The Churchwarden's Annual Report presented to the **A**nnual **P**arochial **C**hurch **C**ouncil 2026 **M**eeting of the Blessed Church of St Mary the Virgin Wambrook, for the Year Ending December 2025.

Fabric Report

The building fabric is generally in good order following the remedial works in the last seven years, thanks to funding from LPOW II and English Heritage.

Internally, the décor is in need of extensive renovation but is on hold until funds permit. A large fissure / crack has appeared in the east corner of the south aspect of the Chancel. This is likely to be due to the hot summer of 2025 and is being actively monitored for any movement

Precision photography of the archway between the Chancel and Nave has been completed and no sign of any movement was detected. After some nine years with no movement detected, monitoring, will reduce to once every two years.

The curtain rail inside the west door needs remedial action/repair to reduce through draughts when the heating is in use, in order to reduce energy costs. In turn, the west door is in need of attention, when funds allow.

During inclement weather rain coming through the south window of the Tower runs down the wall to the Nave. There is nothing that can currently be done to mitigate this at the time of reporting.

Cleaning and Flower arrangements

I thank all those who have given their time, to carry out the regular cleaning and flower arranging in the Church during the past year and I sincerely hope they will continue to do so. Thanks must also be given to those who give their time drawing up the cleaning and flower rota. Their work is appreciated. With decreasing number of volunteers, this will be a challenge going forward.

Attendance at Services

Attendance at regular Services has stabilized within the worshipping community, with Evensong, becoming popular. Obtaining a regular organist was a challenge and we have now introduced a recorded music system, which has filled this gap. Thanks are due to two members of the community, for fully funding the music system equipment.

Service preparation

Thanks are due to the worshipping community, who attend the Church for service preparation and for stowing everything away after the service, including the reading of the first lesson. Again, their help is appreciated, including those who provide light refreshments at notable Services. i.e. Evensong, Rogation and Carols, as examples.

The Bells

A new generation of ringers are continuing to learn the art of bell ringing, or campanology and have rung at some Services. A new Captain of the Tower has now been appointed.

The Churchyard

Volunteer teams of mower and strimming operators, have continued to mow and strim the grass on a regular basis. The grass recovered through the summer months and has stood up well during the winter despite the unseasonable wet weather. Some re-wilding on the south aspect of the Churchyard was introduced, which in it's first year really was a success, plus some limited work on the level part of the extension Churchyard, which will be a continuing feature. The inside of the boundary hedge will need cutting back in the coming year.

This years mowing teams were busy throughout the cutting season and the Churchyard is something we can be rightly proud of. The working party in October, completed the regular trimming and tidying up in preparation for the winter months. Remember that anyone can join in at any time and is actively welcomed. The light fitting in the archway has now been re-connected. Again, I thank, those who have given their time to these activities during the year, not forgetting those who set out the rota's and spreadsheets, again with the challenge of finding enough volunteers for the task.

Safeguarding

Nothing has been raised, in respect of any safeguarding issues in this reporting period. A copy of the safeguarding policy, including contact details of the Safeguarding Officer, can be viewed on the Church notice-board or alternatively, viewed or downloaded from the Church website, by scanning the QR code on page three.

Health and Safety

A health and safety audit was carried out by a member of the PCC and myself. The latest version[2] will be available shortly, as a download from the Church website.

The Clergy

The Rev Deborah Perreau is now well established and is bringing new ideas and vision to the Parish and has seamlessly integrated into the community.

The Rev Deborah, kindly held a Service of Commemoration/Remembrance, on the 75th anniversary of VJ day, at the graveside of a member of the Wambrook community, who fell in battle in Myanmar, (formerly Burma), in February 1945.

Church Electoral Roll

A complete revision of the Church electoral roll was completed ahead of the 2025 A.P.C.M. A list of those on the current roll is posted on the internal Church notice-board.

Finance

A new finance member has been appointed and welcomed to the P.C.C. and is working through the Church accounts.

The Future

Discussions have taken place, to encourage the greater use of the building and the matter of re-ordering of some of the internal fixtures and fittings to create community[1] space, is challenging. The community toilet project, will have to be abandoned or put on long term hold. The wider community have as previously reported, indicated that there is no interest in any support for the long term viability of the building.

Following the highly successful, fundraising scramble in August, future funding of the building, by this event, may be at risk. The major players who have worked hard in previous years to make the event work, have indicated they no longer wish to do the organizing of refreshments. For the record, this is not a reflection on these major players, who really worked hard on the event over the years and we should be grateful for this and their work in previous years. This is a major fundraising event for the Church. With decreasing annual income, funds are being heavily squeezed by the increasing demands of mission, utility, repair and insurance costs. Parochial fees are still the most significant financial burden at this time and may have to be visited, going forward. With current financial trends and within the next five years, the building may not be financially viable and the future of Wambrook Church will come under the spotlight. Downgrading to a festival or complete closure of the Church and Churchyard are options, that arguably are contentious, but are realities that will likely have to be addressed.

In conclusion

There is no intent, implied or otherwise, to distort the facts as set out. If there are errors or omissions in this report, they should be reported to the Churchwarden for correction.

Report end.

Graeme Pidgeon.

Churchwarden.

January 2026.

Reference:-

- The 'Community Survey' of 2014 (1) can be read or downloaded from the Church website by scanning the QR code underneath.
- The latest version (2) of the Health and Safety assessment, (February 2026), can now be read or downloaded, from the Church website by scanning the QR code underneath.



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