

St Edward's Chilton Polden

Report 2026

Chilton Polden PC AGM

The church has just about managed to remain open over the last year but as we have flagged up previously, unless more people attend services and come forward to take on the responsibility of roles to enable the church to function, the future running of the church will not be possible. Any support that the Parish Council can give in this aspect would be appreciated.

We did manage to hold our bi-annual Christmas Tree Festival last year, and that is currently planned again for the future due to a few people coming forward to indicate that they will help with the next one in two years' time. We are so pleased this is the case as we know it is very much enjoyed by the community and is an opportunity for the groups and organisations to promote themselves to all the visitors. The 100 club continues to prove a popular way for the villagers to support the church, and we are very grateful to Karen Squires for running that. Sadly, with so little help, we are not currently able to run other fundraising events into 2026. Although the Family Bingo and the Primrose Tea proved popular in 2025.

The church building has had a few minor repairs; some pointing, but continued water ingress has prevented us from painting the South West corner as we struggle to identify the cause. The Sunday School room has had some outside plaster repairs, and there is still a need to organise and fundraise for the restoration of the bells, but with so few people, we are having to focus our available time on what is absolutely necessary.

Due to personal circumstances, the annual churchyard tidy at the beginning of the year had to be cancelled, and it is hoped that we can organise one in the autumn instead. The churchyard continues to increase its wildflowers with our pattern of mowing, which is roughly once a month, and we are very grateful to the Chilton Parish Council, who provide us with a grant towards the mowing of the Churchyard and who provide a Village Christmas Tree each year.

We continue to collect for the Bridgwater Foodbank run by the Trussell Trust and have a collection box in the Sunday School room porch.

Due to ongoing financial pressures, we have not been able to pay our parish share to Bath and Wells in full again over the last year and into this year, and whilst we work hard to cover the costs to keep the church and Sunday School Room open, and

in a safe condition, that is getting harder with known repairs and inspections over the coming year.

The church is only able to remain part of the village and to run as a result of volunteers, and this is sadly getting fewer people. We are very grateful to those who do help in whatever way at services, or on day to day tasks but we **desperately** need people to come forward to volunteer and shoulder some of the responsibility to keep the church open in the village: amongst other things that is to be sidespersons at services, do church flowers, enable the church to be opened daily by locking and unlocking, be on the cleaning rota, to organise the distribution and to deliver Spokes, and to be on the Friends Group who oversee the church and help with organising all its running and fundraising. It will only be through this that we will be able to remain part of the Village Community of Chilton Polden.

Anita Hayne

Secretary of The Friends Group and Church Cashier

May 2026