

The Parish of Ludlow St Laurence



Summary Annual Report

to accompany

Annual Parish Meeting

and

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

11.30am Sunday 10 May 2026

St Laurence's Church

Registered Charity No 1132703

Extended versions of these reports are available in church

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CLERGY REPORT

PCC Lay Chair's report

Kelvin's ministry as Rector of Ludlow ended on Easter Sunday 2025 immediately after a joyful and inspiring Easter Eucharist service in a packed St Laurence's during which three adults were baptised. He, Ruth and the family left for Ross-on-Wye with all our blessings, and gratitude for the transformations he achieved during his time with us. We continue to reap the rewards of his ministry as we see a lively and engaged congregation growing in numbers and 'growing younger', a well-used church building which brings in people from the local community as well as visitors and pilgrims and healthy finances. However his departure meant that for most of 2025 St Laurence's had no ordained clergy. Ensuring that services, particularly eucharistic services, continued was a challenge. The situation was exacerbated when Revd Andrew Body who took many services also moved away and we thought we might have to replace some with a Service of the Word.

Happily our concerns proved unfounded.

Archdeacon Fiona was very supportive, as was the Very Reverend Michael Tavinor and Bishop Richard came one Sunday but the bulk of our services have been taken by clergy from neighbouring parishes in the deanery and, in particular, a small group of retired clergy with Permission to Officiate within the congregation and the town. Other retired priests and our Licensed Lay Minister Caroline have officiated at funerals and Caroline and our Lay Pastoral Worker, Paul, have led other services.



In all we welcomed 14 different people to lead our 8.15am BCP Communion or 10am Sunday Eucharist and I would like to thank them all: Revd John Beesley, Revd Prebendary Ashley Buck, Revd Sharon Constable, Revd Prebendary Dr John Daniels, Venerable Dr Fiona Gibson, Right Revd Richard Jackson, Revd Justin Parker, Revd John Perry, Revd Jane Plackett-Ferguson, Very Revd Michael Tavinor, Revd Peter Walker, Right Revd Michael Westall, Revd Ian Williams and Revd John Williams.

We hope that we can look forward to welcoming them back to St Laurence's in 2026 while we await permission to start advertising for a new Rector of Ludlow.

R Franks



LAY PASTORAL WORKER'S REPORT

Focus in 2025 on links with other agencies:

- ◇ Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service, Rough Sleeper service, Housing Options Team, Benefits Team, Mental Health Service, Connexus Housing
- ◇ Ludlow Town Council, Police, CE School,
- ◇ Hands Together Ludlow, Ludlow Foodbank
- ◇ Station Drive Surgery

Stephen House clients:

- ◇ Referred by agencies, family, friends and visitors to church
- ◇ Identified by word of mouth or at Rockspring Centre or Ludlow Foodbank
- ◇ Nine people moved to stable accommodation
- ◇ Showers, washing machine and drier used 2-3 times pw



Other activities:

- ◇ Leading morning prayer and Living Room services
- ◇ Planning and participation in lay-led Christmas services
- ◇ Home visits (2-3 pw)
- ◇ Collaboration with other local faith leaders and CTAL
- ◇ Support with hospital visits and benefit meetings



- ◇ Involvement with Ludlow Foodbank, Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, Shropshire Homelessness Forum

- ◇ Advocacy for clients with other agencies

Paul Kemp

CHURCH OFFICERS' REPORTS

Churchwardens



- ◇ Elizabeth Gardner (Liz) and Lesley Harling sworn in by Archdeacon Fiona at a visitation service in June
- ◇ Elizabeth resigned in October due to ill health



Fabric (see also Fabric report)

- ◇ Supervised church building, artefacts and furniture

Clergy

- ◇ Business as usual January - April until Kelvin moved on
- ◇ Maintaining status quo in vacancy with no stipendiary clergy in post May - August
- ◇ Planning ahead to maintain momentum August - December

Staff

- ◇ Recruitment of new Finance Manager and Accounts Assistant to start in January-February 2026

Churchwarden presence at

- ◇ All PCC meetings and PCC committee meetings
- ◇ All Sunday Eucharists and most other services
- ◇ All Civic Services
- ◇ All weekly Keeping in Touch leadership meetings

Mission Statistics

- ◇ Return to Parish Records completed

Fundraising events

- ◇ Catwalk Collective Fashion Show
- ◇ Winter Festival



Friday 28 November
5.30pm-9.30pm
Live music, pizza and beer
Mulled wine and mince pies
Tombola
Entry: free

Saturday 29 November
10am-5.30pm
Winter Fair
Craft and gift stalls, tombola
Children's activities and games,
Festive music
Hands-on-History
Hot and cold refreshments
Entry: adults gold coin (£1/£2)
Children under 12 free

