



# Annual Report & Financial Statements

for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

Parochial Church Council  
St Mary the Virgin  
Friston  
Suffolk

## Review of the Year from the Rector

God's church does not run by virtue of individuals, nor by luck or by throwing money at any problems. God's church runs because of a whole team of people who generously give their time, expertise, money, kindness, faith, goodwill, and hope. We pray faithfully and we try to tread where God is already at work, bringing His love and His mission into our community.

As always, I must start by thanking all of our wonderful volunteers, without whom the church wouldn't function - either as a worshipping body, or as a building. Our team of Sacristans, Cleaners, Welcomers, Flower Team, Rota Organisers, Readers, Organists, Friends, people who pray so faithfully, and many others who give of themselves, their time and their resources so freely. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Huge thanks also go to Bryony for spearheading our 'Reclaim the Rain' project, which has resulted in the church having water sources (eco-friendly of course), courtesy of the beautiful floral water butts.

Our dedicated and generous PCC of Caroline, Marie, Chris, Maggie and Jenny do a superb job of supporting the clergy and making certain the church functions as the 'Beacon of Hope' we have set it up to be. Thank you all so very much. Thank you also to our dedicated ministry team, both lay and ordained. Rev'ds Mary and Nicky, our retired priests and Lay Elders are all so generous with their time and themselves, and it is a continued pleasure to minister alongside you.

We are readvertising for the post of Children and Families Worker and pray that the right candidate will step forward and join us here in Alde Sandlings.

My not-so-secret prayer of doubling the number of baptisms we hold each year is still being honoured by God, and it is really exciting that this ministry is growing across the benefice. In Friston we also hold a number of funerals and burials of ashes, and it is such a privilege to be part of people's lives at these important times. In 2025 we have celebrated the liturgical year with gusto, welcoming members of other parishes throughout the year on an ad hoc basis. We are fortunate to be able to offer Communion services at all major feast days and festivals and on such occasions also enjoy welcoming visitors from the village into our worshipping community. As always our fundraising efforts exceed expectation year after year, and great sums are raised for both St

Elizabeth's Hospice and for the church itself. What a huge effort is made by everybody and what an incredible witness to the Glory of God to see the whole village coming together to support these events.

Much has changed in the nearly 4 years since I have joined you as your Rector, and although not all of it has been easy, it is a real joy to look back and see how far we have come together. I feel as though God has really honoured our prayers, faithfulness and passion for Him, for each other and for the Good News of the Gospel, and I am excited to see what He has in store for us over the next season.

As last year, I would like to invite you to please join me in praying for our church, and our parish of Friston; that over the next year we can continually to prayerfully discern God's calling to us, and continue to spread the Good News of the Gospel throughout His kingdom, joyfully loving God and loving each other as He would have us do.

*“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

*Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

*Matthew 22:36-40*

# St Mary the Virgin Annual Report for the year ending 2025

## Administrative Information

St Mary's Church is situated in the village of Friston. It is part of the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and Saxmundham Deanery. It is linked with Knodishall and Buxlow, Aldringham with Thorpe and with Aldeburgh with Hazelwood as part of the Alde Sandlings Benefice.

Current PCC Members, who have served from January 2025 until the date of this report was approved, are:

|                                      |  |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Priest-in-Charge/Rector              | The Revd Sarah du Boulay   | Licensed                                    |
| Curate                               | The Revd Mary Brown  | Ordained                                    |
| Self-Supporting Ministers            | The Revd Nichola Winter<br>The Revd Johanna Mabey                                      |   |
| Representatives on the Deanery Synod | Mrs Christine Ive<br>Ms Marie Szpak  |   |
| Elected Members                      | Ms Margaret Knight<br>Mrs Caroline Spendlove<br>Ms Marie Szpak<br>Mrs Jennifer Stocker | Verger<br>Treasurer<br>Elder/ Safe-guarding |

## Structure, Governance and Management

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body formed by the Church of England. It functions according to the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure 1956 and Church Representation Rules 2020, and it is currently a charity that does not need to register with the Charity Commission.

The PCC is responsible for collaborating with the incumbent to advance the comprehensive mission of the Church in the parish of Friston, encompassing pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical efforts. Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or are elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church representation Rules.

