

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

COVERING THE YEAR JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025

The PCC continued to hold the vision statement approved in 2023:

We celebrate God's love for all by ...

- Extending Christ's inclusive welcome
- Exploring faith honestly with an open mind
- Placing people and planet at the heart of our mission

until May 2025, when, following a PCC Away Day, it was changed to:

Christ-Centred & Outward-Focused ...

Following the retirement of Rev'd Canon Wilma Roest as Vicar of St Mary Magdalene and RTM Team Rector at the end of 2024, there were two clergy, one Curate and one Reader to serve the Team in ministry for most of 2025. The Curate, Rev'd Charlie Middleton, left at the end of September. Following her departure St Mary Magdalene drew on many local clergy to lead services there as well as the RTM clergy and our Reader. During the vacancy the six churchwardens have had responsibility for the Team, and the two churchwardens of St Mary Magdalene specific responsibility for that church.

Vacancy:

Following Rev'd Wilma's retirement, it was decided to consult as widely as possible as to the attributes the Team was looking for in the next Team Rector and Vicar of St Mary Magdalene. To this end, early in 2025 meetings were held in each church to discuss this and post boxes were provided in which congregation members and visitors to the churches could leave notes (signed or anonymous) giving ideas/opinions/suggestions on the qualities they would like to see in the new Rector/Vicar. Contact was also made for these with those unable to attend church as well as schools, community and civic contacts. There were also Team-wide discussion meetings. This feedback was useful in writing the parish profile. During May the PCC had an Away Day and discussed a new revised Mission Action Plan (MAP) and these thoughts and ideas also contributed to the content of the profile.

New policies and other changes were introduced including:

- The intention to recruit an Operations Manager as first line manager of the administrative team, including a focus on information and communications;
- A Human Resources sub-committee, chaired by a Human Resources professional from the PCC, meeting once or twice a year as necessary and reporting back to Standing Committee;
- A complaints policy supported by the Diocesan Dignity at Work Policy and the Nolan Principles of Public Life, including a declaration of intent signed by PCC members and intended for other volunteers in important positions of responsibility on behalf of the RTM;
- A policy for lone working.

The Diocese, who owned the Ormond Road vicarage, decided to sell it now it was vacant and seek a replacement. This was made clear in the recruitment pack for the new Vicar and Team Rector. The

position was advertised in June 2025, after the PCC Away Day in May developed the revised mission action plan and voted to go ahead with the recruitment. A shortlist of candidates was drawn up at the end of that month and candidates interviewed in July. Unfortunately, no appointment was made.

The Diocese subsequently proposed the appointment of an interim minister identified by the Archdeacon of Wandsworth. This was approved by the PCC, the Wandsworth Archdeaconry, the Mission and Pastoral Committee and the Diocesan Council of Trustees. The identified candidate was interviewed and approved by the interviewing panel (decided by the Archdeacon and Standing Committee) and the Diocesan Council of Trustees and the appointment was made. The new incumbent, Rev'd Robert Stanier, will take up his post at the end of February 2026 for a period of three years.

Services:

During 2025, with the exception of the monthly 11:30am Sunday Matins service at St Mary Magdalene, all the normal Sunday, weekday and Team services continued, including weekday Morning Prayer held across the Team.

At St Mary Magdalene where there was the vacancy for the vicar, the three Sunday services continued as well as the weekday Eucharist service on Wednesdays and the Saturday monthly children's service. In addition, a new service of Evening Prayer was offered every Wednesday from October at St Matthias. The Patronal Festivals of the three churches were held as Team services. All services were held in person with some live-streamed for those unable to come to church. A weekly act of worship was also held at the Greville House Care Home. Residents and staff from the Home were also welcomed to worship on Sundays at St Matthias.

Other services included:

- Corpus Christi, a sung Eucharist and Procession of the Blessed Sacrament
- a festival Eucharist for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Rev'd Charlie Middleton's last service as Curate of St Mary Magdalene

Congregation numbers were similar to those of 2024, particularly important as St Mary Magdalene did not have a vicar in post.

