

Holy Trinity with St Mary, Berwick Parish Church
Registered Charity No 1182751



Annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meetings

Church Groups
Annual Reports

2025-2026

Contents

Vicar's Report	Page 3
Berwick Parish Church Trust	Page 5
Charitable Giving	Page 7
Communications	Page 8
Deanery Synod	Page 9
Eco	Page 10
Fabric	Page 12
Flower Guild	Page 13
Hospitality & Outreach	Page 15
Music	Page 16
Parish Centre	Page 18
Pastoral	Page 19
Safeguarding	Page 20
Schools	
Holy Trinity School	Page 22
St. Mary's School	Page 24
Welcomers	Page 25
Worship	Page 26

The Vicar's Introduction

“Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:18-19a)

Welcome to this Annual Report for the year 2025 for Berwick Parish Church of Holy Trinity and St Mary's. The quote from the prophet Isaiah above was one of the texts for my first Sunday here. It's slightly counter-intuitive in that the whole purpose of this report is to look back! But we look back with thanksgiving and gratitude as we remind ourselves of the presence of God here amongst us in the past year.

Our life together is marked by many things, and you'll find reports covering everything we do, or almost everything we do. These reports give us a flavour of our journey together over the last year and fulfil legal and financial requirements, so it is good to give them your attention.

But they do not give us the entire picture of our life and journey together, the intangibles if you like. How we navigate a new incumbent, how we respond to the challenges and chaos of the world around us, how we engage with our community, and most importantly how we grow in faith and discipleship.

Each of us is a report on this last year, how our lives, our worship, our giving, our discipleship has changed or grown. It has been a busy year and a year of change. My arrival in April will have changed things in obvious and less obvious ways. I've walked over 33 miles Wandering for God, getting to know the physical parish. We've started study courses, experimented with Services of the Word, and begun to explore where evangelism fits into who we are. We held our first PCC discernment weekend at the end of October where we dreamed some big dreams. We have welcomed new people to our services, some of whom have become regular worshippers with us.

We have celebrated many things from life events such as baptisms and marriages to being awarded the Gold Eco Church Award from Arocha and being Highly Commended in the Love Northumberland awards, through to celebrating anniversaries with Holy Trinity School and the Coldstream Guards.

Our role as the Civic church for Berwick has grown and been embedded this year with the special services we've held, with the way in which we have hosted events such as the Northern Sinfonia and other concerts, and the Berwick Literary Festival. Alongside this our relationship with both schools has developed, alongside our support of them as they transition to a two-tier provision and the headache of their building work alongside.

We have also said goodbye to some dear people, our brothers Revd Christopher Smith, Revd Ray Simpson, Alan Bowlas, Gerald Sandwith and John Ayerst. We give thanks for all that they gave us and recognise the loss we still feel.

Revd Diana McNaughton moved away to Newcastle towards the end of last year, and whilst we haven't yet been able to say a formal thank you and goodbye, we give thanks for her ministry amongst us.

Although this report is necessarily looking back, this has been a year of looking forward. The point of Wandering for God, of our PCC discernment weekend and the work we've been doing around that is to follow where God is leading us, to see where God is already at work and to join in. At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting we'll be talking about those plans and what the future might look like as we grow into the parish God is calling us to be. So, I finish with the other text for my first Sunday here.

"Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own ... this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:12-14)

With my love and prayers

Fr Lee Taylor
Vicar of Berwick

Berwick Parish Church Trust Report, April 2025-March 2026

Trustees: February 2026

Sir Philip Mawer (Honorary Chairman), Margaret Shaw (Honorary Vice Chairman), David Mason (Honorary Treasurer), Roger Brunt, Edward Cawthorn, Leslie Findley, Ian Guthrie, Susan Higgins, Roy Jobson, Nick Shaw, Geoff Short

Current financial conditions and likely financial needs

1. The 2024 Quinquennial survey, conducted in July 2024, highlighted a range of repairs needed to the church. One of the major items related to the 100-year-old lead roof of the nave, on the condition of which the Trust subsequently financed a professional report. The report recommended replacement of the nave roof and also of the organ chamber roof, which is felt-covered. Both of these recommendations were subsequently accepted by the PCC. The cost of these works is currently estimated at £200k + VAT, towards which the Trust anticipates making a substantial contribution.
2. Investment performance has been strong during the year, following a period of instability around early April 2025 when the US President announced sweeping new tariffs. Guided by its investment managers, the Trust has lowered the level of risk in its portfolio, in anticipation of the need to withdraw around £100k within the next 12 to 18 months to help finance the roof work.
3. Longer term, the need for substantial work on the organ - identified some years ago - remains a potential call on the Trust's resources, as is the need for replacement in due course of the church's heating system in line with the PCC's zero carbon ambitions.
4. The Trust is working closely with the PCC to raise the funding required to undertake the necessary work to the church's roofs, while continuing to cover other potential calls on its resources. It has already agreed to set aside provisionally £10,000 to cover any agreed fundraising effort and ancillary expenses for the replacement of the roof. It continues to welcome donations and legacies from all who are interested in helping to ensure the preservation and embellishment of Berwick Parish Church, the need for which support is currently very evident.

