

PPSCT Chair's Statement – Year ended 31st January 2025

I am pleased to report on the Trust's tenth year of operations. That in itself is an extraordinary statement – **TEN YEARS** – of putting back into the communities from which we all benefit so much.

After the changes to our constitution agreed last year, we now have a very stable, committed group of Trustees. Despite the rules which now limit total terms of service to twelve years, none seem inclined to stand down even though three of us have been present throughout the whole ten years: community service yes, but fellowship too I suggest.

I am delighted to report that Norman Heckington joined our number during the year. In addition to reappointing Liz Richardson for a further three-year term, Members are asked to confirm Norman's appointment.

Members are rightly keen to receive feedback on grants we have made over the years and this review is an important part of the role of Trustees. Many of the grants we make are highly visible (and even audible!) – Pensford church clock being an outstanding example this year to follow up earlier grants for handbells and church bells across our two villages. Since the year end at 31 January it has been great to see work beginning on a number of projects at St. Mary's church, Stanton Drew. These amazing village church buildings are one of the great glories of England and we are delighted to provide appropriate support in ensuring they continue into future generations. They receive NO support from government and are now threatened with the disappearance of the Listed Places Of Worship scheme under which they can reclaim VAT incurred on maintenance projects.

One extraordinary project we have been able to support at minimal cost to the Trust except in underwriting printing before publication, has been the book on the religious buildings in Pensford and associated hamlets (no less than nine of them, extraordinarily).

The replacement of defibrillators is a vital life-saving project and after a false start this has now come to pass as has the replacement of some very dilapidated play equipment at Pensford School. We are hoping to support similar works at Stanton Drew School but this seems to have got bogged down in local government – what a surprise!

We will all have been concerned to see the disappearance of youth groups in the villages so it is pleasing to report that the small grant we made to the local Guide group has enabled them to continue and indeed grow their numbers.

You will see from the financial statements that we continue to be very well funded, thanks to the amazing 100 Club. Briefly our financial position for the year was:

	£
Grants and other income received	18,159
Interest received	899
Grants paid	7,517
Expenses and advertising	241
Surplus for the year	10,901

The resultant cash balance was £56,461 at 31 January. A good start has been made in distributing further grants this year but we are always on the lookout for further opportunities.

During the year Meg Thomas and Steve Croucher resigned their membership, both having moved out of the immediate area. Very sadly, I have to report that Jane Lucas died on 24th April.

As ever, I am grateful for the commitment shown by your Trustees, particularly Sue, Liz, Mark and Eilish and not forgetting Anne, our reviewing accountant.

Andrew Hillman
Chair of Trustees
26th April 2025