All who are concerned for the future of our church and its role within the community are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll. Individuals might also wish to consider standing for election to the PCC. 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 (and raised!). Currently we have vacancies, including a Secretary. Your involvement in the PCC is crucial for us to continue our mission and support our church community effectively. We welcome anyone who is passionate about making a difference and contributing to the vibrancy of our parish. Whether you have specific skills to offer or are simply enthusiastic about helping out, your presence will be greatly valued. If you are interested in joining the PCC or would like more information, please feel free to speak to any current member.

## Our Clergy and Ministry

We thank Reverend Sarah du Boulay for her dedication and hard work this year. Reverend Sarah, who was installed as Priest in Charge of the Alde Sandlings Benefice in June 2022 and was Licensed as Rector of the Alde Sandlings Benefice on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024, has been instrumental in guiding and leading our church community. Her commitment and leadership have driven our church forward, helping us to grow and thrive.

Our resident Curate, Revd Mary Brown resides at the Rectory in Friston and leads a holy communion service in Friston once a month. As part of her training, Revd Mary has been on a placement in London and gaining further experience of running her own parish. It is likely that she will be moved this summer and be in charge of her own parish/benefice. We all wish her well for her future and hope that she may come back to visit us in Friston at some point.

In managing the four parishes, Revd Sarah has received support from Revd Nicky Winter, who has continued her popular ministry within the Benefice despite health issues. Revd Sarah is also supported by retired clergy in the area.

Our Elder, Marie Szpak, conducts a monthly Service of the Word at Friston. Marie is also a member of our PCC and is responsible for locking and unlocking our church daily, allowing the community and visitors to use it for private prayer, contemplation, and reflection.

## Promoting a Safer Church – Church Safeguarding Policy

We are dedicated to protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults in church activities at both national and local levels. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and an essential part of the church's mission. Clergy, Elders, and PCC members complete safeguarding training as required by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and these have been renewed this year.

Our Parish Statement of Safeguarding, displayed in St Mary's Church porch, aligns with the Church of England and our Diocese's policies. The PCC regularly reviews our safeguarding practices. Marie Szpak oversees Diocesan policy application and will contact the Benefice Safeguarding Officer in Aldeburgh if necessary.

We believe that the PCC has adhered to its duties under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 and the Safeguarding (Code of Practice) Measures of April 2021 regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

## General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Our church community seeks to stay in touch with supporters and residents, including part-time ones. This is crucial for proposed energy projects, event attendance, and keeping everyone informed. We need someone to manage the Church Contact List and send regular updates, adhering to our Privacy Policy. If you can help, please speak to a PCC member.

## Health and Safety

We regularly review our health and safety policies. The PCC has Public Liability cover for events. Fire safety equipment is tested annually. Our insurers perform risk assessments and offer guidance updates.

## Financial Management

The Treasurer executes the financial decisions authorised by the PCC and oversees the financial status throughout the year. There is an annual budget and progress reports are presented at each PCC meeting. Additionally, the Treasurer prepares the annual accounts, which are subject to an independent examination.

## Our Church Website

As a Church of England member, we are listed on AChurchNearYou. To find us, search for 'acny' or 'achurchnearyou.com'. The site updates our monthly services and provides information and history about the church and its building.

## Church Music

Our congregation loves singing during services. We are grateful to Andy Murray, Alan Bullard and

Annabel Brown who play at our services when they can. Alan also leads our choir for our Carol Service in December. We give special thanks to Frasier who travelled from Norfolk just to play for our Christmas Day service! We have a single-console organ, but there is not always an organist available. If you are a piano player willing to learn to play the organ, please get in touch!

## Achievements and Performance

Our annual festival services, including Easter, Harvest, Remembrance, and Christmas, remain popular. Alan Bullard led a choir for our Carol Service, followed by mulled wine and mince pies at the Village Hall—thanks to the PCC members for their warm hospitality. In August, we hosted a celebration after our Patronal Service and invited our community, who give so generously of their time in order to help us fund raise, to join us for a glass of wine and nibbles. We plan to host further events/coffee mornings in 2026 to fulfil our commitment of welcoming our community other than at services. We have already held one coffee morning on a rainy Wednesday morning in January and were delighted with the turnout. Our next one is already planned! We are grateful to our cleaning team and to the team of flower ladies for consistently decorating the church so beautifully throughout the year. We said a big thank you to Margaret Fife who stepped down at the end of the year after many years of supervising the flower rota and we have welcomed Maggie Knight as her replacement.

Many people help care for our church, run fundraising events and help to organise our weekly services. Too many to mention individually but we are grateful to all of them. A glance at our Visitors Book is a heart-warming reminder of how beautiful and appreciated our church and churchyard is.

