



St Martin's Church – APCM Reports

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Review of the Year 2024-25– Minister's Report:

Revd Jenny Mayo (Incumbent)

Since our last APCM we have seen much change as a church and have continued to focus on building our worshipping community, serving the local community, offering a warm and friendly welcome, and seeking to deepen our faith in Jesus.

Sunday services

Our Sunday Services have been gradually seeing a decrease in regular attendance, which is a worrying trend currently concerning the leadership team and the PCC. We have been saddened by the deaths of cherished church members and are faced with an aging volunteer base. As such we are keen to celebrate with much gratitude the faithful congregation who have served St Martin's with commitment over many years. We're also keen and hopeful of seeing some 'green shoots' of the Kingdom breaking through. To that end we've listen to feedback about the 10am service (always gratefully received!) and have developed a new pattern of worship. After much planning and prep we have now started two new service styles on a second and fourth Sunday morning, looking to complement the well-established messy church and the seasonal messy breakfast, as well as draw in new families from our 'one off' services, Baby and Toddler group, and other areas. Whole Church Worship and Whole Church Communion will hopefully work well alongside the more traditional and formal communion services. Please keep praying, supporting and inviting!

A massive thank you to Richard and to our music group, all those who facilitate worship, and those who are committed to shaping our sung worship. Thank you to the Messy Church volunteers, you're all stars. Thank you to everyone who is committed to attending church each week, and a big thank you to those who facilitate and lead, preach and coordinate. Thank you to all those on rotas for serving, sides person, reading and praying. All your efforts are seen and very much appreciated. A particular thank you to Diane who sorts out the rotas, a tricky thing that she does with grace and patience. We're in real need of more people to volunteer for the Sunday rotas, please chat with me or Diane if you can help. Our BCP services continue to hold steady. Our prayer and praise services have embraced a slightly updated time and format and is reaching slightly more people than before.

Midweek services

Our Thursday service is also seeing a gradual increase in attendance and is blessed by a wide range of preachers who do an amazing job. Thank you to Julie who faithfully sets up and tidies away, and to all who help facilitate the worship.

Homegroups

Homegroups continue to meet throughout the week, if you would like to join one, please have a chat with me.

Children and Families work

A massive thank you to Lindsey for running junior Church, messy church and baby and toddlers. We are looking forward to hosting the 'Delve into Youth' and very much hope it is the beginning of establishing a youth group to compliment the youth provision at the URC, please be praying! A big thank you to the whole baby and toddler group team. Have a look at Lindsey's report for a fuller picture of the children and families work and be encouraged by the exciting things that are happening.

We also are in regular contact with Yew Tree Primary school and Park Hall academy, we offer assemblies for Bluecoat academy, and we are looking to establish a CU lunchtime club at Queen Mary's Grammar in the next six months.

Hall hire

Our halls are very busy and rented regularly, there are many different community groups that use our halls both regularly and for one-off events. Izzy continues to be absolutely amazing in her role as coordinator, a massive thank you to her.

Financial

Thanks to your generosity and faithfulness, and to the finance team's steady management, we have managed to break even this year and have an (almost) balanced budget for the coming year. To that end we are beginning a fundraising group to oversee and coordinate fundraising efforts, with the hope that we will be able to fill in the gap. We will also be having another gift day for the children and family's fund. Huge thanks are due to the Davidsons, Dorothy, Martin, David and Jacky and all the finance team.

Community

We said goodbye to beloved members of our church family as they took their final journeys into Jesus' kingdom, and we still feel the loss of them here in our family. We've also facilitated funerals for people of our parish, as well as offered a well-attended bereavement group – a big thank you to Gill, Chris and Penny who coordinate and lead it. Thank you to Julie and Diane who have helped us serve our community by gathering food and products for the food bank. Thank you to all those involved in pastoral care, and we were blessed by the commissioning of the new Pastoral Coordinators, Penny and Colin, who will be overseeing the coordination of our pastoral care efforts, a big thank you to them. Judith M is the legend who remembers when everyone's birthday is and a massive thank you to Chris R and all those who facilitate and help with outreach and prayer walking. A big thank you to Jane, Helen and the team for organising and running our community café, it's amazing to offer this facility to our community, which is now also known as a Place of Warm Welcome. You're all amazing! It's been wonderful to see the Daffodil's community garden grow and flourish, congratulations to Lesley and the whole team. The Summer Community Celebration was once more a roaring success and we are really looking forward to the Wheelbarrow Garden Festival. There have been concerts and gigs for fundraising and fun, a massive well done to all!

Fabric

Thank you to all those who help with the maintenance and keeping the church looking lovely, particularly to Dorothy, to Carl P, Jacky and Martin and Sue, and Neil – you are complete stars!

Church Officers

A very big thank you to Jenny Paxton for doing such an amazing job as PCC Secretary and a big thank you to the outgoing PCC members. Thank you to all those who hold an official office in the church, keep up the good work! Two particular mentions this year – Thank you to Dorothy for doing an outstanding job as Church Warden. It's really not easy to do without a warden mate, could that be you? Please have a think. And thank you to Susan M for her service as safeguarding officer. We are committed to being a safe church for all and fostering a community culture where we are all responsible for the safeguarding of each other – especially the vulnerable. This year that has been even more important in light of the revelations in the national church and will continue to be very important as we move forward. Thank you to Susan, and to you all, for making sure our church family is a safe and friendly place to be a member of.

