

# Events Committee Report 2025/26

## St Andrew's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, April 2026

### Background

Up until June 2025, many events at St Andrew's, particularly the programme of folk concerts, were organised by our dear friend Chris Seward. His untimely passing in June 2025 left an enormous hole in the capability of the church to organise events. We had to pick up very quickly the threads of what was scheduled for the rest of the year and so a combination of the people involved in helping with events under Chris's stewardship formed an ad-hoc events committee co-ordinated initially by Forbes Mutch.

By the autumn of 2025, this group morphed into the ratified **Church Events Committee**, with Forbes as Chairman. Other key members included – and continue to include – Adrian Walter, Catherine Sleath, Jane Eldred, Jenny Mutch, Julie Markey, Julie Hollings, Lesley Self, Lou Cobb, Melanie Seward, Mick Donovan, Phil Probert, Richard Taylor, Rosemary Willis, Shirley Taylor and Stella Walter. While this may look like an inflated number of people for an effective committee, each member has a particular skill, expertise or role to play, which allows events to be arranged and executed smoothly, safely and with commercial viability.

### Membership and meetings 2025/26

The membership of the committee has remained stable since it was formed, with one change – Julie Hollings has joined in her capacity as Safeguarding Officer, replacing Catherine Sleath in this role.

The committee meets online as and when required, usually several weeks before a large event, to ensure that the requirements for success are being met – is the publicity in place, have we sold enough tickets, what is the beer and drinks requirement, do we have a temporary drinks licence, is the right equipment in place, do we have enough helpers on the day? The answers to these questions and many more are recorded on a spreadsheet created by Jenny Mutch and housed on a shared drive.

### Activity 2025-26

The committee originally focused on the folk events that Chris had arranged but soon brought all church events that engage with the public into its remit. These have included the Hertfordshire Festival of Music, Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir, Take Note and Beer and Carols. This last event, co-ordinated by Julie Donovan and Jane Eldred, attracted over 400 people and was a huge success. Eight folk concerts were held in 2025 with such luminaries on the folk club circuit as Churchfitters; Sykes and Causley, Leveret, Gryphon, Gigsparner, Phil Beer, While and Matthews and Richard Durrant. In total, musical events generated a net surplus for the church of £5,851.

### Going forward

Now that the Events Committee has been established, St Andrew's is continuing to carry forward the legacy left by Chris Seward. Six major folk acts have been booked for 2026 so far, and the church continues to build on its reputation as a first-class location for events. The new audio-visual system enhances what was already known to be a venue with excellent acoustics. A broader spectrum of events will be encouraged, starting with 'Celebrating the Natural World' an evening exploring the beauty, wonder and importance of the countryside through music, art and conversation on Thursday 21 May.

### Summary

Events at the church, particularly those for the general public, are important for revenue purposes but also as means of outreach and establishing St Andrew's in the heart of the community. The Newly formed Events Committee ensures a secure future in this area.

### Forbes Mutch (Chair of the Events Committee)

April 2026