




All Saints Church, Milton Keynes Village - Churchwardens Report 2024- 2025


Over the year we have continued to be strongly encouraged by the growth and diversity in church attendance, the expansion of ministry skills enabling more opportunities for time to grow our faith and love of God and the increased weekday use of church for activities and groups interacting with the community. Exploring and refreshing the vision for our church is further deepening our relationships and teachings.

During the year births, deaths and marriages have been marked by appropriate life services. We have continued to celebrate holy communion twice a month, moving during the year, to the minister offering bread and the assistants offering wine from individual cups or the common cup according to individual preference.

Sharing Churchwarden duties between Barny and Pat supported by other church members enables the weekly pattern of services and other meetings to run smoothly. Sylvia continues to arrange provisions for weekly refreshments and organise refreshment volunteers on a monthly basis. This report predominantly covers the main areas of maintenance and practical developments in the church building and churchyard for the year and challenges for future projects. As last year managing the most cost effective and efficient use of the heating in church perhaps remains one of our most immediate financial challenges. A careful blend of use of storage heaters and high-level radiant heaters to ensure the building is as warm as possible for services continues to be managed according to weather and church use.

Projects through the year.

April	We completed the second phase of the upgrade of the sound system. We replaced the audio mixer and the remote control unit at the back of the church. The new system gives us additional channels allowing control of the amplification of the Clavinova and separate channels for recorded music on CD or laptop. It also reduces the occurrence of noisy feedback and means induction loop users only hear amplified voices and not the recorded music. The system was fully funded by specific donation.	
May	Routine maintenance and trimming of trees – church path and churchyard	
August	Early in the summer, a piece of the stone mullion in the stained glass window to the right of the altar became detached. This was repaired in August by a stone mason to reduce the risk of further deterioration of the window.	
September	A heavy autumn rainstorm revealed a leak in the roof valley between the chancel and the vestry. Inspection showed that the gutter was blocked, causing water to pool and overflow the lead lining. This and other gutters were cleared.	
October	As part of regular management of the trees in the churchyard, the Irish Yews in the north east corner were reduced. The trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order and so the work was completed following application to and permission from Milton Keynes City Council. During the month the annual lightning conductor inspection was completed.	
November	Following an assessment of the risk to people accessing the tower roof, the access hatch was upgraded in November from lead to stainless steel to reduce the weight.	

	A third bench was installed on the East wall of the churchyard. The bench and installation materials were generously funded by the family of the late Cynthia Kelly.	
January	The annual fire extinguisher and portable appliance testing was completed. The five-yearly inspection and testing of the electrical installation was undertaken at the end of the month. The inspection found some minor defects but no major work is required.	

Other works:

- **Routine maintenance and improvements –**

Maintenance has continued with the dedicated work of stewards and mowing team to ensure the building and churchyard are in good order. Thanks to Wayne, Paul and Barny for their work with the maintenance of the church building including a team for high level cleaning 12th August. Brian has effectively continued to coordinate the churchyard mowing rota encouraging new volunteers to join the team this year. Thanks also to David Monk for his help with the weekly refuse arrangements of wheelie bin collections.

Sue Robertson has helped to improve communication with the congregation by refurbishing the notice boards and also by providing a regularly updated slideshow, which is displayed at the front of church prior to the beginning of the Sunday service.

- The Churchyard working group and additional time from folk on weekdays has focussed on essential clearing of ivy, weeds and overgrown graves ensuring the churchyard is an inviting area for rest and reflection. Maintaining a weed free accessible 1.5metre wide church path requires labour intensive attention! **The path edges need redefining and the gravel replenishing. A project for the Spring. Volunteers always welcome.**

Welcoming and supporting

- **Welcome events** through the year to get to know people in the church.
- **Welcoming NHS walking groups** for refreshments mid-week continues as a regular part of supporting our community. A team of volunteers in church supply hot drinks, cake and biscuits to 40-60 walking visitors as they end their exercise session. A further £600 was raised in 2024 from donations.
- **Our Dorcas group** continues to meet fortnightly knitting blankets for the Ukrainian appeal and The Milton Keynes Hospital Charity. New participants always welcome.
- **The Bell ringing team** is a regular part of the weekly activities in church with much enthusiasm for welcoming new members and training on a regular basis increasing their part in celebrating worship. A team for maintenance cares for the bells and visiting ringers are hosted regularly.
- **Children's church and an enthusiastic Children's choir** encourage growth and support in the church.
- **Concrete Calves Wind Band** continue to meet each week in church as a not-for-profit community group. They are a place for beginner woodwind players to come together and share in the joy of making music as part of a group. Their rehearsals culminate in concerts throughout Milton Keynes to raise funds for selected charities. Summer and Christmas concerts have successfully performed this year in Church and are a welcome part of our community involvement.
- **Musica Charity Choir MK** have a concert planned to raise funds for Alzheimer's Society and MK Hospital Charity on Saturday 3rd May inviting our local community to join together to support these special causes.

Practical projects ahead

- **We are looking to improve the facilities for the provision of refreshments in church.**

A simple servery at the back of the church providing heating for water, washing up facilities and storage to make the preparation, serving and clearing of refreshments safer, more accessible, simpler and easier to manage. Costings to be further assessed.

- **Audio Upgrade**

The last major element of the audio system that will need renewal within the next couple of years is the wireless microphone system. The current microphones are occasionally unreliable, particularly for services at the back of church, for example baptisms or café church. They are also prone to feedback, which restricts the volume level achievable, affecting audibility when the church is full, although the new mixer has helped to alleviate this problem.

A plan to provide a professional grade, digital wireless system with two handheld and two body worn microphones as well as additional wired microphones for multi-speaker events such as the dramatic reading of the passion on Palm Sunday would require a budget of around £4,000.

There may be a need in future to replace the induction loop and the amplifier and speakers covering the vestry and chancel but this equipment currently remains serviceable.

- **The quinquennial review** of the Church is scheduled for 21st March 2025.

For reassurance and legislative compliance there is confirmation of the maintenance of the formal areas required recorded in the documents below:

- the terrier – a list of land belonging to the church
- the inventory – a list of all the items belonging to the church,
- the logbook – a detailed record of all the alterations, additions and repairs carried out in relation to the church, its land and its contents.

These have all been maintained to ensure the day to day functioning of the Church and are available as hard copies in the church.

There is renewed vigour and energy with the launching of the Vision statement and we continue to pray for guidance to build on life in and around church extending our pastoral work. We give thanks for the leadership from Matt and our expanding church team in this ever-growing parish of the vibrant city.

Patricia Sawyer

Barney Daley

Churchwardens

March 2025