A Summary of Trust Activities, April 2025 – March 2026

Grants to the PCC

5. During the year, the Trust awarded grants to the PCC for the following purposes:
 - Painting of downpipes & gates - £2,808
 - Professional advice on the church roof - £1,235.

Raising the Profile of the Church and the Trust

6. Members of the Trust continued to assist the activities of this Group during the year covered by this report. These have included a programme of events to mark the

300th anniversary of Holy Trinity School and special services to mark the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Days.

375th Anniversary of the Opening of the present Church

7. The work of the Raising the Profile Group is now coming to an end as attention focusses on celebrating the 375th anniversary of the opening of the present church building for worship in 1652. The programme of events began over the weekend of the 24th-26th October 2025 with:
 - a) a capacity audience attending a talk by Professor Kenneth Fincham on '*A New Church in Tumultuous Times: Berwick Parish Church and the Puritan Revolution of 1640-60*' (the talk can be viewed through a link on the Trust's page on the parish website); and
 - b) a Dedication Service on 26th October, at which Bishop Stephen Platten presided.

Further events are planned to run through 2026 and into 2027.

Friends of Berwick Parish Church

8. Members of the Trust have assisted the PCC in introducing a thrice yearly newsletter featuring the ministry and mission of the church which, it is hoped, will also help to familiarise more members of the wider community with the Trust's work. The first edition of the newsletter was published in Advent 2025.

Review of the Trust's Logo and Leaflet

9. Following the PCC's review of the church's communications and the introduction of a parish church logo and associated Style Guide, the Trust has reviewed and updated its leaflet explaining the work of the Trust and has adopted a logo which, while using distinctive colours, echoes that of the church.

Charitable Giving Group Report 2026

We continue to support the 18 charities agreed by PCC through a two-year cycle of collecting although some charities such as Christian Aid, Water Aid, British Legion Poppy Appeal, appear annually. People continue to be very generous and having a nominated charity for a month ensures that charity receives a reasonable donation.

We try to achieve a balance between local, national and international organisations and between church and secular.

One charity on our list – Feed the Minds, no longer exists so we will be considering a substitute. We have supported the National Historic Churches Trust but, in autumn, were directed to Northumbria Historic Churches Trust. We are considering suggesting this as a local alternative partly as we may well seek their help in future.

Unfortunately, the charity receiving the least support is our local Newcastle Diocese charity, PICA (Partners in Community Action) which enables local churches to realise small scale projects designed to help the local community.

Offerings are collected via the charity box in the narthex, the pay station, Christian Aid disaster emergency appeals, social events surplus and WaterAid Lent Appeal. The Eco Group has also raised money through special events to support African projects: Beehive twinning through Bees Abroad and Solar Aid sponsorship.

We remain committed to supporting The Food Bank via collections in church and by occasional donations.

Thanks very much to everyone who has generously supported the charitable work of our church and demonstrated a willingness to stand alongside those in need of help and those who serve others.

The Charitable Giving Group.

Communications

We are grateful to Flora Moxon, who led the communications group for several years. Following her departure from the parish for new adventures, the communications group has been in abeyance pending appointment of a new lead.

However, the various communications mechanisms introduced in recent years continue and are an integral part of church life:

- The website www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk contains information about the church, its personnel and services, and has links to numerous sources of further help. The church calendar is available online on the events page www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/events and the services for the coming Sunday can be viewed on the page www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/next-sunday-worship/. There is a donations page www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/donate/, a signup form for the weekly email www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/weekly-email-signup/ and much more
- The pew sheet is published each week, available from the Thursday of the previous week, giving information about services, notices and contact details
- The monthly messenger provides a digest of additional information and news and is available on the website through a link on the page www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/upcoming-events/
- The Sunday Parish Eucharist and various other services are broadcast live on the YouTube channel www.youtube.com/@holytrinityberwick/streams which also holds recordings of past services – the website has a page www.berwickparishchurch.co.uk/sermons/ which contains the text of sermons and links to the live stream
- The church's Facebook page continues to be updated with information about services and other items of interest
- The logo introduced last year is now well established and there is an accompanying style guide that contains further information for authors of posters and documents to help project recognition of the church

During 2025, the church introduced a glossier newssheet which is circulated to “Friends” of Berwick Parish Church and a signup card is available in church for those wishing to receive a copy when a new one is produced. We are grateful to Andrew Phillips for volunteering as editor. However, there is much more to be done to ensure clear, consistent communications that reach all those we wish to inform about what is going on, and the PCC has identified re-establishment of the Communications group as a priority in its discernment process.