Staff, licensed people, and volunteers

Thank you to all those who creatively and beautifully prepare our flowers, you make such a huge difference to our worship space. Thank you to all those who lead us in worship with such enthusiasm and dedication, and a massive thank you to our curate Sue and to our lay ministers Margaret and Penny for all of their hard work and faithful service, and to everyone who helps lead and shape our worship. A massive thank you to Sue Holmes for preparing our weekly newsletter, and to Sue D for making such beautiful posters and leaflets and getting them up into the very old and rickety notice boards. Thank you to Colin T for working so hard on our new website and social media platforms. Thank you to Jon L who has taken over the role of Health and Safety Officer, as well as helping with the sound and other tech things so marvellously. There are so many who do so much, often without notice or praise or reward – without your quiet and committed service St Martin's wouldn't exist. Thank you.

Special services

This year we've enjoyed a full to bursting Christingle and Christmas services – including a Messy Breakfast before a very well attended Whole Church Scratch Nativity, as well as an increase in attendance for our candlelit carol service. We welcomed hundreds of adults, children and young people to our Light Party and we celebrated Safeguarding Sunday again, a great opportunity to take to heart the responsibility we all share for making our church a safe place. Our Pet Service is now a fun and established annual event, as is the uniformed groups doing an amazing job leading our Toy Service.

Courses

This year we've run the Start Course, met during Advent for Christmas TV specials, watched the latest series of the Chosen together and used the music of Hamilton to help us in our Lenten reflections. We also hosted the Diocesan Whole Church Worship training event.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year we will be saying a fond and sad goodbye to our lovely curate Sue as her curacy comes to an end. She has been such a blessing to us and we wish her all the very best. please be continuing to pray for Sue as she takes up new responsibilities in this next step of commitment to her vocation and discipleship. This year we also hope to expand our community outreach work, offer candidates for confirmation, see an increase in weekly regular attendance to worship and refine our vision and identity as a church.

My prayer for St Martin's in 2025 and beyond is that we will find new and imaginative ways to reach out to our neighbours in service and love, whilst speaking about the sure and certain hope we've found in Jesus. I pray that by working together we may see St Martin's grow and flourish and see Jesus' Kingdom come in our corner of Walsall. In the power of the Lord Jesus, I pray that we may all grasp the height and breadth and depth of God's love for us as we continue to minister together in His name and for His glory. May God's blessing be with you all, this year and always.

St Martin's Walsall – Treasurers Report 2024:

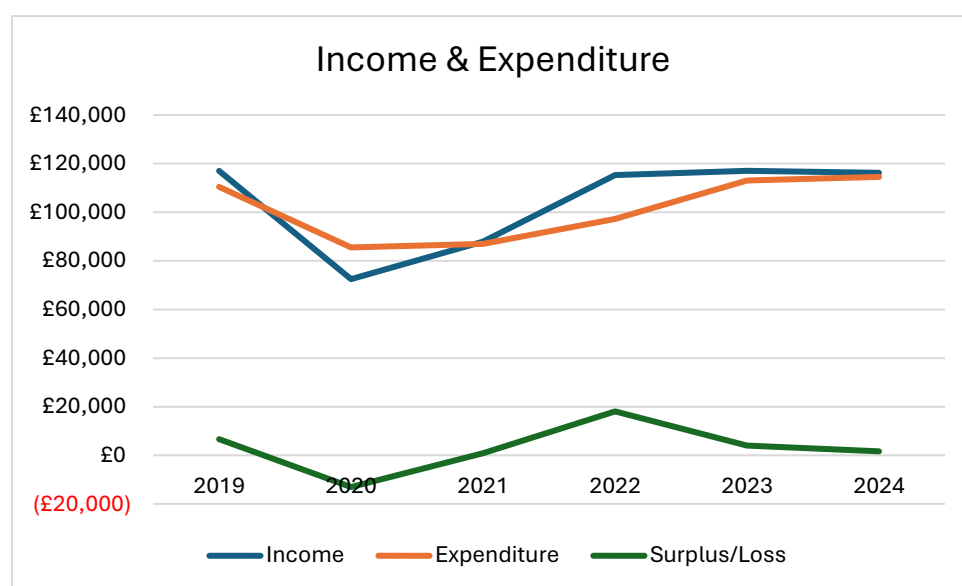
Chris Davidson

Summary

In 2024 St Martin's had a surplus of **£1,695**. At the start of the year we budgeted for a loss of £5,300 so the end result is much better than expected.

The table and graphs below show income and expenditure for the last six years. There was a significant recovery in both income and expenditure in 2021-23 following the COVID pandemic but this has now levelled off.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Income	£116,238	£117,034	£115,320	£87,857	£72,468	£117,022
Expenditure	£114,542	£113,012	£97,258	£87,010	£85,523	£110,434
Surplus/Loss	£1,695	£4,023	£18,062	£847	-£13,055	£6,588



Throughout 2024 we have been striving to minimise costs and raise funds prior to any planned expenditure.

