




Community of St Mary the Virgin

Annual News 2025-26
from Wantage and Overseas



Community

Sisters at December 2025 in order of Profession -
the making of their life vows to God:

Valeria

Christine Ann (Solitary)

Lorna

Stella

Trudy

Elizabeth Jane (Sister in Charge)

Lizzie Ruth (Sister under Promise)

Dear Friends,

As I write, the leaves are turning, the sun is shining and there is a chill in the air - autumn has definitely arrived, and with it the sense of another year drawing to a close. It has been a year of continuing with all that is familiar – the daily rhythm of Office and Eucharist and the sharing of our life together - alongside the unfamiliar and unexpected, new initiatives and the unforeseen.

Firstly we were delighted by the announcement of Bishop Sarah as our next Archbishop of Canterbury - whilst not underestimating the task which lies ahead of her. Bishop Sarah has been our Bishop Visitor since 2018, and we have so valued her commitment to us through her regular visits - meeting with us individually and corporately and presiding and preaching at our Eucharist. We assure her of our full support and of our continuing prayers.

Earlier in the year our dear Sister Phoebe Margaret died peacefully in the Easter Octave aged 93 years. She was much loved and Sister Stella has written of her later in this News. Sr Trudy also shares her news a little further in. Our SRW Sisters continue to go quietly on with Sr Valeria having celebrated her 95th birthday in August! We remain grateful to our SRW Staff who enable Sr Valeria to come to chapel for our Sunday Eucharist and on other special occasions.

On 31st May - the lovely festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, we welcomed Fiona Upton as an Aspirant. Fiona soon felt very at home with us and was much loved. It therefore came as a huge shock when she was knocked down in a road accident here in Wantage and died at the scene of the accident. We were deeply saddened by her death and our thoughts and prayers have been so much with her parents Peter and Jay, and her brother Simon. We too, have been very appreciative of all the love and support we have received at this time. Fiona had become a Postulant and been with us for exactly three months when the accident happened on 1st September. She had a very strong sense of vocation and it seemed very natural and fitting that her Requiem took place in St Mary's Chapel followed by burial in our Garth. May she rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.

In January we welcomed Phil Johnson (Organist and Musical Director at Wantage Parish Church) to make a start on the cleaning and refurbishing of our chapel organ. We enjoyed popping in and seeing the work in progress – including the pipes all laid out on the chapel floor! It's very good to now have the organ fit for use, including the twice yearly Parish Evensong.

In July Sr Stella and I were very pleased to attend Anne Dellar's Valedictory Service

at Christ Church Cathedral - together with Fr Toby and a number of CSMV Trustees and Staff. Anne had latterly been the CEO of the Oxford Diocesan School's Trust and it was a most inspiring occasion as we gathered to give thanks for Anne's life of service dedicated to Christian education. It was lovely too that at the service and the reception, sincere appreciation and thanks were expressed by ODSST for the office space they have here at CSMV and the prayerful environment we are able to offer. We wish Anne every blessing in her retirement and look forward to a new chapter as Sharon Mullins settles in as the new CEO.

In September we held our first Beginners' Retreat for Ordinands and First Year Curates. We saw this as a small way of contributing to the formation of our future clergy, and to enable participation we subsidized the Retreat as part of our charitable giving. Having advertised through our local theological colleges we were pleased to welcome eight participants, most of whom were about to begin their ordination training. At the end we received positive feedback and hope to make this Retreat an annual fixture in our calendar.

As Sisters we've recently decided that as a women's community, we would like to have more contemporary women saints in our CSMV Calendar - particularly those who connect with the history and ministry of CSMV and the Religious Life. We have enjoyed researching and talking about them together and have added: Josephine Butler – Social Reformer supporting prostitutes (1828 – 1906); Pandita Mary Ramabai - Indian Hindu Convert and Social Reformer (1858 – 1922); Evelyn Underhill – Spiritual Writer and Retreat Giver (1875 – 1941); Manche Masemola - South African Child Martyr (1913 – 1928); St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) - Jewish Philosopher and Nun who died in Auschwitz (1891 – 1942); St Teresa of Calcutta - Missionary Sister in India (1910 – 1997). We look forward to celebrating these saints in the coming year.

As we approach the darkening days of Advent, I'm reminded of my recent holiday on the north Norfolk Coast. After several cloudy days in an area of no street lighting, I looked out one night to see the most stunning star-lit sky. The sky was so ablaze with stars that it took time to spot the usually so distinctive shapes of the Plough and Orion. As I gazed at this awesome sight, the words of St John's Gospel came to mind:

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5

Whatever darkness we may be aware of in our world and in our own lives, may I commend this image and these words to you.

We wish you all a Blessed Advent, a Very Happy Christmas and Every Good Wish for the New Year.