David Mason

Deanery Synod and DDG.

It has been a busy year for both groups.

We have welcomed two new Vicars Father Lee Taylor to our Berwick Parish and Father Richard Cornfield to the Tweedmouth Benefice with Spittal and Scremerston.

We also had a Confirmation Service at Tweedmouth Parish Church which included two members of our Congregation.

The Vicar of Norham Rob Kelsey is retiring later this year and discussion is underway as to how this vacancy will be covered.

The other Parishes in the Area have very small but stable Congregations apart from Holy Island which has the benefit of being of historic interest and is a very busy tourist centre.

There are more Churches using Zoom and YouTube Worship.

As always there is great focus on the costs of the upkeep of these Churches which as old buildings are always in need of repair.

The DDG is also concentrating on the upkeep of Churches in their three year plan and looking at different ways of sourcing funding. They are encouraging Churches to expand on how their facilities can be used by different groups for Events other than Worship all of which can bring in much needed revenue.

Here at Holy Trinity and St Mary we have hosted several meetings for the Deanery.

David Smith MP took part in an Open Meeting where he talked about his life before and after he became our MP.

Rev Ben Doolan, Vicar at St Thomas Resource Church in the centre of Newcastle explained the work they do. Their Congregation has an average age of 29 and has 500 members. There are plans for more of these new Worshipping Communities in the Diocese.

In September we had an open meeting on 'Living in Love and Faith' led by the Rev Emma Duff who is the Diocesan LGBTQI+ Chaplain.

Joyce Guthrie

Eco Group Report

The CofE has two Eco targets:

- i) Carbon Neutrality by 2030 for Buildings**
- ii) The Use of all Church Land to Promote Biodiversity.**

A Rocha Gold Award

Holy Trinity and St Mary's progress in these **two areas** was recognised by A Rocha in the presentation of the Eco Church Gold Award in June 2025. A Rocha noted the churchyard wilding, wild meadow creation, and thriving saplings, the busy bird feeding station, wildlife habitats created by children, and hedgehog feeding station, the beehive, and the contribution of HMP Northumberland's Inside-Out Team of rustic seats and log cycle rack made from storm damaged wood. Of particular note, for A Rocha, was the church as "an exemplar for other historic churches" in the installation of solar panels, which now contribute 60% of the electricity needs of the church saving an estimated 1,921kg in carbon emissions.

LOVE Northumberland

Holy Trinity and St Mary's 'Response to the Climate Crisis' was also recognised by the award of Highly Commended in the Love Northumberland Awards. This was a notable achievement "by the first church, in fifteen years, to enter the competition. The prize money was divided between the two church schools for their sustainability work, with the addition of a PCC donation.

These awards were the result of the labours of previous years; the work in 2025 has included the following:

Carbon Neutrality Target

- Surveys and data collection.
- Thermostat renewed in Parish Centre. Temperature monitoring and recording in church.
- Investigation of Ground Source and Air Source Heat Pumps and meetings with engineers.
- PCC investigation of roof insulation and green funding as part of roof replacement.

Promotion of Biodiversity on Church Land

- On-going development of Parish Centre Garden Area, Church Herb Garden and Wildflower Meadow. The clearing of the area around the Millennium Yew Trees to encourage growth. Sapling support and protection.
- The planting of a 300th Anniversary Tree by Holy Trinity School.
- The 2025 bird count and species count recorded increased numbers due to the thriving feeding station and on-going planting.
- Plans have been given to the Vicar and the PCC for a Wetland Wildflower Area based on a proposal, and the expertise, of HMP Northumberland's Inside-Out Team.

Community Work

- Space for Shorebirds Rangers organised a church and community Northumberland beach bird watching walk which was well attended and informative.
- Promotion of Space for Shorebirds and Beach Cleaning has been on-going via the church website.
- Sustainability messages have been regularly advertised in the Monthly Messenger.
- The Eco Group supported the planting of two Oak Trees in the local park by Holy Trinity School.
- Through the Eco Group, Northumberland Wildlife Trust sponsored a Community Seed Exchange Event in the church Parish Centre.
- The local Allotment Association gave a talk during one of the two 2025 church plant sales.
- Heritage and Nature Talks and Walks in the churchyard attracted a record number of people.
- Craft Sales and Plant Sales have enabled the church to support sustainability projects in poverty stricken areas of the world, in this the church has worked with Berwick Slow Food: Bee Hives have been sponsored through Bees Abroad, and 26 Solar Panels (matching the number on the church roof) have been purchased to replace kerosene lamps in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.
- Wildflower Seeds have been distributed after church and school services.

