

Vicar's Report for the APCM of St Andrew's Church Burgess Hill, April 2026

Introduction

St Andrew's continued to grow and flourish throughout 2025 and into 2026. There is a strong sense of unity and energy for the vision God has given us to Love Jesus, Love People, Love Church and Love Burgess Hill and beyond! This was born out by the fabulous response to our Vision Gift Days - Sundays 12 and 19 October – where we raised over £35,000. Indeed, the church is growing numerically and in depth of faith. There were large numbers at our Christmas events and Carol Services and the first few months of 2026 have seen a that growth continue: new people arrive every Sunday, around 20 have attended our most recent Alpha course, and our Youth and Children's ministry continues to be a huge strength.

Youth

The youth mission trip to Mexico in August was amazing and there are now a number of older teenagers stepping into leadership in various areas of church life and a Young Leaders Programme is now running well. Young people have been leading Youth Alpha, our monthly evening service (The Six), "Youth Church" every month, leading actions/worship every Sunday and various other youth groups/projects). Young people seem to be here at St Andrew's almost every day! As well as Sunday morning church, there are youth bible studies on Sunday afternoons, mid-week groups and young leaders' evenings. The youth are certainly taking the lead in our Summer Mission to Burgess Hill which is a whole church mission and will run in August during the week of our Holiday Club and Football Camp. There have been four baptism services already in the last year – the testimonies from both youth and adults have been truly inspiring.

Children and Families

There have been several brilliant children and young family events this year which have attracted literally hundreds of our local families. These include: the Bright party, the Christmas Spectacular, the Crib Service, the Pancake party and our massive Easter Egg Hunt attracting nearly 400 children! Our parent and toddler group, Tots and Tunes, also continues to grow and draw young families into the life of the church. All these groups and events are designed to draw new families to St Andrew's and to a living faith in Jesus. Our Sunday children's ministry continues to grow as we see more and more families coming to faith. Praise the Lord!

Safeguarding

We continually strive to keep everyone safe at St Andrew's. Safeguarding best practice is our goal in every aspect of the church's ministry. The PCC discuss safeguarding at every meeting and are required to complete regular training modules. Sue Griffiths continues in post as our Parish Safeguarding Officer. In April 2025 we adopted the new Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which helps with compliance and best practice in all areas of Church Safeguarding. New policies have been adopted, new posters and other information for victims and survivors is now displayed throughout the church. The diocesan Safeguarding Officer, Colin Perkins, preached at St Andrew's on Sunday 5 October. We continue to run our in-house training sessions for all volunteers and staff, and to follow best practice for safer recruitment and training. Please see the separate Safeguarding Report 2025 for more details.

Mission and evangelism

Reaching out to those who do not know Jesus, is at the heart of all we do at St Andrew's. Alpha is one of the key ways that we reach new people. There were 3 courses during 2025 with over 40 guests attending, most of whom have joined the church and continued to grow in faith. The first course of 2026 attracted over 20 guests several of whom were baptised. Those who complete Alpha are the most likely to then recommend it to family and friends. It is so exciting to see how many continue to encounter God through Alpha (2025 saw over 2.8M people attend Alpha courses worldwide, the highest number ever!).

We have also taken teams out into Burgess Hill on several Saturdays this year to do street evangelism, offer prayer and chat to people about faith.

Prayer

Prayer has been and continues to be a key focus for us as a community. We held various prayer weeks and prayer meetings in 2025, including the Global Week of 24-7 prayer in September, following a teaching series on Prayer and Fasting earlier in the year. We fully believe prayer is fuelling the life and growth of the church.

The 4 days of prayer for the beginning of Lent 2026 was a very precious and creative time for St Andrew's with over 150 people coming to pray. We focussed on the Lord's prayer and many people contributed in creative ways.

Advent and Christmas

Advent and Christmas - We estimate that attendance through Advent and Christmas, including all the school services (Oak Tree, Birchwood Grove and Burgess Hill Girls) and Care Home visits, was around 4,500. This is a significant increase on 2024. Over 2000 of these were those attending St Andrew's Advent and Carol services (including the Christmas Spectacular production, Christingle, Crib Service, 9 Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve Midnight Communion). All of these were evangelistic in one way or another. Many local people, invited friends, family, and neighbours heard the truth of Christmas, received an invitation to Alpha and seemed to leave with a very positive view of the church. We also gave away over 200 copies of Bear Grylls's book, The Greatest Story Ever Told. It has been encouraging to see a significant rise in attendance in January 2026 following the numbers for Advent and Christmas.

New staff

Four new members of Staff joined the team at St Andrew's in 2025. The licensing service for our new Associate Vicar, Gareth Harper, conducted by Bishop Martin, took place on Monday 3 March. It was a great occasion and wonderful to welcome Gareth and Athena (and Bea and Zeph) to St Andrew's. Gareth will focus on local mission and community engagement, he will oversee youth and children's ministry, our evening service "The Six" and help with communication, social media etc. (as well as preaching, leading services and other ordained ministry). It is our longer-term goal that Gareth will explore the possibility of gathering a team to lead a church plant from St Andrew's in the coming years.

Following our Gift Day in October, and a successful recruitment process, Kim Sullivan was appointed to the role of Assistant Youth Pastor. She began in May and has added strength to our youth team as the numbers continue to grow. Gracie Lambert also joined the staff team as she began the New Wine Discipleship Year (DY) scheme in September, with St

Andrew's as her placement church, focussing on youth, children and communications. It has been excellent to have a young person on our staff team this year and we are delighted that Gracie plans now to study a degree in Youth Ministry and Theology and make St Andrew's her placement church for the next three years. We are also very much hoping that we will have a new DY student with us from September 2026.