With our love and prayer,

+ Elizabeth Jane

Sister Elizabeth Jane

Sister in Charge



Postulant Fiona with Sr Elizabeth Jane and Sr Stella

News from the Sisters

Sister Phoebe Margaret Remembered

We Sisters appreciated listening to the content of Sr Phoebe's regular letters sent to us from Botswana. It was, however, a striking beginning to make conversation with Sr Phoebe during her furlough from Botswana's life, worship and ministry. What she wanted to share immediately was the importance of being able to do her washing in what was then a series of vast and deep rectangular stone basins in the Convent laundry. She rejoiced at the scope it gave her compared with the small domestic capacity of the 3-4 Sisters in their small home in Gaberone. It also enabled her to have time on her own at the Convent to reflect, to chew over favourite Gospel passages and to recall the many opportunities she experienced seeking to support impoverished Botswana elderly women. Also, young children enjoyed Phoebe's way of making Gospel passages come to life and wanted to hear them before being taught to read. She also, from time to time, would take a group of youngsters to visit an elderly person in one of the ramshackle hospitals who valued the smaller children sitting on the bed, and appreciated being part of the familiar songs they knew from a range of languages that Phoebe had spent much time learning.

I remember Phoebe sharing an experience of cycling along a main road in Botswana until she felt her pedals pushing her across the highway. She stopped on the grass bank, looked up to see a man she recognised as the brother of one of her women friends, who needed care and support in difficult circumstances. Phoebe helped to steady her and affirm her anxieties of wanting to take her own life, as well as thanking the angel for enabling Phoebe to cross the busy straight road.

In the late 1980s – early 1990s, Phoebe began to be influenced by the support of one of two senior clergy men, whose faith and depth of prayer gave Phoebe confidence. Several years after being ordained I was able to spend some time in South Africa where Phoebe was running a spacious well occupied Anglican church, especially active on Sundays, with the sensitive support of two tall lay, well-built South African men. Phoebe also visited one of the local Hindu temples making an on-going link with the caring leader. She was also invited every so often to a Muslim marriage with food for all who were glad to partake. Phoebe appreciated living in the small mixed-race area in Actonville, occasionally visiting her CSMV sisters in nearby Benoni in a comfortable one level house surrounded by homes of spaciousness. Benoni Cathedral had some fine singing in their worship.

The time eventually arrived when Phoebe was required to return to the Convent at Wantage briefly, before moving to a spacious community house that formally

belonged to a Doctor who visited and supported people in their homes. It was established in the late 19th century in Smethwick on the edge of the centre of Birmingham and overlooking the municipal park. Phoebe spent much time on being part of the group of Sisters, 6-7 of us, where she settled quite quickly. She enjoyed wandering around local roads and passages getting to know the feel of the environment.



There were three Anglican churches in Smethwick quite close to each other, each connected to its own sense of a particular locality, Phoebe identified with St Matthews, a small building with a neighbouring primary school and a limited but steady congregation, with the clergy woman who liked to organise the routine. Phoebe took her turn presiding at certain times for the Sunday Eucharist and was quietly supported at the mid-week evening services. Some of the churches on a wider outreach sought to find clergy who would fill gaps in the absence of clergy. Phoebe filled many of these needs and enjoyed the company. *(Pictured above, Sr Phoebe with some of the congregation of St Matthew's).*

I vividly remember two aspects of St Matthew's congregation. Not long before we left, a youngish woman lived in a halfway house close to the church, from the nearby prison she had known. She told Phoebe about a church much nearer to the centre of Birmingham, a well-appointed Anglican church where she said Confirmation was being arranged after there had been some teaching for the people involved. A young man and women who were close to each other asked Phoebe to help them learn about Confirmation. All three sustained the teaching and participated in the experience of blessing and Confirmation by the Bishop. It was a moving experience to be present there, the three of them, in their own ways, returned to participate in St Matthew's as they were able with their own limitations.

It was later when it became essential to bring the small group of Sisters at the Smethwick house to closure. They settled back comfortably in the Convent and visiting Phoebe as she grew older was a delight to recall and hear again the many and varied experiences she had enjoyed. When she was 93 she had few words left to her but when she died her face was radiant.

Sister Stella

News from Sister Trudy

It has been a busy year in Wantage Nursing Home with a new manager Stacey and Deputy Manager Lyndsey - a new start at the beginning of the year.

I had to spend a few weeks in bed because my ceiling hoist had broken down, and we had to wait for parts to come and the engineer to mend it. I praised the Lord when I was able to get out and shouted Alleluia! As a result, the garden was started late, and I am thankful for the friends that helped me planting up the flowers. The flowers are still blooming in October.