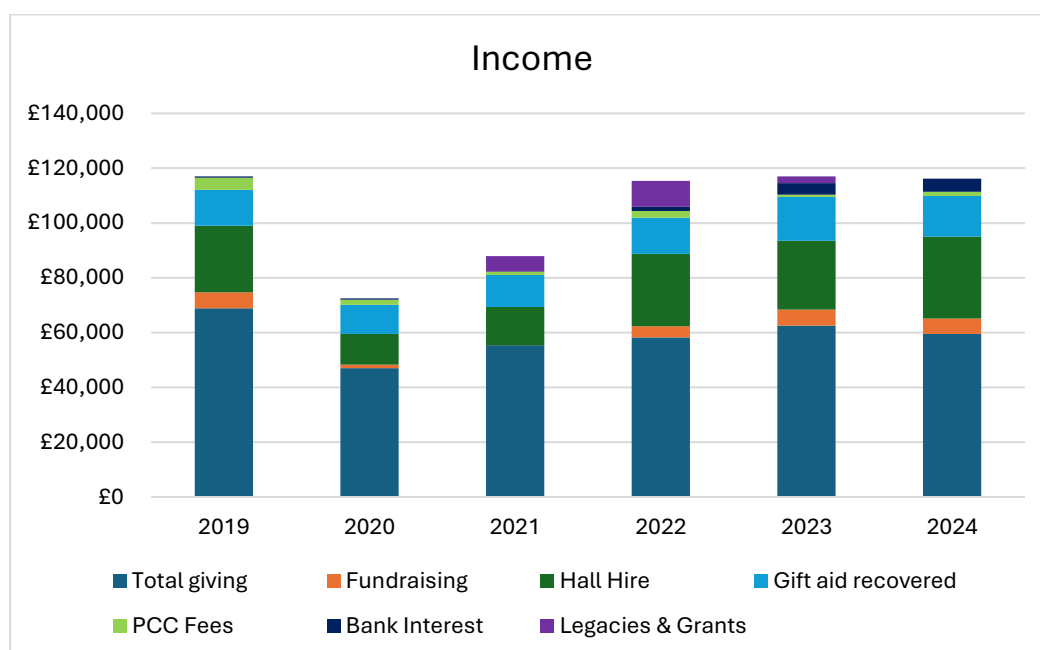
The major items of income and expenditure were:

Income

Total income at **£116,238** was slightly less than 2023. A drop in income from regular giving and gift aid was offset by an increase in income from hall hire.

- Regular giving by bank, envelopes and plate collections dropped by £1,900 from **£53,361** in 2023 to **£51,460** in 2024.
- Tax recoverable on Gift Aid dropped by £1,000 from **£16,051** in 2023 to **£15,022** in 2024.
- Hall hire income rose by £5,102 from **£24,449** in 2023 to **£29,551** in 2024.

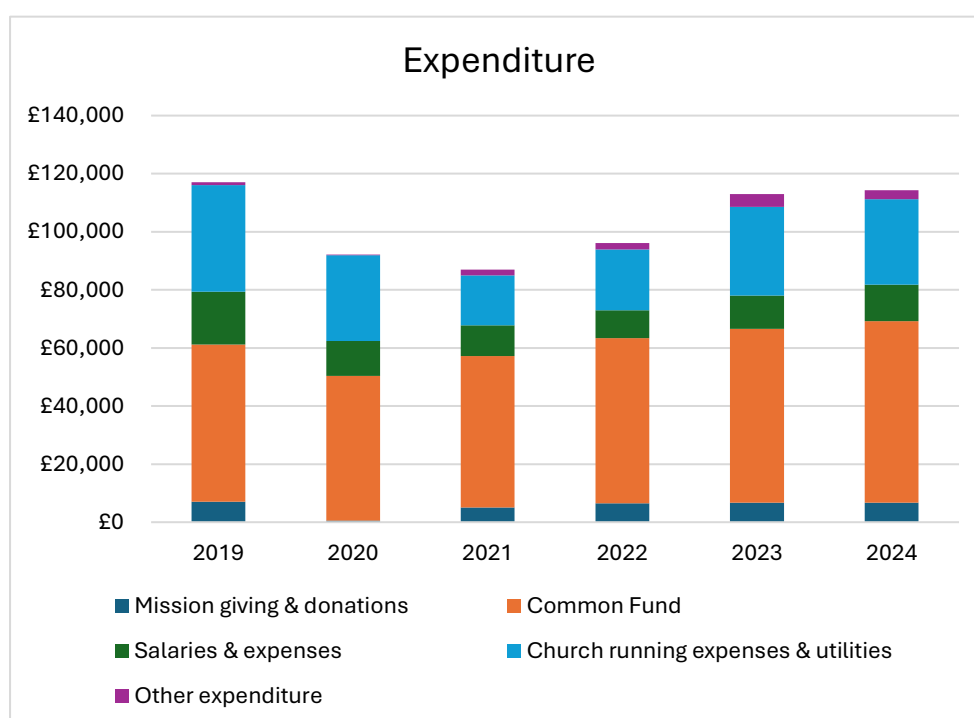
- We continued to benefit from relatively high interest rates, receiving **£4,854** interest in 2024.



