



St Mary the Virgin, Amersham with All Saints' Coleshill

Faithful: Two-Year Ministry & Development Strategy 2026-2028

Executive Summary

St Mary's, Amersham and All Saints', Coleshill is a parish in which there is much to give thanks for. Across the past few years, we have seen growth in worship, relationships, community engagement and the number of people participating in parish life. The PCC away day reflected a strong sense of gratitude for what God is already doing amongst us. From worship and baptisms to friendship lunches, toddler groups, concerts, seasonal events and engagement with the wider community, there is a great deal of life across our parish.

The challenge before us is therefore not simply to make the parish busier, nor to create more activity. It is to be **faithful**.

During the Rector's retreat, the reflections from the PCC away day were brought together around one central observation: **God is growing the life of the parish – and we now need the people, structures and pathways to sustain and deepen that growth.** (The recent Coleshill survey will also feed into this plan once the deadline has passed.)

This is the heart of this two-year strategy.

Our existing vision is: **Building a faithful community of Jesus that provides a warm welcome where all may come and worship God in a place that is loving and safe.**

Our three parish values remain: **Community · Welcome · Worship**

And throughout this strategy there is one overriding purpose: **To grow people in the love of Jesus.**

This gives us an important test for everything we do. Better communication, more children attending, improved buildings, successful fundraising, more volunteers and increased attendance are all good things — but they are not the ultimate goal.

The question we must continually ask is: **Does this help people grow in the love of Jesus?**

Our ambition is therefore not simply for a bigger church or a busier church, but for a **faithful and alive church**: a church in which people encounter Jesus, grow in faith, discover their gifts, serve one another, share the good news and increasingly become the people God is calling them to be.

The Priorities

1. Community: Growing a healthy, sustainable and participatory parish

The PCC away day repeatedly identified a concern that too much currently relies upon too few people. Clergy workload, administration, finance, safeguarding, children's work and volunteer fatigue were all identified as areas requiring greater capacity.

Over the next two years we will therefore strengthen the structures and people needed to sustain parish life. This will include developing administration, reviewing governance, creating appropriate committees, strengthening volunteer participation, improving role clarity and considering additional administrative and development capacity.

The aim is not simply to recruit more volunteers, but to develop a culture in which more people take ownership of the life of the church. We already have 166 volunteers; the challenge is to spread the load and enable people to contribute according to their gifts.

2. Welcome: Helping people find belonging and take their next step

There is much to celebrate in the way people encounter our parish through worship, concerts, lunches, dances, schools engagement, seasonal events, church hires, the choir and bellringers and many other activities. However, the PCC recognised that there is still more we can do to help people understand who we are, find their way into parish life and feel genuinely at home. We will therefore develop an integrated communication and welcome strategy, including improved signage, information materials, welcome packs, website development, social media, QR codes and clearer pathways into parish life.

The principle behind this work is simple:

Every communication should help someone take their next step.

Our existing communications strategy expresses this as:

See → Take → Connect → Belong → Grow

Communication therefore becomes more than the distribution of information. It becomes an intentional ministry of welcome, formation and evangelism.

3. Worship: Helping people grow in the love of Jesus

Worship is at the heart of our parish life. Over the next two years we will seek not simply to sustain our worshipping life, but to help people go deeper in faith. We will continue to develop preaching, teaching, prayer and opportunities for spiritual growth, building on initiatives such as the Psalm 23 teaching series and other forms of accessible teaching.

We will develop resources for prayer and Scripture, seasonal devotional material, opportunities to explore Christian faith, courses, groups and prayer ministry.

Children and families will be a significant part of this work. We will strengthen our toddler provision, children's area and Sunday School, while seeking to build a sustainable volunteer team.

Our framework for discipleship will be:

Know Jesus → Love Jesus → Follow Jesus → Serve Jesus → Share Jesus

Evangelism sits naturally within this wider understanding of discipleship. We want people who are curious about Christianity to have accessible ways to explore faith and encounter Jesus.

The Foundations

Alongside these three priorities are two foundations which enable them.

1. Spaces that enable ministry

Our buildings are resources for ministry. We will therefore seek to make better use of our spaces and steward them so that they support worship, welcome, community, discipleship and mission.

This includes developing the children's area, improving storage, creating café-style seating, developing a library, addressing areas of clutter such as the Drake Chapel and undertaking appropriate kitchen refurbishment.

The purpose is not simply to improve the appearance of our buildings, but to create spaces in which people can meet, worship, learn, pray and share life together.