Sue Phillips/Anne Horne

Fabric Group Report

Following the last APCM, a fabric working group with David, Paul, Roger, Michael and Ted was formed and has met roughly monthly to plan work on fabric items.

We are especially grateful to the many volunteers who have contributed to keeping the fabric of the church in good repair, whether through attendance at the monthly Fabric Day on the third Saturday of each month, or by quietly addressing specific areas of need.

Special thanks are due to Neil for the huge improvement in the nativity figures and their display area outside the church door.

The regular routine of checks of electrics, lighting, alarms, boilers, organ blower, roof areas, clearing of leaves, moss and rubbish and many other routine tasks has continued thanks to the volunteer effort.

We have developed safety protocols for tasks with specific risks such as ladder work, and thanks to a donation of a platform ladder we now have a safe and reliable way of checking the “tell-tales” tracking potential movement in the east wall, which so far has been minimal.

Work on the items identified in the 2024 quinquennial inspection continues. The downpipes (and also the gate) were painted and a platform created to enable the church bell to be accessed – an inspection shows it is in good condition and painting is planned for the spring.

A gate has been installed at the top of the steps leading to the boiler house – a risk area identified in the recent safety inspection.

In spring 2026, work is planned on repairs to the masonry cracks identified in the quinquennial survey, and at the same time it is planned to repair cracks in the masonry and flashing on the south aisle roof which are the probable cause of leaks experienced following heavy rain and strong winds early in 2026.

The main nave roof has been the subject of considerable investigation, following identification of a large number of cracks in the quinquennial survey. An expert report was commissioned which has recommended replacement of both this roof area and also the organ chamber felt roof. The PCC has approved the replacement of both of these areas, which will involve considerable expense – grants for the work are to be sought and an appeal will be made to the congregation and other local supporters for donations. We are especially grateful to Berwick Parish Church Trust which expects to make a very substantial contribution.

David Mason, Paul Marshall, Roger Barrow

Flower Guild Report

This past year seems to have been a busy one for the Flower team. We are a small group and yet we have managed to cover the various events which have taken place during the year successfully and with the appreciation of both the congregation and visitors.

Easter and Christmas are the key festivals as always, when the wonderful profusion of flowers really gladdens the heart following Lent and Advent. 'All hands on deck' is the watchword for these times and extra helpers are much appreciated.

Other services we arranged flowers for during last year were as follows:

March 30th: Mothering Sunday, with two Baptisms which livened us all up considerably and gave the distribution of daffodils added meaning.

April 2nd: The institution of Fr. Lee Taylor as our new priest. We had flowers in Church and in the Guild Hall for the reception, all given away afterwards as it was Lent.

May 8th: There was a Civic Service for V.E> Day with patriotic colours for the flowers paid for by the council.

June 10th: a service to mark the 365th anniversary of the founding of the Coldstream Guards. A great day for the town. We did some splendid red and yellow arrangements which I think they paid for. They showed up well on the photos of the service.

September 19th: Heritage Open Days. Not a service as such, but an opportunity to showcase the history of the Church and display vestments and other fabrics we have to a large number of visitors. We arranged some colourful pedestals to add to the displays.

October 5th: The Harvest Festival was celebrated with the usual flowers, fruit and vegetables. We need someone to acquire sheaves of corn at the appropriate time for next year's display. Thank you to Eileen Otterburn for the Harvest loaf.

October 12th: Berwick Literary Festival took place in the town and welcomed the Rev. Richard Coles as celebrant and preacher at our Sunday service. He really is a genuine vicar as well as a celebrity. We made extra efforts with the flowers, of course.

November 9th: Remembrance Sunday. We arranged poppies with red carnations for the service attended by the uniformed organisations in the town.

November 28th: The Advent wreath is assembled in Church and table centres prepared for the Advent supper in the Parish Centre.

December 13th: The Flower team did wedding flowers for the mayor's daughter, using red poinsettias, red roses and greenery in 16 pew ends, and other pedestals, all of which were taken to the reception at the Guildhall. A Christmas tree erected by the Izat family for their wedding the week before was left with us, which was a generous gesture.

