

APCM Music Report for the Windmill United Benefice April 2025– March 2026

When I think back over the last 12 months of music in our Benefice, my impression is that our musical groups have felt stable and confident. We have continued to take on new challenges but have had more time to review and improve pieces we have performed before.

I am grateful to all who support my work. We are fortunate to have wonderful accompanists in all our churches – Roger Hind, Peter Nye, Emma Denny and James Wells. I give thanks to the clergy who allow me to work in the way I consider best and to all the musicians who work with me to create the wonderful music we manage to achieve. Music has the power to create a space into which God can enter and that is my aim in everything I do as part of my music ministry.

Choir

The Benefice Choir has continued to lead worship at services in our three churches. Sometimes choir numbers are small but those singing accept the challenge and give a good lead to the musical worship.

On Palm Sunday 13 April 2025, the Benefice choir sang *The Crucifixion* by John Stainer. The piece was new to most and involved a lot of learning in the preceding months. The performance was of a good standard and powerful. A good-sized congregation attended. Everyone wanted to sing it again on Palm Sunday, 29 March 2026. It was less work this time but we were challenged by the loss of both our soloists to ill health just days before the performance. I am very grateful to Paul Houston and James Pyke who stepped in to sing for us. Neither had sung the solo parts before, but they both gave of their best enabling another strong and moving performance to go ahead.

The choir sang Choral Evensongs in June and September.

Choristers were involved in several carol services during the Christmas season. We began with a joint Benefice Advent service on 30 November, the highlight of which was probably *The Heavens are telling the glory of God* by J Haydn, with a very good trio sung by Di MacDonald, David Spruce and Gary Lynch.

Members of the choir as well as other singers from the congregations and villages joined together to sing Christmas carol services on both 14 and 21 December. These are important services when we welcome a wider congregation.

This year we added an Epiphany-tide carol service to the schedule, on 1 February, marking the end of the whole “Christmas” period from Advent to Candlemas.

Other special services include Ascension Day 2025, and Ash Wednesday 2026. The choir also sang the *Hallelujah chorus* in Smallfield to open the 80th anniversary of VE Day festivities in May 2025.

Junior Choir

Elizabeth Barrett and Bryony Frost gave a lovely concert in July 2025 to raise funds for their forthcoming attendance at the RSCM residential choral week in Bath. Both sang beautifully showing us how they are progressing from one year to the next. They are very grateful to everyone who supported them.

RSCM Awards

Jo-Ann Harvey and Bryony Frost achieved the RSCM Bronze Award in July 2025. In September they (and Elizabeth Barrett) sang at a Choral Evensong in St Paul’s London where they were presented with their medals.

Work continues with choristers interested in taking the Silver and Gold awards.

Horne Church Band

The Band continues to support musical worship at the family service each month.

Gill Robinson is no longer playing with the group and I would like to thank her for her commitment and violin playing over many years. The rest of the group remains stable. We continue to add new repertoire when necessary and to improve the already established pieces.

In addition to playing at the Horne family services, the Band has led music at the Early Morning service on Easter Sunday on Outwood common and at the Benefice Lammis Communion held in Hookhouse Farm in July 2025.

The Band currently consists of a flute, trumpet, accordion, guitar, bass guitar, percussionist, keyboard and two singers. Any instrumentalists interested in joining the group should speak to me or email ginette.nye@gmail.com

The Windmill Songmen

The Songmen have particularly enjoyed singing Shanties over the past year. The group has recruited new members and many of the men have increased in confidence.

They sang in East Grinstead in November, where they are always very popular. They are already booked to return in November 2026. They have also performed in Horley Community Centre, at CAMEO and WOW. They have a number of bookings lined up for the summer, including one in South Nutfield.

Men are always welcome. Anyone interested in singing should speak to Ginette or Peter (ginettenye@gmail.com or 07714403624). No experience, no commitment, just fun!

Music at Café Church

I would like to thank Liz, Steve, Rachel and Peter for their support of music at Café church. A supportive musical accompaniment is imperative and together we provide that each month.

Handbells

The handbell team has played on several occasions throughout the year, at the Christmas carol service, CAMEO and WOW amongst others, and is always well received. Anyone interested in playing handbells should speak to Charles Sargent or Ginette Nye.

Concerts

In April, Peter gave a concert and talk about playing the organ, supporting the Royal College of Organists' Play the Organ Year. Several people were interested in trying the organ. In May, Peter held a session with these people showing them how to choose registrations, the different manuals and the pedals and allowing each some time exploring the instrument.

Peter gave an organ recital on 22 November 2025, coinciding with the end of the RSCM Director's Challenge. The director, Hugh Morris, played the organ for 25 hours and asked organists everywhere to join him at 1400 to play *Ombra mai fu* by Handel. Peter played this at 1400 and, later on in the programme, Ann Sheppard played another version of it. Ann was one of the people who came along to the Come and Play the Organ day. It was impressive to hear what she had managed and we are grateful for her willingness to share this with everyone. We look forward to hearing more of what she and others have achieved.

Petty Cash

Since April 2025, the music fund has paid for several sets of music, some second-hand choir gowns with collars, attendance at one-day workshops for some choristers and gifts for the Crucifixion soloists.

On 1 April 2025 the balance was £111.45 and on 31 March 2026 it was £19.66. Songmen performances sometimes gain donations towards costs and choristers continue to be generous with their choir fees for weddings and funerals. In this way, I manage to avoid requesting church funds to support our music.

Organs

Horne

At Horne, the electronic organ continues to provide us with great musical accompaniment. It is a versatile instrument which costs us very little over the course of a year.

Nothing has been done about restoring the pipe organ as church funds have been needed on more urgent issues.

Outwood

The pipe organ at Outwood has been out of action for well over a year. Nick Case-Green has arranged for repairs to be made and the builder is due soon. He has also secured full funding for the repair from Surrey County Council.

Burstow

A lot of time has been spent over the last year deciding what to do about the failing state of the organ at Burstow. Repairs and restoration were approved by the PCC in April. The Organ Blower company has visited several times and, after a few adjustments, has advised that the blower is sufficient for the organ. Following that, our organ builder has also visited a few times. He has made several repairs and the organ is now functioning much better. A decision needs now to be made about how to proceed. We could electrify all of the action or continue with repairs and restoration to the original pneumatic action. This will be discussed and a proposal put to the PCC soon.

I would like to finish by thanking all who contribute to the musical life of the Benefice. So many people give their time and skills to support our worship and mission. Choristers, accompanists, instrumentalists, handbell ringers and songmen all play their part. We are a happy and focused team of musicians and I am very grateful for the commitment of so many.

Ginette Nye

31 March 2026