Expenditure

Total expenditure at **£114,542** was slightly higher than 2023.

- Common Fund payment rose by £2,640 from **£59,847** in 2023 to **£62,487** in 2024.
- Church running expenses & utilities dropped by £1,140 from **£30,524** in 2023 to **£29,777** in 2024.
- The cost of salaries rose by £1,446 from **£9,502** in 2023 to **£10,948** in 2024.
- Tithe dropped by £234 from **£6,692** in 2023 to **£6,458** in 2024.



Detailed Review by Fund

St Martin's accounts are divided into a number of Funds.

General Fund

This represents the day to day running costs and income of the church.

Income

Income for the year was £112,718, which was £11,726 higher than 2023. Of this £71,962 was from church giving including gift aid and £29,401 was from hall lettings.

Planned giving fell by 3.5% in 2024 and there has been a corresponding decrease in the tax we can claim back on Gift Aid. We held a Gift Day in 2024 to raise funds to replace the church boiler and enhance the AV system in church. This raised £6,817, of which have we spent £3,990 on the boiler so still we have £2,827 sitting in the General Fund to be used for the upgrade of the AV equipment.

Hall hire income was up by 20%, reflecting the good work that our new Hall Hire Co-ordinator is doing.

We did not receive any legacies or grants for the General Fund in 2024.

Income from Wedding & Funerals was £1,426 in 2024 compared to £826 in 2023 – significantly higher.

Interest on savings was £4,854 which is 17% more than 2023. This is due to high interest rates and having more savings on which to earn interest. For 2024 we have reverted to assigning all interest to the General fund, having split the interest between funds in 2023.

Expenditure

Expenditure was £104,648 – 3% higher than 2023 (£101,700). The bulk of this was Common Fund at £62,487 and this was paid in full.

The cost of Utilities in 2024 was £8,488 which was slightly lower than 2023 (£8,913). We are partly through a fixed price Gas and electricity supply contract so expenditure should remain stable until September 2026.

St. Martin's has continued its policy to tithe 10% of its giving to various charities through Mission Giving, and the total for this was £6,458.

Other significant items of expenditure were Co-ordinator of Music & Worship salary (£3,480), Church Insurance (£1,664), Church Repair & Maintenance (£2,802), Church Cleaning & Materials (£2,644), Grounds Maintenance (£1,460).

The five-yearly buildings inspection (Quinquennial Inspection) took place in 2024. The inspection cost £954 but no major problems were found so there was no requirement to use reserves for significant repairs.

Excluding the gift day money which is set aside for the AV equipment upgrade in 2025, the General Fund still had a surplus of £5,000 in 2024.

Designated Funds

Designated funds are funds where money is set aside by the PCC for a specific purpose.

Baby & Toddler Group – The income generated from this group is set aside and used to fund its costs. Just before the end of the year the balance of this fund was over £500, so in accordance with a rule previously agreed by the PCC, £1000 was transferred into the Children & Family Worker fund. The Baby & Toddler Group continues to be very popular and generated net income of £753 in 2024.

Major Maintenance – This is a fund set aside for large projects that arise, for example roof repairs. There was no requirement to use this fund in 2024 so the balance remains unchanged at £36,518.

Hardship Fund – There were payments of £235 from this fund in 2024. There was no money left in the fund at year end, so the PCC agreed to transfer £220 from the General fund into it for 2025.

Café Non-Food – This is a fund from which equipment used by the café can be purchased. It was created following a donation in 2021. There was no expenditure from the fund in 2024 so the balance remains at £163.

Café Refreshments – This fund was created following the re-opening of the café in May 2022. This money comes from donations received at our Thursday café, and refreshments are purchased out of it. The net income was £759. Excess money is periodically transferred to the Building for the Future fund after agreement by the PCC. £2000 was transferred in 2024. The balance of the fund is £46.

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds represent money which is given for a specific purpose and can only be used for that purpose.

Building For The Future – This is the Repair & Maintenance Fabric Fund which is used for day-to-day expenses over £1,000. There was no expenditure from the fund in 2024 and after taking into account the transfer from the Café Refreshments fund and depreciation, the balance was £14,504 at year end.

Children & Family – Funds are spent on the salary and resources used by the Children & Families Worker. Expenditure was £8,153. Income was £1,395 which came from donations and a fund raising concert. We have sufficient money in the fund to cover costs until mid 2026 but we are now fund raising to cover costs up to the end of 2027.

Defibrillator – Funds set aside for Defibrillator maintenance. There was no income or expenditure to this fund in 2024 and the balance is £137. This money will fund replacement pads over the next three years.

Outlook for 2025

General Outlook

The budget for 2025 is:

Income: £111,655

Expenditure: £117,287

Loss: £5,633

Although a loss is anticipated, this is largely due to using the Children & Families Worker reserves and spending money that we have previously raised.

Income

We anticipate that income from our regular sources such as planned giving, Café and Baby & Toddler will continue at its current level. The budget income for regular giving including gift aid is £63,350.