The Team also hosted the Visitation Service for 200 churchwardens across the Wandsworth Archdeaconry in June and the Deanery Chapter and Clergy lunch in October.

St Mary Magdalene established a prayer group who met regularly to pray in complete confidence over prayer requests made known to them. Once a month the opportunity was given to receive laying-on of hands and to be prayed over individually by a member of the team.

In June, a Talk about Death was held to take away fears about talking of death and prepare each other for the next stage of our journey. It included a series of short talks on a variety of topics such as the theology of death, marking a death, the role of undertakers, the journey of grief and managing probate, with music between each topic. In addition, a pastoral group was established at St Mary Magdalene, meeting monthly and focusing on specific pastoral situations across the church. St Mary Magdalene continued to be an Open Church, 9am - 3pm daily, and it is estimated that some 200 people visit each week during the times that welcomers are on duty.

'Exploring Church' was held monthly, an all-age gentle exploration of what Church is and what it is for, using crafts, story and music. This was especially relevant to anyone new to church or wanting to find out more about the Christian faith.

During the autumn a well-attended Alpha Course was held at St John the Divine, supported by all three churches, as well as a four-sessions study of the Book of Jonah.

As she has in previous years, Rev'd Anne Crawford held gentle reflective walks around the borough and also one to St Paul's Cathedral. In June, Rev'd Anne also led a parish pilgrimage to St Albans to experience the spectacular annual pilgrimage procession, the Eucharist in the ancient Cathedral and Abbey Church and the beautiful Festal Evensong.

Lent:

In April 'Exploring Lent', an all-age exploration of Lent and Holy Week using crafts, story, food and music was held at St Matthias. A talk was given at St John the Divine by Joe Gunby, from St Elizabeth of Portugal Roman Catholic Church in Richmond, entitled "Wings and Whispers: The Silent Battle Between Angels and Demons" which explored beliefs about angelic and demonic forces.

Advent:

Bishop Guli Francis-Deqhani's book 'Listening to the Music of the Soul' was explored during Advent in groups lead by Rev'd Anne Crawford and Ruth Martin Reader).

Rev'd Anne Crawford once again created an electronic Advent calendar, sending around an image, reflection and prayer each morning of Advent.

Safeguarding:

The PCC continued to give a high priority to safeguarding, with officers in each church. The Parish Safeguarding Officer provided every meeting of the PCC with a report of all safeguarding issues which had arisen.

A safeguarding audit required by the Diocese was completed by each of the three churches by the safeguarding officers and then referred to the clergy for finalising. The audits were then sent to the PCC for approval before submission to the Diocese.

All PCC members and safeguarding officers are required to:

- complete the safeguarding course(s) provided by the Diocese applicable to their roles in the Team
- complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as the Richmond Team Ministry is a registered charity and PCC members are its trustees.

Following submission of the data to the Diocese, there was a data breach at the software provider used by the Diocese. The Diocese is looking for a new software provider. Until one is appointed DBS checks were delayed.

Other issues of importance during 2025 include:

1. Meetings:

During the year the PCC held four meetings and the Standing Committee met three times, as is usual. Agenda items considered routinely at every meeting included the vacancy, safeguarding matters, updates on finance and property matters, the Green Team's ECO activities, risk management and news from the three churches.

The PCC also held three extraordinary meetings; the first for discussing and approving the safeguarding audit and two further meetings on zoom to discuss the sale of Sandover House and approve this. In addition, members met for an Away Day in May to work together to prepare a potential new Mission Action Plan (MAP) and Vision Statement and to vote to recruit the next Team Rector and vicar of St Mary Magdalene.

2. Mission Action Plan (MAP):

As above, PCC members discussed and agreed a new MAP during the preparations for the vacancy. However, in view of the appointment of a new Rector who could have his/her own suggestions and ideas for this, it was decided to review this in 2026.

