

Wardens Report for APCM 2026

Well what a year 2025/26 has proved to be. We have felt so very blessed and supported by the very many clergy / lay clergy and indeed the congregation – Thank you everyone.

We said two very fond farewells. In October 2025, and after three years with us, Rev.Emily Hockliffe-Essex finished her curacy and started her new role as vicar of St Johns the Baptist in Bodicote. We said goodbye to Revd Prof Rob Gilbert in March 2026 as he started his new role as priest in charge in the Cherwell Benefice. The congregation have been so very generous in their gifts to them both. We hired a coach to attend their respective licensing, and a feeling of appreciation of how blessed we were to have had them in our lives was very much evident. We wish them both joy in their new positions.

Farewells are always sad, but we did manage to say an especially important ‘Welcome and hello’ to Rev Martin Little, who was appointed as Vicar of Holy Trinity after a 9 month vacancy. In September 2025 Bishop Stephen Croft, Archdeacon Jonathon Chaffey and Area Dean Geoff Bayliss attended to licence and install Rev Martin, and welcome his wife Hannah and children Aidan, Amy and puppy Lucy to Holy Trinity. Margaret and I have felt so very reassured by how easily and quickly Martin seems to have embraced all things in the parish to include Wood Farm, Quarry and Risinghurst, and proving to be someone with a very “hands on” nature. We are all very much appreciating the benefits of ‘proper’ coffee! Martin was rightly impressed by the attendances at all the Christmas services, and especially the scratch choirs’ performance on Easter Sunday.

The snagging list for the building works is still yet to be signed off but it is very nearly completed. We are all using the extension as much as possible, and we continue to work towards using it as part of outreach to the community. It has been used for many wedding and christening celebrations and has proved to be a positive addition. The faculty for the cupboards at the back of the church has been extended until May 2026, and at this time of writing we anticipate the bespoke cupboards are being built. We hope this joinery work will be completed by June/July 2026. These cupboards will provide much needed storage. Now the hard work of paying off the loan for the extension/building work/cupboards needs to continue in earnest. We encourage the whole congregation to not only pray, but consider contributing in any way possible to

paying off this considerable loan – this could be volunteering time to join in the many tasks that are needed for the church to function, donating a talent etc.

Regrettably the inventory is still not quite complete because, not all of the property is back in the church, but we have a much clearer idea of what we have and where.

The gridding which covered the “Narnia Window” has now been removed, and a polycarbonate protective backing is now in place. This has made a huge difference to the appearance of the window.

Despite much hope and optimism that the extension work would fix the leak in the vestry, this was not to be the case. After much investigation involving scaffolding and drones, it appears that stone coping/flashing has deteriorated over many years higher up the roof than anticipated, and are the issue and the cause of the leak – we are bracing ourselves for an impressive quote for repair.

In the churchyard, three trees which needed to be felled were removed in late 2026. The church yard committee continues to work their magic in keeping the churchyard looking beautiful, along with regular mowing by a gardener. The churchyard really is a place of peace and tranquillity.

Adrian Wood continues to arrange visits and tours for the many C.S.Lewis pilgrims from all over the world, and especially America. The visitors are very impressed with Holy Trinity and appreciate the welcome they receive. Adrian stepped down from his involvement in The Coach House committee – and we thank you very much for all your hard work.

The PCC has in principle agreed to take over management of the Coach House/Marth Louise Jackson Bequest, but we continue to navigate the legal process required for this to take place. Richard Churchill has thankfully stepped up as the new coach house bookings manager and caretaker. We are so grateful for his tremendous work. We have recently undertaken much needed toilet renovations in the coach house and it does make a tremendous difference.

A sincere ‘Thank you’ to all the involved in managing the Binswood Avenue property. Currently it is being rented out until such time as HTHQ is allocated a curate. We hope this tenancy will contribute a little towards the much needed funds required to maintain the church.

We would especially like to say a big Thank You to the many volunteers who give of their time and energy so faithfully to contribute to the running of the church. The cleaners, who work so hard to get the church tidy for Sundays. The flower arrangers, who continue to display their art- we are very lucky. Thank you to those who welcome every Sunday, those arranging refreshments, bell ringers, chalice bearers, readers, children's/forest group leaders, the empowered group leaders, and many others attending to all those little jobs that are noticed but not always appreciated (they absolutely are). Last, but not least, the brilliant technical and communications team that continue to ensure we broadcast our Sunday services via Radio Cherwell, live stream any weddings and funerals at peoples request, and deal with our sound system. All of this acts as an outreach to those who are not able to attend in person.

After 5 years Margaret is stepping down as warden, and Linda is no longer able to commit to the role. Whilst not ideal that we are stepping down at the same time – we will still be active members of the congregation and we hope are considered to be very much part of the beautiful HTHQ church family. We see the ending of our time as wardens as an opportunity for a new leadership team to take HTHQ in a bright and flourishing direction. Our church mission statement of 'To be an open Door' is one that we believe in passionately and we encourage the new wardens to continue to not only hold the door open, but to hold the door with pride, faith and strength – we are a magnificent parish.

Margaret Taylor Linda Davies