

Vicar's Report to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting 31 May 2026

The Vicar's Report is always an important milestone in the life of the parish- reflecting back on all that has been in God's strength and with God's guidance looking forward to what is to come in the years ahead.

This being my second report, the past year has seen a number of new developments. Firstly we are now live streaming our services—which has allowed members of the congregation not able to be with us in person to join remotely. The numbers are not huge but it is something which has quickly become an established part of our life as a church and our ministry to be as inclusive as possible- we have streamed a funeral this year and we know that some former members here who have moved away have tuned in. We've also introduced the Kylie Minogue microphone which along with the live streaming has allowed you all to hear better what is being said.

Our Christmas celebrations developed in 2025. This year the Mary and Joseph figures toured the parish stopping off in different houses across the benefice. We went carol singing around Edensor with a balance of singers and listeners and the Christmas lunch returned extremely successfully. We also hosted a service for the estate of which more later. As well as new developments our Carol Service, beautifully sung by Jonathan Francis and his choir, and Christmas Morning proved to be as popular as ever.

We marked as a community Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday and The Sheep Service. Our Harvest benefitted our friends at the Padley Centre and that partnership is down to your generosity and Nadine's devoted collection of our gifts. Edensor Day was very successful, raising funds to support the excellent work that Ed Bond does in the churchyard and allowing us to see how an exhibition works in the Cavendish Chapel.

This year saw another visit by Cliff College for their graduation, Music in the Round returned for a day of concerts and several other visits by organised groups.

Another new development was the talks programme, where Lynne's vision became a reality and a wide variety of speakers have spoken with a number of others planned. They have been a financial success but also brought new people into the church. As someone I met recently said you are that church that does those interesting talks.

This year we lost some faithful members of the church community – Duncan Gordon, former churchwarden and the advocate for well timed sermons, and Mollie Marshall, poet and the much loved reader of Betjamen's poetry. In the wider community we lost Geoff Machin, Henry Sheldon and Margaret Finney. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

I want to say some particular thank yous- to Lynne and Liz for their faithful service as churchwardens, the phrase "Lynne, Liz and I" has probably become my catchphrase in Edensor but it is a reminder of the importance of being a team and demonstrating collegial leadership in the parish" Their commitment, kindness and care for us all is a great gift, Thank you to Lynne for her musical skill week by week - encouraging us and leading our musical worship. Thank you to David Neale as our reader- preaching,

leading and visiting but doing so much more- it is important to have another voice in services and to have a colleague, who brings loyalty, experience and a sense of perspective he is a good friend and an able minister. Mark Titterton is an excellent Treasurer as well as wise and honest counsel to many of us, with an ability to see the bigger picture. Last year Gill Davie laid down her pen as PCC secretary and stepped back with our thanks for all her hard work. We were all very grateful to Christine Robinson for filling the vacancy and with her calm manner, keeping PCC on track and running smoothly. To Amanda and the flower team flower team for keeping the church looking so beautiful which our visitors often comment on. Thank you to all who do the seen and the unseen things - all who make coffee and all who clean the building, all who read, welcome and do the many other tasks in the life of the church- you all deserve our great gratitude.

Clive Thrower holds a triple role of Steeple Keeper, webmaster and PTO priest, all of which he undertakes with efficiency and empathy. I'm grateful to him for providing cover while I'm away and being a source of wisdom on the wider deanery. We had been talking about altering the website but that has been shelved for the moment, and I'm very glad that he has been happy to continue with our existing website and keep it refreshed.

Thank you to all of you for all that you do and all that you are- we're a team and like all teams everyone is important and valued. For Clare especially but also for us as a couple the last two months have not been easy but the support from the whole community, church and parish has been a huge blessing and a sense of being warmly accepted into the life of Edensor. In moments of loss, you see the values and love, of people and places,

As a church we are fortunate to have a number of strong partnerships.

With Pilsley School- which is a wonderful place with wonderful people- it is a huge privilege to host their three big services and to welcome them on visits to St Peter's and St Anne's. I take Collective Worship on most Fridays and help where I can as Vicar and Governor. It has not been the easiest of years but the resilience of Emma and her team, and the kindness and mutual support of the whole community there, shows its firm foundation on Christian values.

There is of course the strong partnership with the Chatsworth community – last Christmas we held a carol service for those working on the estate which was a great success and our diocesan commitment to be greener has for us born fruit through our great friends Alex and Ed in Natural Capital, especially in the swift boxes and the encouragement of the natural world in the churchyard.

My own fascination with Francis Thompson and his life, has given me the opportunity to immerse myself in the life of the estate and to build up links with the archives and collection teams, discovering new opportunities and new insights.

For me the surprise decision to lift the suspension of presentation meant a small change legally but in the institution/licensing an opportunity to reflect on my first two

years and to see so many friendly faces in St Anne's that afternoon from across the benefice. It also allowed me to reflect on my own ministry- I have believed in God's call to be a priest and pastor inside and outside the building, throughout my ministry which is not always the prevailing wisdom in the Church of England these days. Thirty years on from Ordination back in the heady days of Euro 96, I felt affirmed that afternoon that I was still being faithful to God's call in my ministry here, particularly in Harry Bowman's comment in being available through walking around and being seen at the Farm Shop. As the person in the Carriage House said the other day we know who you are and where you are when we need you.

It is good to be affirmed but also important to realise that we live in a changing world and one where ministry develops to face fresh challenges- there other facets to the priestly and the pastoral than walking about.

So what are some of the challenges we face?

Caring for the building- we are still on the At risk register for our roofing issues and this year brought forward the Quinquennial Inspection to start to address these, hopefully with a Heritage Lottery bid. Such an application is the moment when we can look at visitor facilities and developing our church to be a community resource.

Welcoming more visitors and upgrading signage and information.

Developing our cultural events- concerts, talks and exhibitions.

Working even more closely with St Anne's – we are very grateful to Sarah Porter as our PSO for both parishes, the suggestion has been made that we have one website but are there more economies of scale in terms of resources and expertise we have in our parishes that can be shared.

Above all we continue to reflect on our journey and story, where God has brought us and where we are being called to. As a congregation that like so many places is older, how can we pass the story on as the next generation continue the journey of faith. That is an important challenge but needs to be faced.

So thank you for being a supportive and faithful group, sharing the vision of church and community being loved by God and called to be in partnership. Thank you for exploring together what it means to be Christian in today's world and how we grow in faith as individuals and as a worshipping community. Thank you for standing with the PCC in facing the challenges.

My favourite biblical verse is from 1 Thessalonians- "the one who calls is faithful and will do this". May that be our certainty and our call to action in all we do.