Once again, we were able to have a full programme of events which enables us to engage with residents of the village and the many who respond by giving tremendous help in both managing these and welcoming visitors. They are the lifeline for our finances and also enable us to raise money for local charities.

Key events were:

- Friston Goes Green in May – our annual plant, cake and a renew and re-use stall which generated over £1000.00 for St Elizabeth Hospice.
- Also in May, together with Friston Parish Council, we commemorated the 80th Anniversary of VE Day on the Green with a short service of prayer and readings. The church bells were rung as part of the National Celebrations and the event included music on the Green concluding with the lighting of the Beacon.
- The Friston Open Gardens in June featured various gardens, and we thank those who participated. We included the church again in our Garden Trail, with villagers creating floral arrangements around the theme ‘Friston through the Decades.’ Visitors’ feedback was once again excellent.

- Classics (Cars and Bikes) on the Green – our annual event celebrated not just by the classic ‘owners’ but the many visitors who come to admire them.
- In September, Mary and Ian Shipman once again participated in the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride event, raising £1400.00 for the charity and our Church.

### Looking Forward!

We are still faced with the devastating effect of so many energy products in and around Friston. Therefore, we continue looking at other ways in which we can encourage our community to use the church for reflection and personal prayer. We hope that our church will remain as a ‘Beacon of Hope’ for our community despite what is going on around us.

### Events:

Plans are already underway for our annual fundraising events – Friston Goes Green (May), Open Gardens (June), Classics (Cars and Bikes) on the Green (July) and the Suffolk Historic Churches Ride and Stride (September).

### Church Maintenance:

- We take pride in our Grade 2\* Listed church. Following our Quinquennial Inspection Report, we are monitoring the condition of the unique wall-decoration in our chancel; its renovation is a major long-term project requiring careful planning and expert advice and workmanship. We are also planning the long-term programme for the non-urgent repairs and maintenance highlighted in the report.
- We are exploring grant applications to make our church accessible for everyone. It has been suggested that the Church could serve as the village's ‘Safe Place’ in case of flooding or other major incidents, which will require toilet facilities.

### Churchyard Maintenance:

## - Liaison with Ground Maintenance contractor to manage the churchyard

With the help of local contractors, we will strive to increase biodiversity and support wildlife in our churchyard. We will again, this summer, ensure that some areas of grass are left uncut to achieve this. The trees surrounding the church carpark will be pollarded

in due course to help with tree management in general and allowing more space in the carpark.

## - New area for Interment of Ashes

The new area for the burial of ashes is in use. Daffodils were planted along the wall last year, so we look forward to seeing those appear. We shall continue to improve and develop this area.

## - Reclaim the Rain

So far, the churchyard has two very attractive rainwater capture products fully planted up. There is to be a third one which will complete the Reclaim the Rain project. These water collection systems should decrease flooding risk and harvest water which can be used to care for the graves.

| ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, FRISTON                        |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|---------------|---------------|
| FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025  |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
| GENERAL (UNRESTRICTED) FUND RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  | <b>2025</b>   | <b>2024</b>   |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  | £             | £             |
| <b>RECEIPTS</b>   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
| Voluntary Receipts:                                       |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | Planned Giving                       |  |  |  |  |  | 8,185         | 11,985        |
|   | Collections at services              |  |  |  |  |  | 521           | 731           |
|   | All other giving/voluntary receipts  |  |  |  |  |  | 3,689         | 2,903         |
|   | Gift Aid recovered                   |  |  |  |  |  | <u>2,134</u>  | <u>2,028</u>  |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  | 14,528        | 17,647        |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | Activities for generating funds      |  |  |  |  |  | 9,220         | 9,378         |
|   | Investment income unrestricted funds |  |  |  |  |  | 2,351         | 2,277         |
|   | Church activities                    |  |  |  |  |  | 410           | 1,748         |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | <b>TOTAL OPERATING RECEIPTS</b>      |  |  |  |  |  | <b>26,509</b> | <b>31,050</b> |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | <b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>                |  |  |  |  |  | <b>26,509</b> | <b>31,050</b> |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
| <b>PAYMENTS</b>   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
| Church Activities   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | Diocesan Parish Share                |  |  |  |  |  | 8,978         | 8,925         |
|   | Church Running Expenses              |  |  |  |  |  | 5,494         | 6,156         |
|   | Cost of organist                     |  |  |  |  |  | 0             | 350           |
|   | Church Repairs and Maintenance       |  |  |  |  |  | 318           | 294           |
|   | Churchyard Maintenance               |  |  |  |  |  | 900           | 2,204         |
|   | Mission Giving and Donations         |  |  |  |  |  | 3,517         | 2,792         |
|   | Other Sundry Items                   |  |  |  |  |  | 283           | 0             |
|   |                                      |  |  |  |  |  |               |               |
|   | <b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>                |  |  |  |  |  | <b>19,490</b> | <b>20,721</b> |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--------------|--|---------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
| <b>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS (DEFICIT)</b>  |  |  |  |  |  | <b>7,019</b> |  | <b>10,329</b> |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
| <b>ADD SURPLUS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS</b>       |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
| <b>ON RESTRICTED FUNDS (SEE OVER) (DEFICIT -£)</b> |  |  |  |  |  | <b>548</b>   |  | <b>530</b>    |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |              |  |               |
| <b>TOTAL EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS</b>      |  |  |  |  |  | <b>7,567</b> |  | <b>10,859</b> |

