975	36,046
Excess/(deficit) of receipts over payments		(1,527)	29	(1,498)	8,097
Cash at bank 1 January		39,699	634	40,333	32,235
Cash at bank 31 December		38,172	662	38,834	40,333

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2025

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Note	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Cash Funds					
Current Account		1,172	-	1,172	1,599
Bank Deposit Account		17,000	-	17,000	18,100
CCLA		20,000	662	20,662	20,634
		<u>38,172</u>	<u>662</u>	<u>38,834</u>	<u>40,333</u>

Notes

- 1 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts & Payments basis.

- 2 The movements in funds during the year were:

	Bal C/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal C/fwd
General Fund	17,445	11,973	(13,122)	-	16,297
	Bal C/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal C/fwd
Designated					
Fabric Fund	22,254	31,110	(31,488)	-	21,875
	Bal C/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Bal C/fwd
Restricted					
Bell Fund	634	29	-	-	662
Special Collections	-	365	(365)	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	<u>634</u>	<u>394</u>	<u>(365)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>662</u>

The PCC established a **Designated Fabric Fund** to set money aside for substantial maintenance to the fabric of the church and churchyard. It is part of the Unrestricted Fund and held in the general bank accounts.

The **Bell Fund** represents accumulated fees for bell ringing and donations, which can be spent only on the maintenance of the bell tower.

4 Further analysis of receipts and payments

	Unrestricted Fund	Restricted Fund	Total 2025	Total 2024
Receipts				
a <u>All other giving/voluntary receipts:</u>				
Donations from individuals	206	-	206	919
Legacies	-	-	-	-
Grants	782	-	782	100
	<u>988</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>988</u>	<u>1,019</u>
b <u>Activities for generating funds:</u>				
May Festival & Plant Sale	3,211	-	3,211	2,834
Church Fete	27,051	-	27,051	25,749
Other	66	-	66	72
	<u>30,328</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>30,328</u>	<u>28,655</u>
Payments				
c <u>Church running expenses</u>				
Parish Training & Mission	292	-	292	296
Church insurance	419	-	419	1,482
Church maintenance	3,362	-	3,362	1,728
Church Cleaning	1,218	-	1,218	1,180
Other church running expenses	1,501	-	1,501	1,395
Printing, postage & stationery	-	-	-	114
Bank charges	15	-	15	11
Telephone and internet	432	-	432	432
Upkeep of churchyard	500	-	500	788
Upkeep of services	264	-	264	93
Electricity	1,408	-	1,408	1,610
Water	263	-	263	190
Contribution to Thame Church	87	-	87	-
Governance costs	182	-	182	45
	<u>9,943</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,943</u>	<u>9,364</u>
d <u>Mission giving and donations</u>				
BRF Ministries	500	-	500	-
Impact Thame	-	-	-	100
Red Kite Family Centre	-	-	-	1,934
Royal British Legion	-	-	-	-
Scripture Union	-	-	-	350
Sharing Life Trust	-	365	365	2,306
Tearfund	-	-	-	500
Thame Day Centre	-	-	-	-
Towersey Memorial Hall	-	-	-	100
Towersey Playing Fields	11,113	-	11,113	5,767
Wycliffe Bible Translators	500	-	500	350
	<u>12,113</u>	<u>365</u>	<u>12,478</u>	<u>11,406</u>