Sunday 30 November
7pm
Advent Carol Service
All welcome

Further information
social.media@stlaurences.org.uk
01584 872073

Come and join us in St Laurence's Church for our Winter Festival events

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE LUDLOW



BODENHAMS
ECLECTICA
EXPENSIVE MISTAKES
PROMESSE

CATWALK COLLECTIVE

winter fashion show

FRIDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022, 7PM
ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH,
LUDLOW

TICKETS: £15 Includes drink on arrival & canapés
All proceeds to St Laurence's

Fashion show, music, raffle & more

Other activities

- ◇ Engagement with congregation and community
- ◇ Collaboration with staff, volunteer teams and Broadmill to ensure smooth running of church with appropriate balance between its use as a community space, visitor attraction, hospitality venue, exhibition space and performance venue and its primary purpose as a house of prayer and worship
- ◇ Celebratory summer hog roast

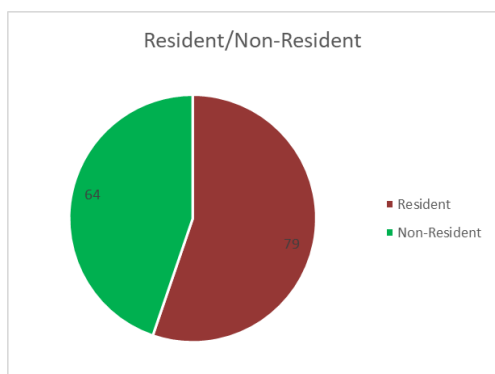
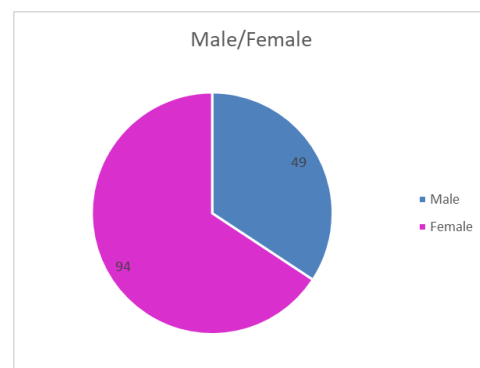
Inventory

- ◇ No items added to or removed from inventory since last APCM

Lesley Harling

Electoral Roll Officer

- ◇ Number on new Electoral Roll:
 - * 143 (94 female, 49 male).
 - * 79 resident in Ludlow St Laurence parish
 - * 64 non-resident



- ◇ Changes since last Electoral Roll
 - * 11 names added
 - * 7 names removed

R Franks
Electoral Roll Officer

PCC Secretary

As of 31 December 2025 there were thirteen PCC members (one churchwarden, eleven elected lay members, one co-opted lay member)

Since the last APCM Meeting on 11 May 2025:

- ◇ Meetings - 8 regular and 2 special meetings, all in person
- ◇ Average attendance - 87%
- ◇ Papers considered - 193
- ◇ Resolutions passed after discussion - 73
- ◇ Policies reviewed and adopted - 6

- ◇ Votes taken out of meeting by e-vote - 8
- ◇ Complied with duty to have due regard to House of Bishops guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- ◇ Safeguarding training and DBS completed by all members

APCM elections 10 May 2026

PCC members continuing in office (term expires May 2027):

- ◇ Dick Franks
- ◇ Eric Griffiths

PCC members continuing in office (term expires May 2029):

- ◇ Ian Marshall
- ◇ Mark Turner

Ex-officio PCC member continuing in office:

- ◇ Caroline Culley (Licensed Lay Minister)

Vacancies:

- ◇ Up to eight elected laity

Elected member at end of 3-year term standing for re-election:

- ◇ Jean Ferguson-Davie

Co-opted PCC member standing for election:

- ◇ Elizabeth Gardner

Completed nomination forms to stand for election to the PCC may be submitted at any time up to 11.30am on 10 May.

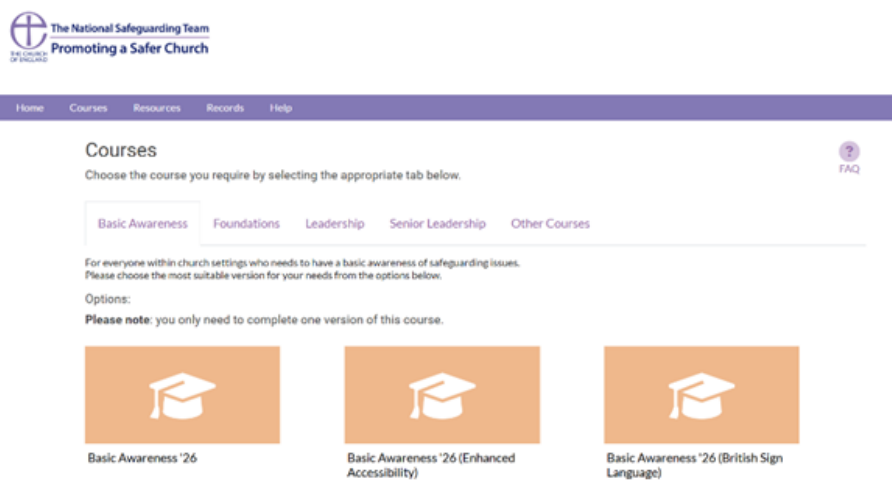
Nomination forms are available in church.