I referred to a busy year at the start of this report and in this I include the funeral services we have had in Church this past year. There has also been an increase in musical events, thinking of the coffee concerts, recitals, a 'Come and Sing' event as well as various school events. The Flower team is very mindful of these occasions and keen to present the flowers well when these take place. We also enjoy an important role as welcomers for the many visitors who come into Church as we are working on Friday mornings.

Finally, a big thank you for the donations we receive from members of the congregation. 'Every little helps', as they say, especially as flowers have become more expensive.

Christine Smith (Flower Guild co-ordinator)

Report of the Hospitality and Social Group.

The Hospitality and Social Group is not so much a formal group as a number of people who get together to help provide hospitality for an increasing number of events and occasions. We have had a very busy year. In addition to the regular refreshments after the Sunday and Thursday 10.00 a.m. Eucharists, refreshments have been provided for several lectures and 'farewells' and are now being provided on a regular basis for the Saturday morning Coffee Concerts. Interval drinks also continue to be provided for the summer organ recitals.

As so many items for our refreshments are donated, we do not routinely charge for them but put out a basket to receive donations to help cover costs.

This year we were also delighted to provide hospitality in the Guild Hall for all our guests and congregation after Fr Lee's induction - a very important occasion for both our church and the community.

On the 3rd Sunday of the month a small, dedicated group offer Tea, homemade cake and chat in the Parish Centre for anyone who would value company. We now have several regular guests who appreciate this opportunity to meet and socialize, but we would love to see more. Please do draw this opportunity to the attention of anyone you think may benefit from it.

Over the year there have been several 'socials' to mark and celebrate specific events in the church's calendar. These take the form of a meal, light entertainment or quiz, and occasionally a raffle too. These events are always well attended and enjoyed by those who come, and the generous donations we receive ensure we cover the costs and can also donate the surplus to some of the charities to which the church gives regularly. This last year, the total amount we were able to give to these charities was £1,011.34.

None of this hospitality would be possible without the help of so many members of our congregation. Whether you are a regular on the 'Coffee Rota' or help at any of the other occasions when we provide refreshments, "THANK YOU!". Generous hospitality is one of the marks of a thriving, welcoming community and Holy Trinity church can only continue to provide this hospitality through the efforts of all those who are able and willing to help us do so.

Ann Mawer

Music Report

Musically, this has been a very busy year. There have been quite a few high profile services that have involved collaborations with both local and nationally based musicians. The choir turned out in force to represent the church and support the congregation in song. We were privileged to be participating at the heart of the service to institute, induct and install Fr Lee, singing Hylton Stewart's portrayal of Mary as a young, innocent and accepting girl through the Magnificat. We also conveyed the very important message to the assembled company of clergy of their responsibilities in Byrd's *Sacerdotes Domini*.

The visit to celebrate the 375th anniversary of the Coldstream Guards was a particular highlight; the congregation was treated to some fabulous playing from their brass band before and after the service and shared the playing of the hymns with the organ; the choir sang the anthem *Almighty and Everlasting God* by Orlando Gibbons, a well-known anthem that would have been familiar to the original members of the regiment in the 17th century.

The service to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Holy Trinity School was both entertaining and impressive in the way that the school children delivered an informative and spiritually moving service. This service has proved to be a catalyst to greater musical collaboration between the church and the school, which we hope will grow in the future.

The coffee concerts have gone from strength to strength over the last year. We have had performers entertaining us from far and wide, including Germany and London, Birmingham, Manchester and even the USA; we have also been able to give a platform to more young, aspiring professional musicians. The coming year is already looking both busy and varied and we are now being contacted by performers asking to come. We are starting to see more and more unfamiliar faces in the audience and the average amount donated is reducing, which, I hope, is a sign that there are more people coming who can't afford to donate at all. The goal remains to have concerts jammed packed with audience, most of whom would not normally go to concerts for financial reasons.

There were three large-scale come and sing events this year:

Brahms Requiem provided a powerful message of hope and faith for Fr Lee's first weekend at the beginning of April. There was a deeply moving and inspirational concert within the Berwick Literary Festival in October involving professional musicians working alongside singers of all ages, including the Berwick Young People's Choir to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII. Last, but not least, we welcomed old friends back for the third Requiem Mass featuring Fauré's extraordinary Requiem for All Souls.

The Summer Organ Recital Series was very successful, kicked off by the wonderfully energetic and multi-talented New Zealander Zosia Herlihy-O'Brien and brought to a close

by the also multitalented Scot Tiffany Vong. This year, the net has been thrown even wider, with players coming from far and wide, including Portugal and the Netherlands.