We have increased our hall hire charges by 1.7% for 2025 so anticipate higher income than in 2024. The budget is £30,900.

We have budgeted for a gift day in 2025 to raise funds for the Children & Families worker fund and we will also be applying grants for this fund, although these may not be received until 2026.

Expenditure

Common Fund

The Common Fund request for 2025 is £65,792 - this is 5% (£3,133) more than in 2024. We are four years into a five year escalator that will see the request increase by 5% per year until 2027.

The payment by St Martin's for the next few years is forecast to be as follows:

- 2026 £69,082 (+5%)
- 2027 £71,845 (+4%)
- 2028 £73,282 (+2%)

The PCC will continue to regularly review the financial position and ensure that we have a balance on free reserves that will cover several months payments. The budget assumes that we will be able to pay the Common Fund in full but we will keep this under review through the year.

Utilities

We are on a three year fixed price contract for Gas & Electricity until September 2026, so in 2025 we anticipate a similar cost to 2024 of around £8,400. Notices are up in the halls reminding our hall users to turn off the heat and light before they leave.

Employees

The PCC agreed payment increases for the Children & Families Worker and Co-Ordinator of Music & Worship in line with Living Wage increases. The cost for 2025 will be £11,570.

Tithe

We will continue to donate 10% of our regular giving (including Gift Aid) to nominated charities. The cost for 2025 will be around £6,350.

Finance Team

The Finance team have been hard at work through the year to keep the money flowing. The people involved are:

- Dorothy Doody: Bookkeeping and Payments
- Martin King: Stewardship and Gift Aid management
- Sue Cooper: Payroll
- Chris/Sue Davidson: Management of hall hire payments, management of payments for funerals/weddings, preparation of monthly and year-end accounts, budgeting, fundraising.
- Jenny Paxton: Bank liaison
- David and Jacky Lynam: Banking

The Treasurer would like to thank all the members of the Finance Team for their continued support in 2024.

Music and Worship Coordinator's Report – May 2025:

Richard Brinck-Johnsen

I have now been in post for more than two years and remain extremely grateful for the continued support I have received from the whole church. In particular, I once again express thanks to Rev Jenny without whose constant encouragement I would not be able to fulfil this role and also for supporting my vocational pursuits. Thanks, must also be expressed to Rev Sue for all her hard work leading services over the last couple of years as she nears the end of her curacy, she will be missed.

Thanks as always are due to the faithful members of our music group, especially the singers, several of whom are in church almost every Sunday without fail. Your loyalty and continued support does not go unnoticed. Thanks also due to Jon Leloup for your regular support with sound and tech and on occasions to David Leloup.

Thanks again also due to Peter and Penny Wheble. It makes a big difference to our worship that we are able have live instrumental accompaniment for so many of our services and we recognise that this involves sacrifice and effort on both your parts. Thank you for the occasions when you both look after services in my absence so that I can enjoy my entitlement to occasional Sundays off!

Once again, there have been many highlights over the last twelve months. These have included our continued partnership with Andrew Clayton at St Matthew's and other members of the Walsall church musician's group with whom we have hosted the regular social gathering on several occasions over the last year including earlier this week. In June, we participated in a Retro praise service at Broadway URC and in July, we were delighted to welcome the St Matthew's community choir who performed a concert for us. In September, it was a joy to host for the first time the North Birmingham Suzuki school for an extremely well received fundraiser concert despite it being an exceptionally wet night.

In December, we were delighted to welcome back to Christmas choir to sing at our candlelit carol service for the second consecutive year. Sadly, due to fewer singers from other churches being available which made the travel costs to London unfeasible, we were not able to participate in this year's Prom Praise.

The only upside was that this did reduce the stress of having to arrange additional rehearsals during the busy Easter period. Prom Praise in 2026 is not taking place until June so we will reconsider this depending on how much interest there is.

In October, we were delighted to welcome Engage Worship to St Martin's to lead a workshop which was attended by members of several local churches and was extremely well received. As I was unable to attend, I later attended an online version of the same workshop which was extremely useful. Subsequently, we soft launched our new whole church worship services with our messy nativity service the Sunday before Christmas before beginning our new regular monthly services in January which are now on the second Sunday on each month. We are listening to feedback and are attempting to ensure that there are songs, hymns and other aspects of the service that will appeal to all of the congregation. The attendance of these services is proving to be encouraging. We have also introduced Whole Church Communion which is a slightly more relaxed version of our regular communion service which still has some formal liturgy but a slightly shorter service format overall which also seems to be well received. We are now in our second year of the new style Prayer and Praise service which takes place on the first Sunday of each month. Thanks to all those who have helped lead these over the last

year, hopefully in the coming months we can use these as an opportunity to explore some new music as well as other ideas.

In February, we also hosted the monthly Gathered service on behalf of the Lichfield diocese LGBTQ+ chaplaincy for which we led the worship, and we look forward to continuing to be involved with these in the coming months.