3. Children and Young People's Ministry:

Emma Smellie, who led this ministry, resigned at the end of December 2024. Due to the changing needs of children and young people both within the Team and the local area, the Team did not wish to rush into finding a new leader. Also, the need to allow for the thoughts of the new Team Rector on this subject was recognised and, as a result no one was appointed to this ministry.

A pre-teens group called the 'Underground' and a Dinner and Discussion group for teens were all held monthly.

'Little Chicks', a baby and toddler play church was launched in October at St Matthias. The weekly sessions during term time provide an opportunity for carers and their children to meet in church and play, with a short story, song and prayer at the end.

4. Schools and Community:

Contacts were maintained with schools in the parish and also with the 1st Richmond Scouts. Services were held for pupils from King's House School, Christ's School, Thomas's College and the Vineyard School variously at Easter, Harvest Festival, Armistice Day and Christmas.

The Richmond Team Ministry continued to provide a member of the clergy for the Board of Governors of Christ's Church School for part of the year, as well as foundation governors to the Board, electing two new governors to take the places of two of our previous governors who could no longer continue to give the amount of time the position needs.

We continued to support and work with local charities, such as Spear, the Vineyard Community Centre and the Richmond Food Bank. The Richmond Soup Kitchen continued to operate from St John the Divine supported by volunteers across the RTM, offering soup and sandwiches two nights a week and Saturday morning breakfasts, from November 2024 until April 2025, restarting in November 2025. The Richmond Team Ministry continued to support the work of Christian Aid, as well as the Children's Society with collections taken at the Christingle services. St John the Divine also continued to host the ecumenical Richmond Street Pastors.

Since October St Mary Magdalene has held monthly Saturday 'Open House' coffee mornings in the church to encourage local people to come to the church for coffee and informal chat.

A lunch was held during Lent for the Bishop's Lent Call to raise funds for projects in Southwark, Matabeleland (Zimbabwe) and Jerusalem. Dr Chris Hewer continued to hold his 'Understanding Islam' courses at St Mary Magdalene and the Richmond Synagogue and Richmond Council invited RTM to the annual Holocaust Memorial Day civic service held in January. At St Mary Magdalene, as part of the Richmond Liberal Democrats 2025 programme, members of the local Iranian community told of their personal experiences, shedding light on the resilience of the women of Iran.

The May Fair was held again in 2025. St Mary Magdalene had its traditional stalls around the church, raising funds for Richmond Soup Kitchen and other charities with music and dance performed by various schools and other groups inside the church. The Friends of St Matthias held their usual BBQ on the Green, selling top quality burgers and sausages, as well as a cakes.

In September, musical events were held at St Mary Magdalene as part of the new Richmond Town Centre Festival. In addition, in September both St Mary Magdalene and St John the Divine participated in the Open House London Festival with Peter Bowyer and Paul Velluet giving guided tours of the churches. St Mary Magdalene's bell ringers also gave tours of the church's bell tower.

5. Risk Control

The register of risks drawn up by the Risk Working Group, comprised of members from each of the three churches, was reviewed and updated five times to ensure all relevant risks were identified and assigned to appropriate people to apply suggested mitigations. The updated register was approved by the PCC which holds overall responsibility for risk management.

6. Eco Church

The RTM Green Team, a group made up of clergy and congregation members from all three churches, met every few months to plan how to work toward and achieve silver status (all three churches currently hold bronze awards) in the Rocha Eco Church Programme and also to ensure we care for God's earth irrespective of external awards. Helen Stephens, the Church Relations Manager from Rocha UK, presented a session on this in September, providing some excellent suggestions for making progress towards the silver award.

News of the Team's progress and activities and the passing on of ideas for caring for our planet was given to the congregation in the quarterly 'Green Tips' newsletter on the RTM website.