The choir continues to grow, and we now have forty one singers on our list. Very sadly, we lost a bass who has given unwavering service to the singing of the morning Eucharist for many years. John Vicars was a rock solid and reliable singer who was often the only bass on a Sunday and will be greatly missed. We are constantly on the lookout for new recruits, particularly to the morning services and currently, there are a few singers who are interested.

We have initiated a choral scholarship, that will provide singing lessons to young singers in return for singing at services, particularly the morning Eucharist.

As the PCC looks forward to future development of services, so we are also considering the possibility of introducing different genres of music, not as a replacement to the musical tradition that we currently have but as supplement. We are also hopeful that our closer musical links to our church schools will lead to greater participation in our choral services in some form or other.

Kit Hobkirk, Director of Music

Report on the Parish Centre for 2025-6

The Parish Centre working group consisting of David Mason, Joyce Guthrie, Ann Mawer, Paul Marshall and Linda Foley is responsible for the running of the Parish Centre and has met roughly monthly.

A number of improvements have been made to the Parish Centre:

- New tables and chairs – the tables in particular are much easier to stack and should minimise damage to the walls
- A new heating control system enables the heating to be regulated each week in accordance with the actual bookings, saving energy by avoiding heating the centre unnecessarily
- A panic alarm has been installed to enable the parish administrator to alert others to an emergency situation; the alarm can also be used by lone workers in church
- A camera has been purchased to enable live streaming of events in the Parish Centre – in conjunction with the AV system installed the previous year this enhances the attractiveness of the Parish Centre to potential hirers

The Parish Centre continues to be very well utilised with income generating sufficient funds to support the running costs and contribute to the financial reserves for major capital items such as the furniture.

However, there have been some cancellations or reductions in hours from some regular groups recently, and as a result there is a need to attract some new regular (and occasional) hirers.

During 2025, the text of the standard hire agreement was reviewed in line with the latest advice on safeguarding – all hirers need to agree to a safeguarding statement, with additional requirements for activities aimed at children or vulnerable adults.

The Parish Centre is a valuable resource both for the church and the local community and the working group is grateful to members of the Fabric Group for support with the many maintenance tasks needed to keep the centre in working order, to our cleaners who do such a good job of keeping it clean and to the Treasurer for his support with the finances.

Parish Centre working group

Pastoral Report for the 2026 APCM

The Pastoral group meet regularly and are making contact with people who have been referred to us for a variety of reasons. In some cases telephone calls are acceptable but others prefer a visit. We do try, along with the congregation, to look out for Church members who have not been seen in Church for some time. It may be some-one from our 8-30, 10am, 6pm or Thursday morning services.

I thank Rev Lynn Philips for his continued involvement and guidance with the group and for taking home communion to various housebound parishioners. I also thank Rev Geoff Short and Paula for holding a short eucharist service in the three Care Homes in the Parish, Tweed View, La Cura and Albury House. These services are warmly welcomed by both the residents and the staff and are held regularly.

Heather Marshall continues to send cards to families on the anniversary of their child's Baptism, this has been done for many years.

The sick list is updated every week but please remember you do need the consent of the person who is sick or their family for names to be included to the list.

In addition to the formal structure which exists I am pleased to report that a tremendous amount of pastoral care goes on in our Church within the congregation themselves, by giving people lifts to Church, helping with shopping or simply giving people a warm and genuine welcome when they come to Church. These little things are so important to everyone.

Pastoral care is a very important aspect of the life of the Church and it has to be dealt with in a professional, confidential and discreet manner. This work is greatly enhanced by the input from Joyce Currie as the Church Safeguarding Officer. Our grateful thanks go to Joyce.

Finally, I thank Neil, Lynn, Joyce, Joy, Paula and Heather for their work and support over the year taking up a lot of their valuable time.

Gwynneth Guthrie

Lay Pastoral Chair

Safeguarding Report

The Safeguarding Hub and Dashboard are fully up to date, they are showing the following information.

The Safeguarding Hub

Currently there are 25 people listed on the safeguarding hub, everyone has completed the required training.

DBS certification is complete for everyone listed as requiring a check. We have recently moved to a new DBS checking service who are reported to offer a better service and who are more familiar with church roles. Excellent support is provided by Christine Smith, DBS Administrator for this parish.

The Safeguarding Dashboard

Mandatory safeguarding requirements are currently 100% complete. This is likely to change over time, e.g. if training and/or DBS checks are left to expire or if other people and/or activities need to be added to the list. Reminders are sent out to people around 3 months before expiration of training and/or DBS checks.

The PCC are kept up to date via safeguarding reports at PCC meetings which are regularly taking place.

I have kept good links with the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese, and they are consulted whenever it is felt their advice is required. I link in with online PSO meetings which are currently being held bi-monthly. The last PSO meeting took place on 3.2.26.