2. Financial stewardship

Financial sustainability is not itself our mission. It enables our mission. We will seek to steward the resources God has entrusted to us wisely, enabling investment in ministry while maintaining appropriate reserves and meeting our responsibilities.

This includes stewardship and giving, fundraising, grant applications, the Mission Fund, appropriate investment in buildings and staffing, and strong financial processes.

The Process

Year One: Establish

The first year will concentrate on putting in place the people, structures, resources and pathways needed to sustain growth.

Key areas will include:

- strengthening parish administration;
- developing appropriate governance and committee structures;
- improving communication and digital infrastructure;
- implementing the QR code strategy;
- developing welcome materials;
- strengthening children's provision;
- establishing sustainable volunteer structures;
- beginning priority building and space improvements;
- developing initial discipleship resources;
- strengthening financial stewardship and fundraising capacity.

Year Two: Develop

The second year will build on what has been established.

We will seek to:

- deepen discipleship and teaching;
- develop successful community activities;
- increase participation and shared ownership;
- strengthen mission and engagement with the wider community;
- develop pathways for people exploring faith;
- expand effective children's and family ministry;

- make greater use of our buildings;
- strengthen the parish-wide identity of St Mary's and All Saints';
- evaluate what has worked and refine our priorities accordingly.

The Measure

We will use numerical measures where they are helpful: attendance, participation, volunteer involvement, engagement with communications, giving, use of groups and resources, and other appropriate indicators.

But numbers will never be the definition of success.

A larger congregation is good if more people are growing in faith. More volunteers are good if more people are discovering and using their gifts. Better communication is good if it helps people find belonging and take their next step. A busier building is good if it creates opportunities for community, worship, discipleship and mission.

Our ultimate measure remains:

Are people growing in the love of Jesus?

The Action Plan

The purpose of this strategy is **to grow people in the love of Jesus**. Over the next two years, we will seek to establish the people, structures and pathways needed to sustain the growth already taking place and then develop them to deepen faith, participation and mission.

The following are the principal actions arising from this strategy.

1. COMMUNITY: Growing a healthy, sustainable and participatory parish

We will:

- Strengthen parish administration and clarify the responsibilities of our administrative roles.
- Explore and, subject to funding and PCC approval, recruit **Parish Development Administrator**.
- Establish and develop the proposed **Finance, Communications & Marketing, Fabric, and Mission & Discipleship groups**.
- Strengthen pastoral structures and support.
- Review how responsibility is distributed across our **166 volunteers**, seeking to reduce dependence on a relatively small number of people.
- Encourage a culture in which people are equipped not only to suggest new ideas, but to take appropriate ownership of implementing them.
- Strengthen sustainable leadership and volunteering within children's and young people's ministry.
- Reduce unnecessary dependence on the Rector for administration and implementation.

What we hope to see:

A parish in which ministry and responsibility are increasingly shared, people are using their gifts, volunteers are supported, and clergy have greater capacity for worship, teaching, pastoral care and mission.

2. WELCOME: Helping people find belonging and take their next step

We will:

- Introduce clear and consistent **church information boards and posters**.

- Produce a simple **parish information leaflet** and **contact cards**.
- Produce a more substantial **Parish Welcome & Information Booklet**.
- Create consistent **Welcome Packs** for newcomers.
- Implement the parish **QR Code Strategy**, providing simple pathways for people who are new, want prayer, wish to give, want to join a group, explore faith or get in touch.
- Strengthen and regularly maintain the **parish website**.
- Develop our **social media, photography, video and digital communications**.
- Continue to develop the weekly parish newsletter.
- Strengthen intentional welcome, accessibility and pastoral connection.
- Develop our identity as **one parish with two distinctive worshipping communities**, sharing resources across St Mary's and All Saints' where appropriate.

Our communication pathway will be:

See → Take → Connect → Belong → Grow

What we hope to see:

People encountering the parish through worship or community life can easily understand who we are, feel genuinely welcomed and know how to take their next step towards belonging and faith.

3. WORSHIP: Helping people grow in the love of Jesus

We will:

- Continue to develop accessible **preaching and teaching**, building on initiatives such as the Psalm 23 teaching series.
- Produce **Scripture and prayer cards** for use within and beyond the congregation.
- Develop a programme of **parish devotional booklets and resources**.
- Produce **seasonal mission and discipleship resources**.
- Strengthen opportunities for **prayer, prayer ministry, groups and courses**.
- Maintain clear pathways for people wishing to **explore Christian faith**, including courses such as Alpha where appropriate.
- Revamp and resource the **toddler group**.
- Develop a welcoming, semi-permanent **children's area** within St Mary's.
- Strengthen **Sunday School**, including two age groups, a larger team, consistent themes and readings, and sustainable volunteer rotas with planned breaks.
- Continue to seek opportunities for children, adults and those new to faith to move deeper into the worshipping and discipleship life of the church.
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Our broad discipleship pathway will be:

Know Jesus → Love Jesus → Follow Jesus → Serve Jesus → Share Jesus

What we hope to see:

People of all ages taking identifiable steps in faith: engaging with Scripture and prayer, growing in worship, exploring Christianity, serving others and becoming increasingly confident followers of Jesus.

