

St Paul's, Newington

Churchwardens' Report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (2026)

Presented by:

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1. Introduction

The past year at St Paul's has been marked by steady growth, renewed clarity of purpose, and a deepening commitment to worship, mission, and community life. As Churchwardens, we have worked closely with Father John, Father Wayne, the PCC, ministry leads, to support the spiritual, pastoral, and practical life of the parish.

Across the year's PCC meetings, several themes have consistently shaped our work:
welcome, safeguarding, discipleship, finance, and the ongoing care of our buildings.

This report summarises the key developments, challenges, and achievements of the past year.

2. Worship and Congregational Life

Worship remains at the heart of our parish identity. The PCC has spent considerable time reflecting on how our services can remain prayerful, accessible, and engaging.

Key developments include:

- **Service Length & Timing:**
Concerns were raised about services overrunning, particularly on baptism Sundays. The PCC agreed to maintain the **9:30am start** and to streamline readings where appropriate while always retaining a Gospel reading.
- **Readings & Rotas:**
A renewed **reading rota** has been introduced to allow members to prepare in advance. A **greeters rota** is being reinstated to strengthen our welcome at the door.
- **Hospitality:**
Improvements in after-service refreshments were noted and appreciated.

- **Seasonal Worship:**

Lent Compline has been well attended and spiritually enriching, offering a quiet, reflective close to the day.

We remain grateful to clergy, servers, readers, intercessors, musicians, and all who contribute to our worship.

3. Children, Young People & Families

This year has seen both encouraging growth and important learning.

Toddler Group

The Monday Toddler Group continues to flourish, with **20+ families attending weekly**. It remains self-funded but requires additional support for safety equipment. The PCC will continue to explore **Deanery funding** and encourage voluntary donations.

Children's Choir Initiative

The partnership with St Paul's School was paused after limited engagement. Despite significant effort, the hoped-for integration between school and church did not materialise. The initiative will be reviewed later in the year.

Young People's Serving Team

Work continues to build a stronger serving team, with support from diocesan officer **Amy**, who visited to discuss holiday funding and youth engagement.

4. Safeguarding

Safeguarding has been a major area of focus throughout the year.

Key actions:

- PCC members continue to complete the required **safeguarding training**, with an audit underway to ensure full compliance.
- The transition to the new diocesan provider **31:8** has required clarification, but the PCC is now confident in the process.
- Existing DBS certificates issued under the previous provider remain valid.

- A generic safeguarding email address is being established to support those experiencing technical difficulties.
- The parish email domain outage has affected communication and requires urgent resolution.

We thank **Lara Akinwunmi** and the safeguarding team for their diligence and commitment.

5. Mission Action Plan & Discipleship

The PCC has continued to strengthen the mission and discipleship life of the parish.

Welcome & Visibility

A new **welcome banner** has been designed and is ready for printing. This will help communicate our ministries more clearly to visitors and the wider community.

Discipleship Groups

- **Wednesday Bible Study** continues to grow, offering fellowship, teaching, and prayer. It has become a valued “midweek oasis” for many.
- **Lay Ministries** continue to develop, with members taking on new responsibilities in worship and pastoral care.

Existing Ministries

The PCC affirmed the importance of strengthening what is already working well:

- Toddler Group
- Bible Study
- CYP Champions
- Lay Ministries Champions

These remain central to our mission expression at St Paul's.

6. Buildings, Fabric & Maintenance

The care of our buildings has been one of the most demanding areas of warden responsibility this year.

Boiler & Heating

The church continues to rely on **one functioning boiler**, placing strain on the system. Repairs are planned, with the cost of the replacement board offset against outstanding payments owed from the 2024 Christmas Concert.

Boiler Room Water Ingress

This remains a significant and urgent issue.

The Power Board confirmed that while the cables are currently “relatively safe,” the system requires upgrading **after** the water ingress is resolved.

Work required:

- Repointing of the staircase
- Replacement of the membrane above the boiler room
- Electrical board upgrade

The architect must revisit to confirm the technical requirements before work can proceed.

Lighting

Several lighting issues have been addressed:

- Replacement of the dangerous balcony lamp
- Restoration of the “Risen Christ in Glory” lights
- Repair of the main hall socket
- A wider lighting plan is being prepared for submission to our supplier.

Hall & Community Rooms

- The Knights Foundation is mostly up to date with rent.
- The PCC noted the need for clearer communication regarding the Community Group's contract, duties, and utility contributions.
- Hall users are being reminded to clean up after use, and deposits are being considered.

7. Finance & Transparency

Financial transparency has been a recurring theme in PCC discussions.

Key commitments:

- Regular updates to the APCC
- Clearer reporting of hall income and outstanding payments
- Continued pursuit of grant funding opportunities

- Preparation of a spreadsheet of church accounts for circulation

The PCC remains committed to responsible stewardship and open communication. A shared Microsoft Cloudbase is being setup to facilitate this.

8. Administration & Governance

- A monthly rota calendar will be distributed via WhatsApp.
 - Two new Electoral Roll applications have been received.
 - PCC safeguarding training is being audited.
 - Policies will now be reviewed on a structured schedule, with one policy reviewed at each PCC meeting.
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9. Looking Ahead

Priorities for the coming year include:

- Completing all PCC safeguarding training
 - Securing funding for accessibility improvements, including a wheelchair-accessible lift
 - Resolving boiler room water ingress and progressing essential building works
 - Strengthening hall hire processes and revenue
 - Continuing to build the serving team and youth engagement
 - Improving communication between PCC, APCC, and congregation
 - Developing our mission and discipleship pathways
 - Enhancing our welcome and visibility in the community
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10. Thanks

We extend our sincere thanks to:

- **Father John and Father Wayne**
- **Our PCC members**
- **Safeguarding team**
- **Gary Stevens** for his tireless work on buildings
- **Tina, Anastasia, and the CYP team**
- **All volunteers**, ministry leads, and those who serve faithfully week by week

St Paul's continues to be a place of welcome, worship, and witness.
We are grateful for the privilege of serving as your Churchwardens.

ASA MAY 2026