Over this last year two safeguarding concerns were received. Both of these concerns were discussed with Father Lee and the Safeguarding Team at the Diocese and were responded to appropriately. Information was passed onto the relevant people to deal with.

Currently there are no safeguarding issues that are open to us.

Contact information is displayed in Church and at the Church gate for anyone who may need to seek help for safeguarding reasons and / or for those facing homelessness or domestic abuse.

I regularly keep in touch with the Pastoral Team who usually meet monthly. I also meet regularly with Fr Lee and the other churchwardens.

Joyce Currie
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Schools Reports

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School 2025-6

“Working Together with kind hearts to inspire inquisitive thinkers who love learning and actively seek to challenge themselves”

In celebrating our tercentenary in the spring, we learned a lot about the history of our school and community; hearing from former pupils and local historians about the past 300 years. It is perhaps fitting then, that September brought another major milestone, when we officially became a Primary. As I'm sure you are aware, the transition has not been seamless (to put it mildly), but our staff pulled out all the stops to make sure the new modular classroom was ready for the start of term. We retained our Y4 children to create our first ever Y5 class who will enjoy the status of being our most senior pupils for three years in a row. It is a massive adjustment for everyone but we have been working hard to ensure our curriculum is revised to incorporate Y5 and Y6 content, and that our facilities and opportunities meet the needs of these older children.

Our strong relationship with our families, community and partners has allowed us to work together and use this change as a positive opportunity to grow and update our offer. The additional hurdle of remedial building works to address subsidence in the hall has really tested our commitment to being challenge-seekers – but we have made it work!

Dinners and collective worship are temporarily accommodated in a spare classroom, while Monday excursions to Berwick Sports Centre have given PE lessons a whole new dimension. The use of the centre's state-of-the art facilities has certainly been the silver lining for our children, and we'd like to thank Places Leisure and the Newcastle United Foundation for their support. Swimming lessons also continue to take place at the centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Encouraging movement beyond PE lessons and competitions, has always been important to us and the past year has been no exception. Our Active 30:30 programme continues, supporting our children to be active for 60 minutes a day, and we have been working with charity Living Streets to promote active travel, such as walking to school.

With our hall currently out of action, our visit to the church for our Harvest Festival was particularly significant, presenting an opportunity for whole school worship. Our annual Easter Service, Christingle and Nativity are always a highlight for our children and their families. We're grateful to Father Lee for continuing to visit us regularly to lead worship and to the whole team at the church who continue to provide excellent support.

Trips out of school really help to broaden our children's cultural experiences and we're really grateful to our friends in the community for all their support. Y3 and Y4 had a brilliant time with the Ubuntu Choir last spring, an experience organised by Churches Together. Our pupils have been taking part in projects such as 'Singfest', where they

learned sea shanties, and the Maltings led 'Berwick Shines Light Up the Skies' initiative. We're proud of the opportunities we offer our pupils to be 'Courageous Advocates' and how well they represent us. Our Mini Police collaboration with Northumbria Police is ongoing and is now into its seventh year, with a new cohort each September, and Young Leaders Award, Picture News and fundraising events continue to inspire pupils to learn about the world around them and their role within it.

Our new primary status means we have welcomed a new Y5 teacher, Mrs Kerry Guerin, who has settled in well since joining us in September. Kerry's bagpipe playing was a boost to this year's Burns' Night celebration, and we look forward to making the most of her musical talent in the years to come!

There have been changes also to our Governing Body following the retirement of long serving governors Caroline Wilson and Richard Keech, and the relocation of Rev Diana MacNaughton. We wish them all well and thank them for their service.

Nicholas Shaw
Headteacher
Holy Trinity CE Primary School
February 2026

Annual Report: Berwick St Mary's CE Primary & Tweed Special School

The last 12 months has been a very exciting time at St Mary's with the expansion of the school to become a primary setting and the opening of The Tweed Special School. The integrated model of mainstream and specialist provision is a new concept for Northumberland designed to meet the growing SEND needs within our community, whilst allowing children to remain in their locality with a fully inclusive and adaptable learning environment. St Mary's was very honoured to be given the privilege to pilot this approach, and despite the many challenges we have faced during the building process, we are delighted with the end result, which has given our community a school fit for the future.

The transitional phase for both the primary and special school has been without doubt a challenge, not least in our determination to remain open fully to all our pupils despite working within a live building site. However, as we come to the end of the process, yet again the resilience, commitment and endeavour of the staff and children has shone out, and I am proud to say despite the challenges faced we come out of the process stronger and ready for whatever comes next.