Being the Associates' Link Sister has kept me busy, by telephoning Associates around and about their Anniversaries of becoming an Associate, as well as those who have been unwell. In the Summer, we had a visit to the Convent from Associates Barnabas and Philomina Gorelal from India, they also visited Sr Valeria on St Raphael's Wing.

I try to go to Wantage Parish Church on a Friday morning for Eucharist. Fr Frances brings Communion to the Wantage Nursing Home once per month and we join in Communion with him and sing hymns. I still join the Sunday service at Witney St Mary's Parish Church via their live streaming service on YouTube.

Jo, our habit seamstress, has done a fantastic job of clearing many boxes and cupboards in the Habit Room. We found a box of old habits which we gave to another Community - it was good to be able to reuse these items no longer required by us.

Sister Trudy

Our Come and See Weekend

Over the last weekend of September we hosted a Come and See Weekend here at St Mary's Convent. The aim was to offer a 24 hour or so residential taster of Religious Life to help those exploring their vocation. The CSMV Sisters used to put on these weekends in the past so it was actually nothing new. It simply felt the right time this year to restart them.

csmv.co.uk/community-life/vocation' in a small dark blue sans-serif font." data-bbox="474 95 932 324"/>

CSMV Come & See Weekend 2025
A weekend with the Sisters at St Mary's Convent, Wantage,
for vocational explorers

Pray with us • Sing with us • Eat with us • Chat with us • Look around
Sat 27th Sept 11:00am - Sun 28th Sept 2:00pm

More details at csmv.co.uk/community-life/vocation

The invitation to spend the weekend with us was offered to complement the Enquirers' Zoom evenings that we've also been hosting from time to time over the past couple of years. The Zoom evenings enable anyone around the world to meet us face to face and to ask questions about CSMV from the comfort of their own home. The Come and See Weekend enables those interested to gain what can't be gained over Zoom; namely experiences such as praying and singing plainchant with us in chapel, eating meals with us in our Refectory, simply 'being' in our building and grounds, the gentle alternating of silence and conversation in our way of life, and experiencing our daily rhythm first hand.

The weekend was open to any single women discerning their vocation. We hosted the weekend very much seeing ourselves as doing so somewhat representing all female Anglican Religious Communities.

The participating women arrived mid-morning on the Saturday. After some time to unpack and settle in, it was time for a little welcome session in which some of us Sisters introduced ourselves and gave space for the participants to share a little about themselves if they wanted to. Our aim was to help them feel as comfortable as possible, giving them what information they needed for now and answering some practical questions they might have without overloading them.

After experiencing praying Sext with us and eating dinner in our Refectory with us in silence, the participants were given a tour of our Convent before they had some free time.

Later on in the afternoon we Sisters had tea and cake with the participants. Those Sisters on the Infirmary Wing who were able to join us for tea did so, meaning the participants were able to meet more of us than they might have previously done

on our Zoom evenings. They seemed to especially enjoy hearing the stories and experiences of our older Sisters.

The time set aside each day for each CSMV Sister' personal prayer and spiritual reading was another part of our life that we wanted to help the participants have a gentle experience of. For this reason, as well as wanting to be as helpful as possible to each participant's own discernment, we were very keen for the weekend to allow sufficient space for the participants' own reflection and prayer. After Vespers Sr Elizabeth Jane led the participants in a guided imaginative prayer exercise. The aim of this session was to help the participants deepen the link between what they were experiencing with us over the weekend and what God was saying to them within.

After supper, Sr Lizzie Ruth led a session explaining the Greater Silence and looking at our Compline books ahead of time so that the participants could feel comfortable and confident joining in with us at Compline.

The participants joined us for 6:30am Lauds then, like us Sisters, had their own space for personal prayer before breakfast.

They later joined us for our Sung Eucharist, the high point of our week, and for coffee and biscuits with our visiting priest and guests afterwards; a taster of another side of our life and ministry.

Over the course of the weekend a number of books, booklets and leaflets giving overviews of the Religious Life were laid out on a table for participants to browse or borrow. There was also a sign-up sheet on which participants could anonymously sign up to talk one-to-one with Sr Elizabeth Jane. This offer was taken up.

Before Sunday dinner, Sr Lizzie Ruth led a closing session in which she respected the privacy of each participant's inner thoughts but outlined the different avenues one might go down from here depending on how each found the weekend. For anyone feeling led to explore further with CSMV, details on how to do this were offered. For anyone feeling they might be called to Religious Life but not to CSMV, details were given of other Religious Communities and how to explore them. For anyone who felt that becoming an actual Sister was not for them but who still felt drawn to a deep spiritual association with a Religious Community, the concept of being an Oblate (whether of CSMV or any other Community) was explained to them. The helpfulness of a spiritual director to accompany each participant in their vocation discernment was also highly recommended.