Lesley Harling, PCC Secretary



Safeguarding Officer

- ◇ On 17 March 2025 the PCC reviewed its adoption of the Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' and 'Protecting All God's Children' Safeguarding Policies.
- ◇ Diocese now using thirtyone:eight to handle DBS check applications; it is now possible for me to initiate and handle DBS checks for many of the roles.
- ◇ PCC continues to update its Safeguarding Action Plan (reviewed April 2025) using the Parish Dashboards Software
- ◇ Parish Dashboards helps us maintain a single central record of roles involving children or vulnerable adults within our church community, the DBS checks and training required for these roles and the people assigned to them
- ◇ Current Safeguarding guidance now available in online e-manual <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>
- ◇ CofE provides online safeguarding courses, and other safeguarding resources. Courses, updated regularly updated, should be refreshed every three years.



- * Link to the Church of England Training Portal - <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org/>

R Franks – April 2026

MISSION

Arts @ St Laurence's

- ◇ The third Ludlow Piano Festival in May was highly successful, both musically and regarding audience numbers. The programme included a sell-out Celebrity concert, stand out concerts by Alim Beisembayev and Joanna MacGregor and a sell-out 'Desert Island Piano' featuring Sheila Hancock being interviewed by Alistair McGowan.



- ◇ Collaboration with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire continued with Saturday recitals.
- ◇ Local performers included: Ludlow Orchestra, Ludlow Choral Society and the Edge Chamber Choir.
- ◇ Other highlights included the Ludlow English Song Weekend with Roddy Williams and Iain Burnside, a Gala Organ Recital given by Thomas Trotter, a return visit by the Cory Band and a first visit by the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
- ◇ Generous sponsorship ensured overall financial viability for the Arts programme.
- ◇ Thanks are expressed to the [Arts@StLaurence](#) Committee and the band of welcoming stewards.

Ewart Carson
Chair, Arts@StLaurence



Bell ringing

Regular ringing

- ◇ Tower membership - 18 ringers; one new member
- ◇ Two learners training using simulator

Special ringing

- ◇ Special 'date touch' of 2025 changes of Stedman Caters rung on 1 January 2025
- ◇ Quarter peal rung half-muffled to mark Good Friday and as a farewell compliment to Revd Preb Kelvin Price
- ◇ General ringing to celebrate 80th anniversary of VE Day
- ◇ Half-muffled general ringing on 11 November 2025 for Armistice Day
- ◇ Wedding ringing for Jade Priday (St Laurence choir member) and Luke Henson
- ◇ Joined local ringers for Kelvin's installation at Ross-on-Wye
- ◇ Supported service ringing at Stanton Lacy and Bromfield.



Visiting ringers

- ◇ Nine visiting bands
- ◇ Two full peals: Ancient Society of College Youths (Cambridge Surprise Royal) in memory of Chris Kippin, a Cleobury Mortimer ringer, and Hemel Hempstead band (Verulamium Surprise Royal)

Richard Bracher

Celtic Prayer

- ◇ Eleven Celtic prayer services over the year.
- ◇ The average attendance is 15 people with regular attendees from a variety of churches and usually some visitors who attend after seeing the poster on the door
- ◇ Five leaders from local churches within and beyond Ludlow
- ◇ Quiet and reflective services, with times of silence, a Taizé chant and an opportunity to light tea lights in prayer time
- ◇ All are welcome



Caroline Culley

Children and Young People

- ◇ Children's area in the north aisle is kept stocked with toys, puzzles, books and drawing materials
- ◇ Used extensively during the week by families visiting the church and Icon Coffee.
- ◇ The regular Sunday morning congregation currently includes only two young people (8-18) and two children (5-8).
- ◇ Visiting families with children are directed to the children's area and/or are offered activity bags.
- ◇ All are invited to wave worship flags and to follow the retiring procession.
- ◇ Without an increase in numbers more organised activities not feasible



Sandi Burley

Christian Aid

- ◇ Active member of Ludlow Christian Aid committee raising funds to help meet needs of our brothers and sisters globally
- ◇ Two Lent lunches, hosted by St Laurence's and by Methodists - £2,391.31, 65% up on 2024
- ◇ Two retiring collections (Christian Aid Week and Harvest Festival) - £1,712.00 and £432.72
- ◇ Special collection for Myanmar - £562.10
- ◇ Annual coffee morning - £1619.75, 20% up on 2024; thanks for Broadmill and Icon Coffee



Fundraising for Christian Aid

You're invited!