| <b>ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, FRISTON</b>                       |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025</b> |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
| Restricted Funds - Receipts and Payments                        |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
|   |                              | <b>2025</b>       |                   | <b>2024</b>       |                  |
|   |                              | £                 |                   | £                 |                  |
| <b>CHANCEL FUND ACCOUNT</b>                                     |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
| RECEIPTS  | CBF Income Fund              | 16                |                   | 16                |                  |
|   | Interest                     | 3                 |                   | 3                 |                  |
| PAYMENTS  |                              | 0                 |                   | 0                 |                  |
| <b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>                         |                              | <b>19</b>         | <b>791.00</b>     | <b>19</b>         | <b>772.00</b>    |
| <b>CHURCHYARD FUND ACCOUNT</b>                                  |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
| RECEIPTS  | Interest                     | 0                 |                   | 0                 |                  |
| PAYMENTS  |                              | 0                 |                   | 0                 |                  |
| <b>Excess of Receipts over Payment</b>                          |                              | <b>0</b>          | <b>220.00</b>     | <b>0</b>          | <b>220.00</b>    |
| <b>FABRIC FUND ACCOUNT</b>                                      |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
| RECEIPTS  | Interest                     | 527               |                   | 509               |                  |
| PAYMENTS  |                              | 0                 |                   | NIL               |                  |
| <b>Excess of Receipts over Payment</b>                          |                              | <b>527</b>        | <b>28,355.00</b>  | <b>509</b>        | <b>27,828.00</b> |
| <b>GANNON AND LAMBERT CHARITIES</b>                             |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
| RECEIPTS  | Interest                     | 2                 |                   | 2                 |                  |
| PAYMENTS  |                              | 0                 |                   | 0                 |                  |
| <b>Excess of Receipts over Payments</b>                         |                              | <b>2</b>          | <b>402.00</b>     | <b>2</b>          | <b>400.00</b>    |
|   |                              | <u><b>548</b></u> | <b>29,768.00</b>  | <u><b>530</b></u> | <b>29,220.00</b> |
| <b>STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31 DECEMBER 2025</b>  |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
|   |                              | Unrestricted      | Restricted        | Total             | Total            |
|   |                              | Fund              | Funds             | <b>2025</b>       | <b>2024</b>      |
| <b>CASH FUNDS</b>   |                              |                   |                   |                   |                  |
|   | Cash in Hand                 | 0                 |                   | 0                 | 0                |
|   | Bank Current Account         | 43,928            |                   | 43,928            | 74,242           |
|   | Building Society Account     | 97,084            | 29,768            | <u>126,852</u>    | <u>88,969</u>    |
|   | <b>Total Monetary Assets</b> | 141,012           | 29,220            | <b>170,780</b>    | <b>163,211</b>   |
|   |                              |                   | <u><b>548</b></u> |                   |                  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Approved by the PCC on 16th March 2026 and signed on their behalf by</b>                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>The Revd Sarah du Boulay (Rector and PCC Chairman) and Mrs Caroline Spendlove (PCC Treasurer)</b> |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Independent Examiner's Report to the members/trustees of the Church of St Mary The Virgin, Friston, Parochial Church Council

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

### Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act: and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view, and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

# Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of

Charities Act or

. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

Signed:

Date:

Mr Anthony Morley (Retired Financial Executive)

2 Hillcrest, Friston, Saxmundham, IP17 1NN