Various activities during the year included:

- picking up litter around church grounds
- collection of old spectacles and sunglasses for the Lions Club who use them to improve the sight of children and adults living in less developed countries and collection of outdated, unneeded coins for Oxfam and used ink cartridges for recycling
- a Beetle Drive which very successfully raised funds for the charity Toilet Twinning (who help people in poorer countries to build these) and the 'twinning' of two toilets for each of the three churches in Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Tanzania and Zambia
- Earth Hour (switching off all lights for an hour to show support for the planet and raise awareness of its environmental issues), Clean Air Day (everyone was asked to come to church by some means other than driving) and No Mow May were observed.

7. Communication

Communication between the clergy and congregation members was primarily via the RTM's website, the weekly emailed newsletter and 2 quarterly items - the ECO Green Team's newsletter (as above) and the 'Team Talk' magazine. Individual churches have their own newsletters for circulation among their congregations and St John the Divine joined Instagram.

8. Music

The music for church services has been beautifully arranged and led by the Music Director/organists/choirmasters: Seb Gillot at Mary Magdalene, Bernard Robertson, assisted by Mark Laflin, at St Matthias and, since the summer, Gina Kruger at St John the Divine. Andreana Chan continued at St Mary Magdalene as Assistant Organist.

Recitals were held monthly on Saturdays at St Mary Magdalene, as well as the annual Christmas singalong with the Honorary Artillery Company Band. A recital was also given at St John the Divine in October.

The Choral Foundation at St Mary Magdalene continued to provide generous scholarships for choral and organ scholars, who contribute to choral services and the monthly Saturday recitals, showcasing their talents during the year. A retiring collection was taken at most recitals to help fund the Foundation.

The Foundation is being expanded to provide additional mentoring opportunities for some of the scholars. It also supports the Junior Choir, launched for those aged 7 – 13 years. This meets on Thursdays after school for singing a fun and eclectic mix of music across all styles and ages.

Funds were also raised for the purchase of a new piano at St Mary Magdalene. The piano was delivered in December, and a series of professional concerts is scheduled for 2026 to inaugurate the instrument, as well as the ongoing Saturday recitals. The piano is garnering significant interest from a number of external groups and performers.

A fund was also launched to replace some of the bells in the Tower.

9. Administration Team

Once the Ormond Road vicarage was sold in Spring 2025, the parish office moved to St Matthias Church, where it will remain until the Parish Rooms development is complete and it can be relocated there.

The administration team has four members: John Palmer - Parish Administrator, Denise Mahony - Bookings Administrator, John Rushe - Property and Facilities Manager and James Nicholson - Verger. For much of the year Ruth Martin, our Reader, acted as the temporary line manager for the paid staff at the request of the six churchwardens, easing the burden for churchwardens and clergy during the vacancy. After Ruth stood down in November, Denise Mahony took over as operations lead and will continue in the role until the Operations Manager (see above) is employed. The appointment of the Operations Manager has been deferred until the interim Rector has joined us.

10. Thefts:

The RTM suffered two thefts during this year. The first was the data theft detailed under 'Safeguarding' above.

The second occurred in December when nine historic pieces on loan from St Mary Magdalene to the Museum of Richmond were stolen. These were precious pieces such as a pair of Charles II silver flagons, a William III Britannia silver tazza (cup) and a Charles II silver sideboard plate, valued in 2023 at around £86 000. Although insured, the loss was devastating and financial recompense cannot replace the sentimental value of the stolen items to St Mary Magdalene and Richmond.

11. Finance and Property:

Our efficient financial systems have been maintained and regular up-to-date information given to PCC and Property and Finance Committee, the latter being chaired by the Treasurer.

David Bartlett resigned as Treasurer in March 2025, and Ruth Martin became interim Treasurer until the appointment of Ros Constantine in November 2025.

During 2025, the number of people making regular donations through the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) fell from 75 to 69. 48 people continued to donate through standing order, and we need to continue to encourage them to switch to PGS. About 6 people gave using envelopes and 4 through the Charities Trust or CAF payroll giving.