What: Coffee Morning

When: Friday 8th June

Where: St Laurence's

Time: 10am - 12pm

Drinks donated and served by Icon Coffee

All welcome, bring a friend.
We're raising funds for Christian Aid to help people in poverty around the world. We'd love you to join us!

christian aid Your gift can change lives! Find out more at caid.org.uk or christianaid.ie

Christian Aid is a registered charity in the UK and Ireland. We are a member of the Christian Aid International network. We are a member of the Christian Aid International network. We are a member of the Christian Aid International network.

- ◇ December street collection - £848.00, slightly up on 2024
- ◇ Living Nativity donations - £122.50
- ◇ With other donations total raised in 2025 - £8072.68, with additional £575.39 from Gift Aid, giving a grand total of £8648.07, a considerable increase over 2024

We would be unable to raise any money without the commitment of you all and the enthusiasm and readiness of the wonderful team of helpers.

A huge thank you to everyone.

Claire Wilcox



Conservation Trust for St Laurence Ludlow

- ◇ Grants of £90,000 made to church:
 - ⇒ nearly £14,000 to repair windows damaged by vandalism and install protective external mesh;
 - ⇒ over £76,000 towards exterior stonework repair and restoration work;
 - ⇒ further £45,000 in 2026 to complete the programme
- ◇ Funds raised by new Events Group which organised a summer garden party, autumn lectures in the historic Palmers Hall, a Christmas party held with the Civic Society in the church and the popular Palmers Quiz at the Brewery
- ◇ Further sums were raised from church crawls, text and QR code giving, Easyfundraising and street collections
- ◇ Several bequests received
- ◇ Paid secretary recruited
- ◇ Nine trustees met quarterly to review progress, agree on grant-funding and plan events

The Ludlow Palmers Autumn Lectures 2025
Our Autumn Lectures are given by world-renowned experts and present a unique opportunity for all our supporters and guests.

THE MEDIEVAL STAINED GLASS OF ST LAURENCE LUDLOW

Dr Penny Hegbin-Barnes
SATURDAY OCTOBER 18TH 2PM
THE PALMERS HALL (Ludlow Sixth Form College)
MILL STREET, LUDLOW, SY8 1BE




© Chris Parkinson

Our specialist lecturer, Dr Penny Hegbin-Barnes, is an expert on medieval stained glass. She has written and lectured widely on her subject; is the author of summary catalogues of medieval stained glass in the counties of Lincolnshire (1996), Lancashire (2009) and Cheshire (2016), and is currently working on a catalogue for Essex with Chris Parkinson. She has also written various articles and guidebooks, and advised museums, churches, conservators and the Pewsey reviews on the pre-nineteenth century glass of North-Wales, Lincolnshire and Essex. Penny is the Stained Glass Advisor to the Diocese of Chester and a committee member of the British Glass Vitreum, an international body devoted to recording stained glass that predates c.1800.

To secure your place tickets (£8.50) are available from Grace Wilkins (call or text 07990 526203) or use the QR code below.

Scan this QR code to connect with our ticket site



The Ludlow Palmers | Helping to conserve the fabric and treasures of St Laurence's



The Conservation Trust for St Laurence Ludlow & the Ludlow Civic Society invite you to our


CHRISTMAS PARTY
WEDNESDAY
10th DECEMBER
at St Laurence's Church
6 pm to 8 pm

with drinks, canapés, and a little light music

Tickets £10 – call/text 07887 71040, email treasurer@ludlowpalmerstrust.org.uk or use the QR code



The Ludlow Palmers Autumn Lectures 2025
ORIGINS OF THE FAN VAULT
Professor Peter Salter
SATURDAY 8th NOVEMBER - 2 PM
PALMERS HALL (Sixth Form College)
MILL STREET, LUDLOW SY8 1BE




Peter is an architectural designer and his professional teaching has included the Architectural Association School of Architecture, University of East London and later the Health School of Architecture, Cardiff University.

The Fan Vault is a peculiar English invention found mostly in Chantry Chapels, South Porches and the occasional grand church, with the earliest examples dating from 1301. Excellent examples of the Gothic style can be found in Gloucester Cathedral, as well as Bath and Tewkesbury Abbey with King's College Chapel in Cambridge boasting the largest fan vault in the world.

TICKETS: £8.50 available from Karen (call or text 07887 71040), or using the QR code below, or on the door, depending on availability.