4. SPACES THAT ENABLE MINISTRY

We will:

- Declutter and make better use of under-used areas, including the **Drake Chapel**.
- Establish the new **children's area**, with appropriate resources, screening and storage.
- Introduce **café-style seating** around the piano to encourage hospitality and conversation.
- Establish a **parish library** and accessible discipleship resources.
- Improve storage for children's, worship and community resources.

- Progress an appropriate **kitchen refurbishment** at St. Mary's to support friendship lunches, Brickfest, hospitality and other parish and community activities.

What we hope to see:

Church spaces that feel welcoming and alive and are increasingly able to support worship, hospitality, discipleship, children's ministry and engagement with the wider community.

5. FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

We will:

- Strengthen financial oversight and reporting through the proposed Finance Committee.
- Develop communication around **regular giving and stewardship**.
- Increase capacity for **fundraising and grant applications**.
- Strengthen administration and monitoring of the **Mission Fund**.
- Identify external funding opportunities for appropriate ministry and building projects.
- Ensure that proposed staffing and capital expenditure is financially sustainable.
- Continue to maintain appropriate reserves and responsible financial controls.
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What we hope to see:

Finances increasingly aligned with our ministry priorities, with the resources and resilience needed to sustain the parish's mission.

The Two-Year Journey

YEAR ONE — ESTABLISH

Our first task is to put the foundations in place.

We will prioritise:

People → Structures → Communications → Children's Provision → Discipleship

Resources → Spaces → Financial Capacity

By the end of Year One, we want the parish to have stronger structures, clearer communication, more sustainable ministry teams and the core resources needed for the next stage of growth.

YEAR TWO — DEVELOP

Having established those foundations, we will concentrate on deepening and developing what is working.

We will prioritise:

Deeper Discipleship → Wider Participation → Community Mission → Children's Ministry → Shared Leadership → Building Use → Parish Identity

By the end of Year Two, we want to see a parish that is increasingly **alive rather than simply busy**: alive on Sundays and throughout the week, less dependent upon the Rector and a small number of key people, increasingly present within the wider community, and above all a place where people are visibly growing in faith.

How We Will Know

We will monitor appropriate indicators including:

- worship attendance;
- children and family participation;
- engagement with groups, courses and teaching;
- volunteer numbers and, importantly, the distribution of responsibility;

- newcomer engagement;
- website, newsletter and QR-code engagement;
- use of parish spaces;
- giving, fundraising and grants;
- participation in prayer and discipleship opportunities.

These numbers will help us understand what is happening, but **they are not themselves the goal**. Every part of this action plan must ultimately return to the same question:

Does this help people grow in the love of Jesus?

More people, better buildings, stronger finances, clearer communications and better structures are valuable insofar as they help us fulfil that calling. Our aim over these two years can ultimately be expressed in one word:

Faithful

The Conclusion

There is much to give thanks for. God is already growing the life of this parish. We have a community with a strong history, committed worshippers, 166 volunteers, growing opportunities for children and families, increasing engagement with the wider community and a wide range of worship, pastoral, discipleship and community activities. The task before us is not to manufacture growth. It is to faithfully steward what God is already doing. We want to create the people, structures, spaces and pathways that enable that growth to deepen.

We want people to encounter the love of Jesus.
 We want them to know him, love him, follow him, serve him and share him.
 We want our buildings to support that mission.
 We want our administration to support that mission.
 We want our finances to support that mission.
 We want our communications to support that mission.
 We want our community to support that mission.
 And we want our worship to remain at the heart of it all.

Our ambition is not simply to be busy.
 It is to be **alive**.

Our ambition is not simply to be bigger.
 It is to be **faithful**.

And throughout these two years, the question we return to is simple:
Does this help people grow in the love of Jesus?

If it does, it is worth pursuing.
 If it does not, we should ask whether it belongs at the heart of our strategy.
 May everything we do as a parish — in Community, Welcome and Worship — help us to become increasingly faithful to Jesus and to the calling he has given us.