We recognise that some congregants still prefer the more traditional service model which we are still using on at least two Sundays of every month as well as for the Thursday morning services. We also still have the monthly BCP service. However, whilst I am grateful that most of the feedback I receive personally about our worship and song and hymn choices is overwhelmingly positive. However, I also welcome constructive criticism and am always looking to make improvements that will hopefully ensure our future as a worshipping community.

Since September I have also been participating in the diocese run Chad Foundations programme, which is aimed to encourage those pursuing vocational studies. At the time of writing this report I am about to submit my application to go forward to the Diocesan Advisory Panel, who will help discern if I am ready to go forward towards training to become a licensed lay minister or reader. If I am successful, I will begin part time training in September, which will obviously have some bearing on how I continue to serve as Coordinator of Music and Worship. I thank you all again for all the support that I received that has helped me reach this point and ask for your continued prayers as I await to see where my vocation leads and what this will mean for all of us as a church.

Whatever happens I remain grateful for the continued privilege to live in this parish and serve as part of St Martin's Church.

God bless you all.

Richard Brinck-Johnsen

Coordinator of Music and Worship

May 2025

St Martin's Church Electoral Roll Report 2025:

Colin Townsend

The 2025 Electoral Roll stands at 99 members, reflecting a -7.48% decrease from 2019, when membership was 107. While this decline might appear concerning at first glance, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic must be taken into account. Many churches across the country faced disruptions in attendance and membership during this period, and in comparison, St Martin's figures remain stable, demonstrating resilience within the congregation.

Demographics & Membership Changes

Average Age: 66.6 years (based on those who provided their date of birth).

Gender Distribution: 34 male, 65 female.

Parish Residency: 66 members live within the parish, while 33 reside outside.

Children Under 16: 7 children currently listed, though this number does not fully reflect the engagement of young families in the church, especially with Messy Church.

Comparison to 2019

Departed Members: 40 people have left or passed away since 2019.

New Members: 31 individuals have joined since 2019, with an average age of 58.

Considerations & Opportunities

The figures for 2025 do not fully represent the scope of St Martin's community engagement. A significant number of regular attendees have not formally enrolled, which skews the membership numbers downward. If all regular worshippers and participants had joined, the roll could more realistically reflect 120 to 130 members.

A particularly important opportunity lies within Messy Church, where many families actively participate but have not formally enrolled. It is unclear how many parents attending Messy Church are baptised, members of other churches, or whether St Martin's is their only church. Regardless, this ministry presents significant potential for growth. If these families were to enrol, both membership numbers and child engagement would be far higher.

This aligns with current trends in church growth, particularly the rise of faith engagement among Generation Z, who are quietly leading a spiritual revival. For St Martin's to ensure its future vitality, it will be essential to tap into this movement, embracing new and creative ways to engage younger generations in faith and church community life.

Next Steps

Despite numerical shifts, St Martin's remains a strong, welcoming, and vibrant congregation. The next steps could include encouraging formal enrolment among regular attendees and Messy Church families, fostering deeper engagement, and intentionally connecting with younger generations to ensure long-term stability and growth.

This report highlights both stability and opportunities, reaffirming that St Martin's has a firm foundation but also space for considerable expansion. With a renewed focus on inclusivity and outreach, the church can continue flourishing, making faith accessible to more people in meaningful ways.

Colin Townsend

May 2025.

Café Report for APCM May 2025:

Jane Quinn and Helen Murray

The Community Café continues to open weekly on a Thursday morning.

We have dedicated leaders who, in their turn, lead cafe once every four weeks. The leaders are ably assisted by wonderful teams of volunteers.

The leaders and volunteers set up café from about 8.45am in readiness to open by 10.00am.

We always have a few 'early birds' but most of our customers appear from 10.30am onwards when the service has finished in church. It is always a lively atmosphere in the hall with much talking and fellowship.

We have a jigsaw out at the far end of the hall which is popular with a few people.

We have a box of games, puzzle books, colouring books etc which is also popular. with one or two.

We provide drinks plus toast and fruit bread the latter being very popular indeed.

Debra Mayo always provides some token/gift on 'special days' such as Valentines Day, Mothering Sunday, Easter, Father's Day, Christmas and these are always well received.

We will always welcome more volunteers even on an occasional basis.

In June we have organised a CPR and use of defibrillator course for all volunteers and members of St Martin's congregation.

We celebrated VE Day on Thursday 8th May taking us back to the 1940's and also respecting the two-minute silence.

We continue to be a Place of Welcome to everyone who comes through the door of St Martin's church.

Jane Quinn and Helen Murray

May 2025

Children & Families Worker Report - May 2025:

Lindsey Taylor-Thornley

Babies and Toddlers is going well, we have welcomed several new families since over the last few months. We currently have 46 names on our register which is absolutely amazing but if they all turn up at the same time could prove to be overcrowded and overwhelming to some of the quieter individuals. We will lose about 6 children due to starting School and nursery in July. However, I am making plans to start a second playgroup plus an additional group for 0-12 months from September.

We are now able to provide two craft stations, due to the help of staff like Caroline and Helen. This tends to be based on a theme, 1 using art supplies and the other often being food related. Caroline helps set up the craft and I tend to oversee the food table due to allergies and religious beliefs. At Easter we made Easter baskets, toilet roll sheep, flags for VE day and this week we have a dinosaur theme.