Scan this QR code to connect with our ticket site



The Ludlow Palmers | Helping to conserve the fabric and treasures of St Laurence's



The Ludlow Palmers
Helping to conserve the fabric and treasures of St Laurence's
The Conservation Trust for St Laurence, Ludlow (Registered Charity No. 1114678)

Contemplation Group

- ◇ Weekly on Wednesday mornings, gathering just before 10.30am
- ◇ Silent meditation
- ◇ Coffee and fellowship from 11am
- ◇ Thanks to Helen Blyth for extending a welcome to all who wish to attend
- ◇ For further information call 01584 875 041

Liz Gardner



Fairtrade

Fairtrade church since 2010

- ◇ Using Fairtrade products eg tea, coffee and sugar after Sunday services
- ◇ Keeping congregation informed about Fairtrade and promoting Fairtrade Fortnight
- ◇ Fairtrade stalls run by Penny Bridstrup
 - ⇒ held twice monthly after Sunday service for 16 years
 - ⇒ came to an end in September 2025 with 'Final Fling'
- ◇ St Laurence's to retain Fairtrade status, continue to use Fairtrade products and support local Fairtrade initiatives



Fellowship Groups

- ◇ Number of fellowship groups grew significantly in 2025
- ◇ One for each weekday
- ◇ For advice on which might suit you speak to Paul Kemp

Monday led by Caroline Culley

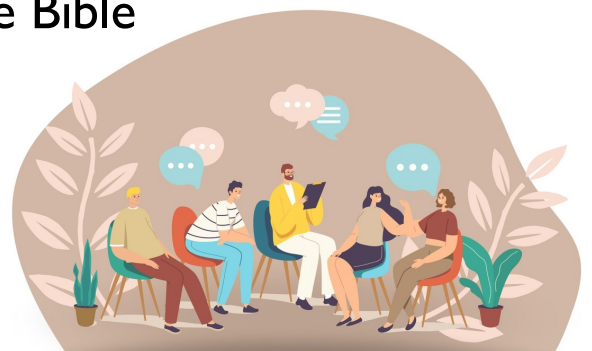
- ◇ Meets in private home on Monday mornings
- ◇ Studied 'Return of the Prodigal Son' by Henri Nouwen, John Pritchard's 'Twenty Questions Jesus asked' and 'Walking backwards to Christmas' by Stephen Cottrell

Tuesday led by Paul Kemp

- ◇ Meets at Stephen House in Tuesday evenings
- ◇ Simple meal and conversation on topics eg the day's lectionary reading or previous Sunday's sermon
- ◇ Studied 'God on Mute' by Pete Greig and 'Practicing the Way', by John Mark Comer.

Wednesday led by Lily and Nick Hingston

- ◇ Meets in Stephen House on Wednesdays 6-8pm
- ◇ Up to 11 people share a simple meal then study using Bible Society's 'Bible Course'
- ◇ Started when Tuesday group became too large and needed to 'multiply' and in response to new enquirers seeking guidance on how to read/study the Bible
- ◇ A small 'family' unit of the church.



Thursday led by Ollie Atkins and Nick Hingston

- ◇ A men's group ('The Forge') of about a dozen members
- ◇ Meets on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm in Stephen House
- ◇ A meal followed by bible study following a recognised course, or preparation for the following Sunday service theme, and prayer
- ◇ A mutual support for members recognising that men (particularly young men) have certain difficulties and issues in today's world
- ◇ A strong sense of belonging to the wider family of St Laurence's

Friday led by Eileen Padmore

- ◇ Shema prayer craft ministry making things for people with love and prayers.
- ◇ Meets twice a month in a variety of venues to share and pray for our creations and encourage one another
- ◇ Crafts include knitting, crochet, calligraphy, wood carving, patchwork and writing
- ◇ Items created include: prayer shawls; emotional support chickens; handmade calligraphy cards; a carved rosary; and a prayer rug with Christian symbolism
- ◇ Prayer shapes are requested and used in our pastoral care ministry.



Handbells

- ◇ A small, tight-knit but very friendly and supportive group
- ◇ Meet on Tuesday evenings in the choir vestry to practise playing and to learn and rehearse for public performances
- ◇ Performances in 2025
 - ⇒ summer lunchtime Chancel Concert
 - ⇒ St Laurence's Winter Fair
 - ⇒ Ludlow Cancer Support Group Christmas party
 - ⇒ two pre-Christmas events in Castle Bookshop Gardens
 - ⇒ carols at the start of the Nine Lessons and Carols service in St Laurence's on 23 December.
- ◇ Sad honour of playing at the funeral of Thelma Ayre, a long-time member of the handbells team.
- ◇ ***Sally Newman-Kidd***



Liturgy

The Liturgy Committee's main purposes are

- ◇ To review and develop the liturgy strategy
- ◇ To support those who deliver liturgy ie clergy, lay readers, servers and musicians
- ◇ To promote and foster best practice at St Laurence's
- ◇ To provide a forum where suggestions and queries about liturgy may be raised and addressed

This committee met four times in 2025 and discussed:

- ◇ A review of the Terms of Reference.
- ◇ A new Major Services Planner has been produced covering 2025-2030
- ◇ Arrangements for and review of all Major Services
- ◇ Health and Safety issues over 'Darkness' services
- ◇ Being a Dementia Friendly church
- ◇ Benefice services at St Laurence's and St John's.
- ◇ Mothering Sunday and the Service of Light to be included on the list of Major Services.
- ◇ Arrangements for the Mayor's Civic service
- ◇ Moving Harvest Festival to the last Sunday in September.
- ◇ Review of Pastoral Offices
- ◇ The problem over enforcing the 'No Intinction rule'.
- ◇ Farewell to Rev Andrew Body