The new Dona machines at St John the Divine and St Mary Magdalene were well used. They are simple to use and enable people to donate to specific causes making accounting much easier than with the older SumUp Machines.

RTM's Parish Support Fund Pledge for 2025 was £350,000, an increase of £10,000 on the 2024 pledge.

Charitable Giving (Away Giving) amounted to £19,750 for 2025. It was decided to give larger amounts to fewer charities instead of the previous policy of giving small amounts to more charities.

77% of the total was donated to church-based charities and societies and 23% to secular ones, this secular allocation focusing on British charities, rather than international. Charities with which congregation members are either involved with or benefit from were included.

A higher proportion was given to charities working overseas (56%) than to UK based (44%).

The PCC confirmed the away giving for 2025 following the recommendations of the Away Giving Group which in turn had considered requests from members of the congregations.

The monthly reserves policy was maintained to hold a 3-month reserve in unrestricted cash funds.

Parish Rooms Project: Planning permission was given by Richmond Council for the core project. The construction firm Nicholas Stephens was appointed (with the PCC's approval) and started work on site in August 2025. Access to the site is required from the rear via Tesco's property. Delay in obtaining an access licence from Tesco, together with additional restrictions imposed by Richmond Council on deliveries, to and from the site, from Paradise Road, have led to several weeks delay. This has extended the timetable and increased the cost.

Sandover House: It was decided to sell Sandover House in late 2024. An excellent offer was received and approved by the PCC in July 2025, but exchange of contracts has been delayed by questions relating to the legal title raised by the Diocese. It is expected that completion of any sale will be contingent on RTM obtaining vacant possession of the property.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT

Parochial Church Council (PCC) Membership

Members of the PCC are *ex officio*, co-opted or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. The following members and officers served during the year:

Clergy

The Rev'd Anne Crawford
The Rev'd Joseph Moore
The Rev'd Charlotte Middleton - until 28 September 2025

Secretary

Margot Gallie

Treasurer

David Bartlett - until 14 March 2025
Ruth Martin (interim) - from 15 March to 4 November 2025
Rosalind Constantine - from 4 November 2025

Reader

Ruth Martin

Churchwardens

Anthony Bell
John Buckingham
Sally Gill
Alison Hall
Fiona Morgan
Mary Ricketts

Elected Members

Stephen Brown - until 17 May 2025
Arabella Hobson
Helen Kelsey - until 17 May 2025
Catherine Kozeluh - until 13 October 2025
Maureen Robinson - from 18 May 2025
Richard Seaborne - from 31 May 2025
June Wiszniewski - until 5 October 2025
Judy Wright - from 18 May 2025

Deanery Synod Representatives

Martin Brecknell
Renee Fletcher
Fay Johnstone
Thomas Kelsey
David Powell

Committees

The PCC operates through a series of committees, which meet between PCC meetings. These include:

Standing Committee

Standing Committee has the power to transact PCC business between meetings. It is made up of the clergy, churchwardens and parish officers.

Property and Finance Committee

This committee has the responsibility to review and monitor expenditure on Fabric and General Funds and to work with the parish architect to prioritise fabric repairs. It reports to Standing Committee and the PCC.

Church Committees

The three churches in the parish each have their own committee. These meet to discuss matters of particular concern to the individual churches and report to the PCC.

All new PCC Trustees are given a Trustee Welcome pack which includes RTM's Mission Action Plan, trusteeship guidance notes from the Charity Commission and Church of England (plus link to the Church of England's trustee video tutorial), RTM's governing documents and the previous years' report and accounts.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE and ELECTORAL ROLL

The number of parishioners on the Electoral Roll and average weekly attendance at services at our churches in 2025 was:

	St Mary Magdalene	St Matthias	St John the Divine
Electoral Roll as at 18 May 2025	165	54	47
Congregation average, including children	124	54	52