April's Messy Church saw over 106 people attending the Messy breakfast, crafts and service after. This seems to be a popular way to attract new families, and we will look at repeating this format for Father's Day on 15th June.

All Church worship and Junior Church sees on average 5 children attending, I announce at the end of each Baby and Toddler and Messy Church session when the next one is and encourage others to attend.

The Youth group mentioned in my last report is now flying solo as Delves have returned to their original building. The new name is **St Martin's Youth**. Our first session welcomed 14 youths and saw us walking to the arboretum, using the facilities, sharing snacks and returning back to church. Feedback from existing parents is extremely positive with all children enjoying the sessions we have put on so far.

I still have meetings to arrange with Walsall college in terms of seeing if they can support our youth or Family fun days during the summer holidays. The initial meeting with Brian and a college representative went well and they are keen to try and support us.

Funday Friday during the Easter holidays was enjoyed by 38 children and adults. I am drawing up ideas to run sessions during the summer holidays and applying for HAF funding to further develop this within the wider community.

More news next month about exciting opportunities to further develop the community and family work—WATCH THIS SPACE.

As always, I cannot do any of these events without the help and support of our regular helpers Judith, Caroline, Karen, Helen, Dorothy, Sue P, Sue D, Chris D, Rosie D, Diane, Brian, Iain and Pat. Many of which gave up their Fridays and Sundays to help and support. Any further offer of support or help are always welcome.

Thank you as always for all the support and prayers.

Lindsey Taylor-Thornley xx

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator's Report May 2025:

Colin McIlwaine

It is my privilege and responsibility to have been appointed to work alongside Penny Wheble in co-ordinating the pastoral care of the congregation. I have now had the opportunity to become involved in services at care homes and in distributing home communion to those who are unable to attend church. I will also be taking my guitar to one of the local care homes to give a short concert for the residents and hope to develop this aspect of my involvement with other care homes in the area.

Within our congregation, I would encourage anyone who wants to discuss a pastoral matter to feel free to chat to me informally and confidentially and as already mentioned in Penny's report, it is impossible to over emphasise the importance of prayer. I am always happy to pray for or with anyone on request and I will appreciate your prayers for us in our pastoral role.

Colin McIlwaine.

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator.

Pastoral Care & Bereavement Group Report May 2025:

Penny Wheble

Following the appointment of Colin McIlwaine and myself as Pastoral Care Co-ordinators, I am delighted to tell you what we have been up to so far this year.

Part of pastoral care has been the sending out of prayer request emails. Since the beginning of January 2025, I have sent out 36 emails to church members for various pastoral needs, some of which have had more than one request, and further ones which are updates. It would be good if those being prayed for could let us know if your prayers have been answered, and how. I believe persistence in prayer is vital, and the power of prayer can never be underestimated.

Prayer Ministry – while I would like to see prayer ministry being an integral part of our services, there are always opportunities to pray with those who are struggling with various issues, whether they be health related, or emotional, or just need God's guidance through the work of the Holy Spirit and more touches of his love.

Nursing and Care Home services – I have been taking services to nursing and care homes for over 9 years now. Initially at Rushall Care Home, where up to 15 residents would attend, there would also be opportunities to pray for individuals in their own rooms, pray for those receiving end of life care, and attending those who have just died. It is a privilege to take church in those places to those who cannot get to church in person.

This year I have been invited by 4 additional nursing homes (Bescot Lodge, Pelsall Hall, Anson Court and Woodgreen) to take regular services to their residents where I will take pre-

consecrated Holy Communion. Colin McIlwaine and Reverend Jenny now join me at Bescot Lodge.

Part of the role of Pastoral Care is to look out for those we haven't seen in church for a while or are in hospital. I do acknowledge that there are several people in our congregation who do just that. Many of those people (and they know who they are!) visit representing the church community and as concerned friends. For this, I am very grateful.

Home Communion – at the moment this is taken on a regular basis to 2 people who are unable to attend church. We hope to grow a team of people who would be willing to minister to people in their own homes – those lonely, unwell, just out of hospital or unable to get to church on a regular basis.

Bereavement group – following the conception of the Bereavement Group 13 years ago by the late Reverend Phill Ball, this group has continued to meet monthly to listen and support the bereaved, and those living with loss.

While some people come for just a few sessions, there are several that have attended for many years, supporting the more recently bereaved. This is invaluable as they can share their experiences of coping and living with loss.

I appreciate Chris Wall, who has been a Facilitator since the group was begun. She always makes people feel at home and comfortable. This is a non-judgemental group, and confidentiality is paramount. More recently, Yvonne Kent joined the group as a helper. Where people want to speak in private instead of in front of the group, one of the team will be available to listen.

Currently, we have 10 to 12 people that come to the group which provides a safe space to air their hopes and fears about living alone following a loss. We would like to see more people join us, and through personal and Funeral Directors' recommendation, we hope to continue to grow and support those when they are maybe at their most vulnerable.