R Franks April 2026



Ludlow-Langwasser Link

- ◇ Two dear friends from the Evangelical Lutheran Paul-Gerhardt-Church (PGK) in Langwasser, former pastor Joerg Gunsenheimer and Albrecht Roettger, joined us for Revd Kelvin Price's final service in Ludlow on Easter Day
- ◇ The two churches have long had close links, as part of Hereford Diocese's partnership with the Lutheran Church's diocese of Nuremberg



Colin Weston

Ludlow Tower Parish Magazine

- ◇ 600 copies printed in full colour each month
- ◇ Distributed free of charge
- ◇ 40 pages of articles of local, national and international interest
- ◇ Available on church website

<https://ludlow->

stlaurences.org.uk/tower/



Music

- ◇ Numbers in choir stable (approx 26) – two new singers
- ◇ Organist team working well and supporting our liturgies with skill and style
- ◇ Finding younger choristers still a challenge
- ◇ New music introduced for both choir and congregation – the Thorne setting has been bedded in well over the year
- ◇ A regular flow of new music for the choir has been a positive challenge and achievement
- ◇ Choral Matins and Evensong – are flourishing musically. Congregational numbers have varied - often small, occasionally larger!



Michael Oakley, Director of Music



Pastoral Care

Local Pastoral Visiting team

- ◇ Individual visits to over 30 people in their homes and in care homes during 2025
- ◇ Most receive communion monthly; a few receive a pastoral visit
- ◇ All visits include catching up and listening to people's stories, and some include deep theological discussions
- ◇ Sadly a number of people died in 2025
- ◇ Care Home visits to Alexandra House, Hendra, Churchill and Onny Cottage; over 25 residents seen each month
- ◇ Visits to individual residents in Four Rivers and Hagley Place.
- ◇ Visits to Ludlow residents who are patients in local hospitals
- ◇ Eight members in team; new members are sought



Anna Chaplaincy

As an Anna Chaplain I have:

- ◇ led services in care homes and visited individuals
- ◇ visited people at end of life to pray with and for them and their families
- ◇ taken funerals, visiting bereaved families beforehand to plan the service and hearing about their loved ones
- ◇ at the Diocese's request met people considering becoming Anna Chaplains over the year, talking about the role and the possibilities and opportunities it offers



Offering spiritual care in later life

Caroline Culley, Pastoral Care Coordinator and Anna Chaplain

Church Tours

- ◇ Tours introduce people to St Laurence's position in the town's religious, social and architectural history, as well as its mission today
- ◇ There are six active tour guides registered
- ◇ Between January and December 2025, 199 people in 13 groups booked and attended tours
- ◇ Commercial tour operators continue to be charged for their use of the church
- ◇ The church remains one of the main attractions in Ludlow and receives positive feedback on travel review websites.

Eric Griffiths



Volunteers

- ◇ More than 100 people volunteer regularly at St Laurence's
- ◇ Some have a visible presence – welcoming visitors or stewarding for events but many work behind the scenes or out of opening hours
- ◇ New volunteer team in 2025 – Divine Diggers work outside keeping the churchyard clean and tidy improving the appearance of building for passers-by in Church Walk



- ◇ No sign of the 'vanishing volunteer' phenomenon observed elsewhere perhaps because the church is seen as *such a vibrant focal point of the wider community*
- ◇ Many volunteer in several different roles and willingly step in to fill in when needed
- ◇ Volunteers joined congregation, staff and wider church community for summer .

hog roast and naming of Stephen House meeting room in memory of Revd Prebendary Ann Barge

- ◇ Training for welcomers - fire evacuation, CPR, use of AEDs and stemming blood loss with introduction to 'Martyn's Law' the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act

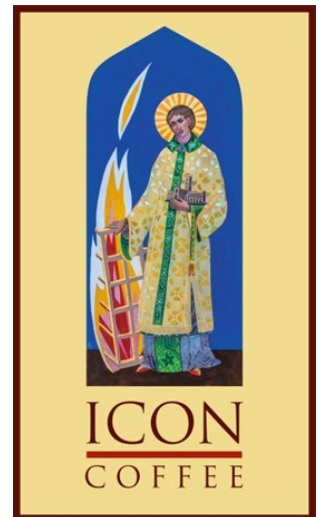


Broadmill Ltd

- ◇ A not-for-profit company not affiliated to any other company
- ◇ Significant negative impact from increase in employers NIC without any increase in small business employers NIC allowance
- ◇ Melanie Trappe, Icon Coffee manager, and Sian Griffiths, Shop manager, take on all day-to-day responsibilities
- ◇ Most cakes, quiche and soups produced locally by Jane Lloyd; pastries made by a new local supplier; coffee roasters, Hundred House, based in Ludlow
- ◇ Icon net turn-over just under £230k (up 15%); over 50k drinks and 28,000 food items sold
- ◇ Over £33k generated for church's mission work
- ◇ Shop net turn-over £121k (up slightly), with increased card and book sales to produce a slightly up on 2024
- ◇ Over £18k to the church
- ◇ Total contribution to church in 2025 - over £50k up from £45k in 2024
- ◇ Nine full- and part-time local employees

We would like to thank all those who supported us throughout the year and look forward to welcoming them back again in 2026.

