

St Andrew's Church, Walberswick Annual Report 2025-26

I have pleasure in preparing the following report to the 2026 Annual Parish meeting on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St Andrew's Church Walberswick.

Following the 2025 survey inviting people to share what they valued from the church, the PCC and lay members of St Andrew's have done a brilliant job at bringing a greater variety of musical styles and service formats into the church calendar. Our weekly congregation numbers are up across both the more informal serve and the traditional form of worship and Christmas and Easter Services wonderfully well attended. The installation of a fabulous built in screen and the extension of the PA equipment and other new technology so generously funded by the Friends of St Andrew's is already enabling so many new opportunities for the future, as well as ensuring anyone sitting in the porch can hear the service!

Our weekday services on Wednesdays at 10am continue to attract a small but loyal congregation for a traditional service of Holy Communion. We are grateful to our organists and choir who lead Choral Evensong on the second Sunday of each month, and also to our team who have developed our Sunday morning offerings to attract more families to St Andrew's.

In the Autumn 2025, Revd Russ Gant was put on personal leave and Revd Alix Taylor, curate in Beccles, was licensed as Interim Curate to Sole Bay Team Ministry. This has meant that momentum in worship and work within the churches continued, relatively undisrupted.

We celebrated four weddings at St Andrew's in 2025 and look forward to a further three booked for the summer of 2026. We already have bookings for summer weddings and blessings in 2027. This 5th July sees the 100th birthday celebration of former church organist and PCC Secretary Julia Josephs and later that day we have our first baptism in the ruins, along with a picnic open to all in the village. On a more sombre note, we have had six funerals at St Andrew's in 2025 and already six funerals / interments in 2026.

Following the announcement of Revd Gant's suspension from ministry at the beginning of 2026 the Team find themselves in a double vacancy. Advertising the Team Vicar and the Team Rector roles begins this month, with interviews at the beginning of July. We are confident that the positions will be filled, and the new priests licensed and in place by early Autumn 2026. The wider team of retired priests, Lay worship leaders and clergy are committed to ensuring the summer schedule of worship and ministry in the village will continue with gusto!

The PCC remains especially grateful to all those who serve in the church, providing flowers, cleaning the building, maintaining the churchyard, playing music, singing and ensuring services run week by week.

Significant repairs to the churchyard boundary wall along the roadside are due to be underway before the end of 2026 for which we are applying for grant funding.

We have had a replacement carpet and received an anonymous donation for new cushions in the choir stall with a design reflecting former village artist Chris Sinclairs bronze crosses on the altar. We extend further thanks to the Friends of St Andrew's who continue to raise funds for the upkeep and development of the fabric of the church, and to everyone involved in ensuring our buildings, the ruins and the churchyard are maintained to the high standard they are in.

It has been an absolute joy to serve as an interim priest at St Andrew's and I have been made to feel incredibly welcome and loved during my time with you. It is a remarkably special church within an incredible village.

God bless the next 12 months!

Revd Alix Taylor – Interim Assistant Curate
May 2026