

Report to Pettistree Annual Meeting 2026 from St Peter & St Paul's Church

2025 has been a very positive year for Pettistree Church. Our new vicar the Rev Charlotte Wallington moved into the vicarage in Wickham Market and was installed in her post by the Archdeacon on behalf of the Bishop in February. Since then she has worked hard at getting to know us and wishes to stress that she is available for everyone not just churchgoers!

The redecoration of the Nave was the major work on the church this year. The plaster was removed and then replaced with 'breathable' lime plaster and once that was dry it was painted with Limewash. This is the approved method for long-term conservation and should help prevent further deterioration of the walls. The majority of this work was covered by the Insurance claim and it was only some improvements to the electrics etc. that the church had to fund. Interesting historical finds meant that a little more of the church history was uncovered during the work.

The contractors worked very efficiently and it was completed ready for the church to reopen in August. A Rededication and Thanksgiving service was held on September 21st with the Archdeacon preaching and followed by refreshments in the Village Hall.

All the normal Sunday and Festival services were held in 2025 although these were in the Village Hall during the redecoration work. Many people appreciate hearing the Bells, and the bell ringing team were able to keep practicing regularly and ringing for services when the church was closed. The church was beautifully decorated for Harvest, when Donations of produce were made at the Harvest service. These were all given to the 'Open Pantry' which is run weekly at All Saints, Wickham Market. Many people attended the Christmas services. A Christingle service was held when the Presmere nursery children could attend. A traditional Carol service, and family communion on Christmas day.

A service of Remembrance on November 11th at the Pettistree War Memorial was started in 2004 by Ned Hogg, one of the churchwardens who had served with the Royal Marines during WWII. This year there were 36 people attending, both church members and non-regulars too. The bells were rung half-muffled before the service, a very evocative sound, and Peter Holloway from Charsfield played the Last Post and Reveille before and after the 2 minute silence. Jim Jarvie played a lament on the bagpipes, the final bars of this were particularly effective as he walked slowly away from the War Memorial.

The Community Payback Service team returned to work in the churchyard and the PCC are very grateful to Dick Smith for organising this. Unfortunately, they are no longer able to undertake this kind of work, so ongoing maintenance work on the churchyard will now have to be funded by the church members. The PCC are very grateful to Andy Curtis for mowing the grass and keeping the very elderly mower going.

By the end of December the Church's Parish Room renovation was complete and it is now an accessible, well insulated small meeting place with a servery, and an adjacent disabled toilet. We hope that people will find it a useful addition to the larger and well-appointed Village Hall.

The difficulties that have been raised about car parking have been discussed by the PCC at length, and no decision has yet been made about applying for planning permission to the District Council to slightly extend the current car park. The PCC appreciate that the Village Hall carpark is available for Sunday services but many of the congregation would find it difficult to walk that far. Car sharing is in operation but is not always a practical solution. The PCC fully support the Parish Council Chairman's decision to review the whole problem of parking in the roads near The Greyhound and the Church.

Maggie Hallett 20-3-26