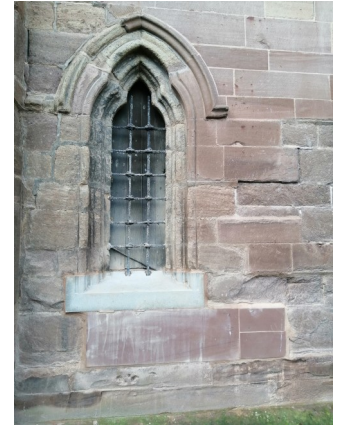
Anthony Shuster, Broadmill Ltd



FABRIC

Fabric Committee

- ◇ Conservation Trust support enabled most major works
- ◇ Notable improvements include the 13th-century east window, defrassing, vestry sills and north wall string course
- ◇ Of 214 quinquennial issues (2021), over 71 resolved by year end 2025
- ◇ Search for 2026 quinquennial inspector begun
- ◇ White Ensign appeal raised £6,000; faculty submitted October 2025
- ◇ New equipment purchased for conservation cleaning and grounds maintenance
- ◇ Vision Project revisited to assess potential for NHLF bid
- ◇ ‘Divine Diggers’ volunteer group formed to maintain churchyard
- ◇ Stephen House water supply under investigation
- ◇ St Leonard’s burial ground received neighbour concerns about light-blocking trees; removal considered for faculty approval



East sacristy window (new stone)

Eric Griffiths, Chairman Fabric Committee



Vestry sill

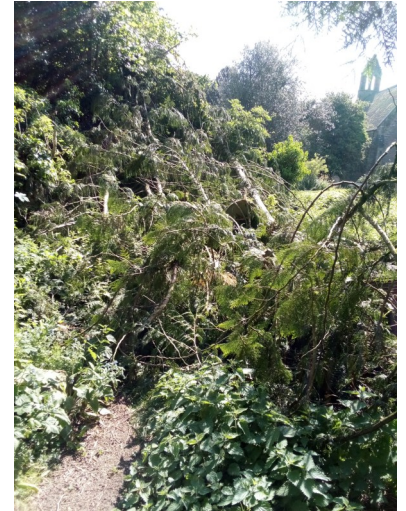
String course work in progress



St Leonard's Churchyard

New Friends of St Leonard's Churchyard committee formed in June 2025 faced four pressing matters:

- ◇ No functioning bank account – now resolved
- ◇ Large branch fallen in churchyard blocking a minor paths – now cleared
- ◇ Concern from residents of Merchant Court that trees in the churchyard blocked their light and might compromise the structure of their building – efforts under way to resolve.
- ◇ Churchyard rather unkempt - several successful work parties rectified
- ◇ Remembrance service held at one of the war graves in the churchyard on 11 November



Fallen branch

Clive Richardson, Chairman

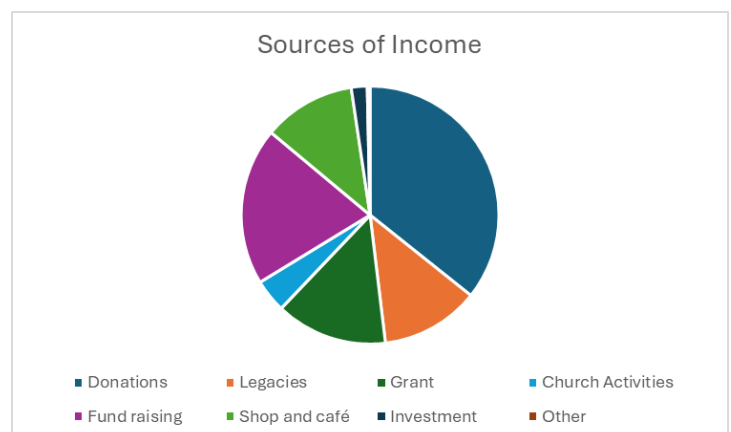


FINANCES

- ◇ A good year for the church meeting its commitments on time and in full
- ◇ Relatively healthy year end surplus of £33k in general funds (used to meet regular operational expenses).
- ◇ Average expected outgoings each month are c£28k so a reasonable operational buffer but not meeting Charity Commission's target of three months of operating expenses
- ◇ Free reserves are unrestricted funds, less designated funds (£13k) and tangible assets of (£111k)
- ◇ Restricted funds year end c£183k in restricted funds, most of it relating to Stephen House; these are legally tied up for specific uses and cannot be drawn upon by the Church for general operational expenses or occasional unforeseen expenditure
- ◇ A healthy balance sheet of £342k made up of tangible assets, cash at the bank (including any money owed to us at year end) less liabilities (any money we owed at year end) - an increase of 28% on 2024