My recent training refresher courses have included Safeguarding (enhanced), Bereavement Care, Dementia Care, Trauma Informed Care, Funeral Ministry and Dealing with difficult people.

I would appreciate your continued prayers for this ministry.

Thank you.

Penny Wheble

Licensed Lay Reader/ Pastoral Care Co-ordinator

Eco Church Report 2024/25:

Revd Sue Phillips

The eco church team - Dorothy, Jenny P, Richard, Colin T, and Sue P have met to go through the new survey to gain eco church status. Apart from worship, which has come out as silver, the other categories show bronze status. The survey will be finalised and submitted shortly. We can then look at working towards silver award status, but this will mean doing more in-depth reports of our practices and also bringing in new ideas and practices.

As a start the PCC has to produce a vision of how we plan to work more closely with nature and the environment.

We should also look at the charities we give to each month and aim to support an environmental or nature charity in 2026.

Hopefully it will not take long to hear back about the bronze award. If anyone would like to be part of the eco church group, please let Rev Jenny or one of the members know.

Safeguarding Report May 2025:

Susan McIlwaine

Another year in the life of St Martin's has passed and safeguarding training continues on a rolling programme.

We at St Martin's, believe that safeguarding is important for everyone, and I am pleased to say that we currently have a lot of people who have undertaken training. I & Rev Jenny are available to assist with training. I would like to thank Rev Jenny for her help and support.

I am completing my safeguarding training throughout May, and I am also in the process of updating all our records here at St Martin's.

We had our safeguarding Sunday service in Nov 2024. This is an important part of St Martin's services, and we will be having another service later this year.

I want to say a big thank you to all who continue to give their time & support to ensure safeguarding is integral to all we do at St Martin's.

ST MARTIN'S PARISH CHURCH

Annual Church Meeting

Sunday 19th May 2024

Chair: Revd Sue Phillips (SP)

Present: Members of St Martin's Parish Church in Church

1. The Revd Jenny Mayo welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with prayer.
2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Jackie & David Lynam, Stuart Smith, Ann Timms, Debra & Gary Mayo, Dan & David Leloup
3. **MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 21st May 2023:** Nothing raised, minutes agreed as a true record.
4. **MATTERS ARISING:** There were no matters arising from the minutes.
5. **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** There were no notifications of any other business.
6. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Rev Jenny Mayo (JM) mentioned that her report was part of the financial report that has been made available on the website and in the packs presented to all present. No questions raised.
7. **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT:** JM advised that there was no electoral roll to report on this year.
8. **SAFEGUARDING REPORT:** Susan McIlwaine (SM). The report was included in the paperwork, but SM thanked everyone who has completed the training and JM in particular for helping to deliver the training. St Martin's now has the most people who are safeguarding trained in the diocese.
9. **MUSIC & WORDSHIP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Richard Brink-Johnson (RB-J) The report was included in the paperwork, but RB-J mentioned that he would be applying to complete the Chad course which if accepted, he would be starting in the autumn. He asked for prayers. RB-J gave thanks to all for their continued support.
10. **CHILDREN & FAMILIES WORKER'S REPORT:** Lindsay Taylor-Thornley (LT-T) This report is included in the paperwork. Dorothy Doody and Colin Townsend thanked LTT for her tireless work with the children and families. JM remarked that the Good Friday celebration was attended by over 90 people.

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** The salient points of this report was presented by Chris Davidson (CD) and is included in the paperwork.

12. **ELECTIONS:**

- a. Parish Church Wardens: Dorothy Doody has agreed to continue to serve for another year. She was elected unanimously. Diane Sainsbury (DS) spoke to the congregation about the possibility of having a warden team rather than everything being on one person.
- b. Deputy Church Wardens: Julie Bradshaw & Lesley Bates agreed to continue to serve for another year and were elected unanimously. There is still one vacancy for a Deputy Church Warden.
- c. Deanery Synod Representatives: Colin Townsend was unanimously elected to serve as Deanery Synod Representative. Colin & Susan McIlwaine have stepped down from this position.
- d. St Martin's PCC: Susan McIlwaine, Colin McIlwaine, Peter Wheble, Richard Brink-Johnson, Chris Davidson, Diane Sainsbury, Jackie King, Julie Bradshaw & Jenny Paxton were unanimously elected.
- e. Sidespersons: Judith Matthews, Yvonne Kent, Norman Luckett, Peter Rigby, Liz Dunthorne, Margaret Jones, Jackie Lynam, Maggie Lea, Pat Stokes & Chris Rowe.
- f. Electoral Roll Officer: Colin Townsend was elected unanimously.
- g. Stewardship Secretary: Martin King was elected unanimously.
- h. Independent Examiner: Lichfield Diocese was elected unanimously.
- i. Safeguarding Officer: Susan McIlwaine was elected unanimously.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** none

14. **DATE OF NEXT APCM:** TBA in May 2025

SP closed the meeting at 11.40am with the Grace.

PPC Elected members agreed the following posts immediately following the meeting:

Treasurer: Chris Davidson

Secretary: Jenny Paxton

Standing Committee: To be confirmed

Church Bank Account Signatories: no change from 2023.

The dates for the next PCC meeting: Thurs 6th June 2024