The children have enjoyed a year of learning which even with all the building work has not diminished. Working with charities local and national, they have shown great character and resilience achieving their aims of supporting those less fortunate than themselves. The highlight for Year 5 was undoubtedly their meeting with David Smith MP, who described the encounter more challenging than sitting in front of a parliamentary committee, but as a result he agreed to table a parliamentary question in relation to supporting educational entitlement for children in areas of conflict.

We have enjoyed visits across the north east and borders from Newcastle to Edinburgh, but have also welcomed many visitors including Mad Scientists, Archaeologists, Sports Persons, to name but a few. However, our favourite visitor is without a shadow of doubt Fr Lee, who has seamlessly integrated into the St Mary's family, delivering worship in school and at church, as well as taking part in many of special events in school such as the Family Fun and the School Nativity.

As the school grows so has our staff body, with several new members joining us this year to support the increase in students. From new apprentices to more experienced staff, all have added to the strength of our team and more importantly added real quality to our curriculum and pastoral offer. Several members of the team continue to support other settings, sharing good practice and delivering school support.

If you would like to know more about any aspect of our school or arrange a visit please feel free to drop me a line.

Gary Hilton, Executive head teacher - The Tweed Learning Federation

Welcomers' report for 2025

An estimated 4,000 visitors passed through the church in 2025, mostly visitors from GB and many countries abroad, come because of the historical interest. A few come for quiet contemplation or to light a candle. The welcoming season goes from Easter until the end of September.

Visitors clearly appreciate the church being open between morning and evening prayer. Some have mistaken St Andrews for ours and wondered why it wasn't open!

Welcomers will be in the church Monday to Saturday inclusive, 2 hours every morning and 2 hours every afternoon. We have been advised by our Safeguarding Advisor, Joyce Currie, that ideally two welcomers should be present for each slot. This has not been easy and attempts to recruit more welcomers have been difficult.

For the coming season, we have instituted a signing in sheet, to be held on the right-hand table at the back of the church with the readings' sheet.

We are planning a new area for welcoming material on a dedicated table to the left of the main door into the church.

We have a number of documents to give out to welcomers:

- The blue printed leaflets with aspects of the history + Large print laminated version.
- A brief history of the church
- Guidelines for 'welcomers'
- Printouts which can be given to visitors 'Where to find things'

We also ask them to read our Lone Working policy, and to read and sign that they have read the Church and the CofE E Safeguarding policies.

We have recently signed up to the Church of England 'Pilgrim Places', and leaflets and cards will be displayed on the Welcoming table.

Helen Mason

Worship

It feels slightly odd to be writing a business report on such a fundamental aspect of our life together as a congregation, indeed the 'chief purpose' of humanity according to the Shorter Westminster Catechism. In a sense I can only report on our public worship, which, hopefully, feeds your own private worship.

The regular pattern of worship that was in place when I arrived has largely been maintained:

Sundays

8:30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
10:00am	Parish Eucharist
6:00pm	Sung Holy Communion according to the BCP (First Sunday)
6:00pm	Choral Evensong or Sung Evening Prayer

Weekdays

8:30am	Morning Prayer Monday to Saturday
5:00pm	Evening Prayer Monday to Thursday, Saturday
10:00am	Holy Communion (BCP) Thursdays

The one change to this pattern is the introduction of the Sung Holy Communion according to the BCP on the first Sunday evening of the month, to replace Evensong with Holy Communion.

Our seasonal approach to worship has been strengthened and deepened, marking Feast days, embedding the All-Souls' service, Advent Carols and introducing a Quiet Christmas service. The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was moved to the Sunday before Christmas, with no huge impact, and the Crib service and Midnight Mass saw larger congregations.

We hosted a plethora of special services that included the whole community and beyond: the 80th Anniversary of VE Day, the 300th Anniversary of Holy Trinity school, the 375th Anniversary of the Coldstream Guards, VJ Day memorial service at the War memorial, Remembrance Day Civic Service, and the Lord Lieutenant's Carol Service for Young People.

Our schools have become part of our worshipping life, holding services in church for Easter and Christmas, including Christingle, and supporting the Harvest Festival, which this year we held as a Service of the Word.

Worship is a fundamental aspect of who we are as Berwick Parish Church of Holy Trinity and St Mary's. Historically the format or style of worship has varied tremendously from when the church was built along with its furniture and layout. The PCC is keen to ensure that our services are lifegiving and accessible, and so there will be conversations in the coming around how we worship, our orders of service and our patterns of worship, but we have a good foundation to build on.

My thanks go to our Readers Anne Horne and Sheena Hewitt and to the retired clergy who support us all and put up with my rota malfunctions.

Fr Lee Taylor
Vicar