In October our Worship Pastor, Stuart Barbour, stepped down after many years of faithful service. We are so thankful to Stu for all his hard work, his wonderful heart and musical gifts, and the amazing worship ministry that he led. But we were delighted to appoint Zoë Baker to the role, she began on 30 November and has made a great start.

Mission Partners

We held a review of the Mission Partners that St Andrew's support. A working party was asked to propose a way forward and after prayerful consideration by the PCC, it was decided that the following should be Mission Partners (who receive regular financial support):

1. Family Support Work (FSW)
2. Sam and Daniela Leighton (YWAM)
3. Church Mission Society (CMS)
4. Hope House Haiti
5. Befriended
6. Centre For Urban Mission (Nairobi, Kenya)
7. Loiyangalani (Northern Kenya)
8. Off the Fence
9. Tearfund

It was agreed that the list of Mission Partners will be reviewed in 2 years.

In partnership with Befriended we are now a monthly Sunday afternoon tea party for lonely and isolated, mainly older people (attracting over 100 people each time).

It was wonderful to have Yvrose from Hope House Haiti with us for three weeks in June 2025 when she was visiting St Andrew's and other partner churches in the UK. We held a Summer BBQ with her Hope House Haiti and the Loiyangalani Trust, which was a wonderful day!

Creation Care

Neroli Allen, our Authorised Lay Minister for Creation Care, presented a proposal for the PCC as we consider how to become a more environmentally friendly church. The plan is to appoint leaders and teams for 5 different areas in response to the climate crisis and God's call to care for creation more responsibly. These are: our green space; our buildings/energy use; teaching, worship and prayer on creation care; advocacy and community action; recycling and personal good practice. We have also received a report on St Andrew's energy use, proposing a number of actions which would significantly reduce our carbon footprint. The most significant of which are to replace our gas boiler with an air sourced heat pump, and to install solar panels on the church roof. Both of these are big and expensive projects which we will be considering in 2026.

Paul Dyke has now also completed the ALM course for Creation Care and will continue to serve on our Eco Church team with Neroli and other committed members.

Men's and Women's Ministry

Men's and Women's breakfasts continued on Saturday mornings throughout the year. These are excellent occasions which have brought people together, strengthening relationships, sharing faith and welcoming newcomers/those from outside the church. The men's breakfasts are a joint venture with Sheddingdean Baptist Church and St Edward's Burgess Hill. It was great to have Gary Grant, founder of The Entertainer Toy Shops, as our guest speaker in February 2026. There was a Women's Day conference at St Andrew's with Perry May Britton in September 2025. The Women held a Christmas Dinner at the Hassocks Hotel and the Men held a Curry Night in the Rider Hall.

Nursing Home Services

There have been regular services of Holy Communion, as well as seasonal services of Songs of Praise or Christmas Carols, in six local residential and nursing homes.

The Highmead Trust

We offer our sincere gratitude to Robert and Lucy Monroe and the Highmead Trust, who have been so generous to St Andrew's over many years. The trustees are no longer able to continue overseeing the grant-giving work of the trust, due to age and ill health, so they have decided to transfer the remaining funds to St Andrew's. This is a considerable amount of money which will be placed in a restricted fund with directions from the Highmead trustees (essentially capital projects, and youth and children's ministry) but will now be administered by the PCC. Their generosity enabled a new kitchen to be fitted for the Vicarage in August which has made a huge difference to the living space and the ability to offer hospitality at the Vicarage.

Structure, Governance, and Management

An Operational Leadership Team (OLT) has been established this year, made up of staff, volunteers and PCC members. The OLT now meets 6 times per year for long term planning and review of all activities and events.

We welcomed the Archdeacon of Horsham, the Ven Angela Martin, in October for our quinquennial Archdeacon's Visitation. She thoroughly reviewed every aspect of ministry at St Andrew's and our compliance with diocesan regulations. Her report was accompanied by the following comments: "I enjoyed my visit, seeing the care you all take over the Mission and Ministry of the Church within the Benefice both practically and spiritually. ... I certainly enjoyed learning about your plans for the future and the growth in the church family that has taken place since the blend happened 18 months ago."

Parochial Church Council from APCM April 2026

Revd Will Kemp (Chair) – Priest-in-Charge
Gareth Harper – Associate Vicar from March 2025
Amanda Hanlon – Churchwarden
Phil Kelly – Churchwarden from April 2025
Ian Porter – Parish Treasurer
Andy Sherlock – Fabrics Manager

James Allen – PCC Secretary and Head of Operations, Deanery Synod
Sue Gumbrell – Deanery Synod
Margaret Kay – Deanery Synod
Sheila Smith – Deanery Synod
Jean Cooke
Dale Marklew
Michael Awuye
Julienne Layzell
John Lumley

The following steps down from the PCC in 2025/6

Mandy Anstee – acting Churchwarden to April 2025, PCC to April 2026
Andy Gilbard to December 2025
Janet Davies to April 2025
Nicola Duckworth to April 2025
Faith Fallon to April 2025
Linda Porter to April 2025
Nicola Reuter-Sinclair to April 2025
Ruth Sanders to April 2025
Steve Watson to April 2025

To support the church's ministries, St Andrew's has teams responsible for various aspects of administration and management. These are the Parochial Church Council (PCC), the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP), and the Standing Committee.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Vicar/Priest-in-Charge
Associate Vicar
Churchwardens
Parish Treasurer
Fabrics Manager
Head of Operations

Standing Committee

Vicar/Priest-in-Charge
Associate Vicar
Churchwardens
Parish Treasurer
Head of Operations

Electoral Roll

At the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in May 2025 there were 210 members of the church electoral roll. In April 2026 the electoral roll stands at 220.

Revd Will Kemp (Priest-in-Charge)