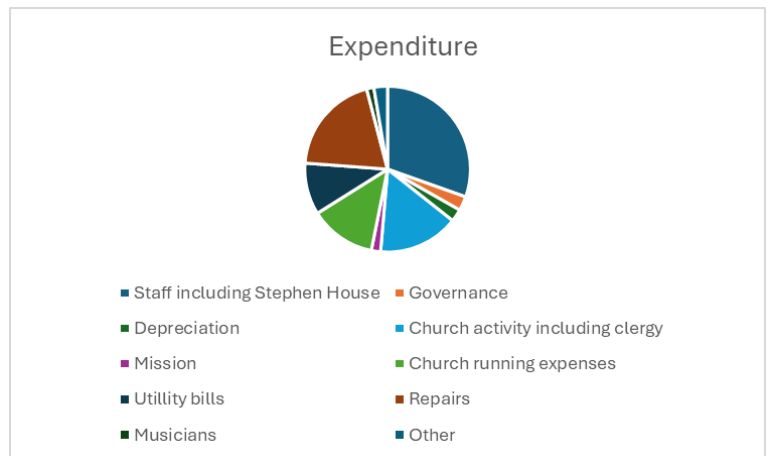
Income

- ◇ Sources - Church activities, eg weddings and funerals; fundraising events; Shop and Icon (up 9% on 2024); donations (similar to 2024 at £153k), legacies (up substantially at £53k) and grants (notably c£60k from the Conservation Trust for work on the fabric) and visitor income (footfall up to over 98,000 in 2024).
- ◇ Total income - £408k, a monthly average of £34k



Expenditure

- ◇ Total costs of running the Church, including Stephen House, in 2025 - £335k (down £155k on 2024 due to the refurbishment spend on Stephen House in 2024).
- ◇ Most other costs relatively stable
- ◇ C£57k paid to Hereford Diocese as Parish Offer
- ◇ Regular expenditure excluding major fabric projects was £275k and income was £348k. The difference of £73k does not reflect free reserves for the PCC, as some is in restricted funds therefore leaving the free reserves at £33k for this year.



Restricted Funds

- ◇ Restricted funds include the fund for the White Ensign (to be spent on the restoration of the flag once a faculty has been approved), flowers, bells, and Arts.
- ◇ Where the object of the giving is no longer deliverable the PCC will use the funds to support similar activities as they arise. The largest restricted fund is in place to support Stephen House.

Stephen House

- ◇ Running costs, including the costs of the Local Pastoral Worker were £25k. The funding position improved during the year from £82k to £142k, including c£13k designated funds for art projects to support mission activities.
- ◇ The Stephen House mission is therefore fully funded for five more years.

Charitable Giving in addition to Stephen House

- ◇ In 2024 the Rector's Discretionary Fund was at the forefront of community giving. Before Kelvin left the benefice, he had directed c£3k to funding local needs in 2025.
- ◇ £4.5k remains in the fund ready for the next Rector.
- ◇ The Church maintained its other outward giving to local and national charities - £2,226 in 2025

Parish Giving Scheme

- ◇ Number of PGS donors at start of financial year (January 2025 to December 2025) was 35
- ◇ Number of donors at end of financial year was 32
- ◇ Total giving was £31,915.17
- ◇ Total gift aid recovered by PGS was £7707.33
- ◇ Number of donors who have agreed to the annual inflationary increase was 21
- ◇ Number donors giving regularly by standing order but who have not joined the PGS was 20
- ◇ Number of people on the St Laurence electoral roll was 164
- ◇ For more information about PGS contact our Parish representative Richard Wilkins (richardjwilkins@aol.com or 07901 658737).
- ◇ Alternatively, see the PGS website at www.parishgiving.org.uk or phone them on 0333 002 1260.
- ◇ Information packs are also available near the steward's desk in church.

LUDLOW DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

- ◇ Held three meetings during 2025 and the DS Service in the summer.
- ◇ February meeting - talk on social problems affecting our area such as homelessness and addiction.
- ◇ Deanery Synod evening service at Diddlebury Church on a beautiful summer's evening; low attendance but bountiful refreshments
- ◇ December meeting - issues raised included problems with the bank in accessing our small amount of funds; Deanery Strategy (yet to be released); on-going vacancy in Ludlow and efforts to find a new rectory; support available to retired priests and their families covering illness and or death of the retired clergy; need for more information on support given to ordinands in Tanzania

Sue Harrison-Stone
Ludlow Deanery Synod Secretary