Going forwards we intend to host more Come and See Weekends. In fact we already have a date: **7th-8th February 2026.**

Details of any upcoming Enquirers Zoom Evenings or Come and See Weekends that CSMV are offering can be found on our website at csmv.co.uk/community-life/vocation-events.

To be kept in the wider loop of upcoming Religious Life vocation events, one can 'follow' or regularly check the following X feed: x.com/monknunanglican. Our own CSMV offerings will appear on this feed and so too will Zoom events and Monastic Taster events being hosted by other Anglican Religious Communities or by collaborations of several Communities.

Sister Lizzie Ruth

Our Convent Hospitality

The Retreat Wing

The Retreat Wing is a place of silence, of tranquillity and of peace; a space preserved for you as a guest to encounter God. Individual Retreats and Quiet Days are a wonderful way in which to fully appreciate this silence, to enter into the rhythm of prayer and to renew your connection with God. We are delighted to welcome all guests, new and returning, and we hope that you may find time to visit us in 2026.

The Retreat Wing fulfils an important part of the ministry of the Community through its hospitality and in supporting those living and growing in faith. This year we hosted nine conducted silent Retreats and Quiet Days where leaders were chosen by the Community for their understanding of the rhythm of life at the Convent, as well as the encouragement they offer to those seeking spiritual refreshment. The programme of Retreats and Quiet Days for 2026 can be found on page 12, as well as our website.

"A place of blessing! A truly beautiful and uplifting place - thank you!"



"No words can explain the amazing and fulfilling experience these two days have given me!"



"The peace and worship here is truly restorative, thank you. The food was always excellent"

2026 Calendar of Retreats and Quiet Days

The below Retreats and Quiet Days are held at St Mary's Convent, Wantage and are open to all. For further information visit www.csmv.co.uk/calendar-of-retreats/
For bookings contact welcome@csmv.co.uk or 01235 763141.



Saturday 7th February

Embroidery Workshop - A Celebration of Mary

An Embroidery Quiet Day led by Suellen Pedley of The All Saints Embroidery Group with guest speaker the Ven Christine Allsopp.



Friday 8th - Sunday 10th May

Mapping the Unmappable: Praying with the Carmelite Saints

A conducted silent retreat with Fr Charlie CR, Mirfield.



Saturday 20th June

Reflecting on the Image of God

A Quiet Day led by Fr Christopher Woods, Oxford.



Friday 31st July - Sunday 2nd August

A Saint for all Seasons - Francis 800

A conducted silent retreat with Fr John-Francis Friendship TSSF.



Saturday 26th September

Beholding Intimately

A Quiet Day led by CSMV Oblate Dr Maria Dent.



Saturday 14th - Sunday 15th November

Beginners' Retreat

A conducted silent retreat with Sister Lizzie Ruth CSMV.

The Maribel Centre

In May, we were pleased to host a keynote speaker event at the Maribel Centre for senior leaders from local Multi-Academy Trusts. The event, “EdTech in a Changing World,” explored the rapid developments in Education Technology. Four expert speakers covered a range of topics—from cybersecurity to artificial intelligence and beyond. We extend our sincere thanks to all the speakers who generously shared their time and expertise. Guests enjoyed a full day of hospitality at the Maribel Centre, beginning with a breakfast meet-and-greet, followed by a sociable buffet lunch, and ending on a sweet note with the chance to take home a slice of our much-loved cake.

This year, the Maribel Centre launched a refreshed menu, featuring breakfast options for morning meetings and an expanded selection of lunches. The Centre continues to welcome a wide variety of groups from education, charities, parishes, and diocesan organisations who appreciate its warm hospitality and tranquil setting.

If you would like to bring your group to the Maribel Centre, please contact our reception team - we'd be delighted to host you.

Thank you once again for a really wonderful space for heads to meet and work - always so conducive for collaboration and reflection. Everyone commented on how much they appreciate the calm quiet space away from the busyness of school and we are always greeted so warmly. The catering was top quality and delicious. You provided exactly what was needed.

Multi Academy Trust Senior Leadership Day



Oblates UK

Firstly, we would like to thank Sister Stella for her commitment to us, and we are delighted that she will continue to be Oblate Sister this coming year. Georgetta Forster-Pert's time as an Oblate Councillor has concluded, and we owe her our heartfelt thanks for her commitment, and her deep spiritual insights and wisdom. We are very blessed that Sue du Preez is now a council member. Current council members for the coming year are Anna Sketchley, Jennie Keyte, Maria Dent and Sue du Preez. We are very grateful to Susan Cunningham for her support with sending out the anniversary cards and renewal slips. We would also like to thank our friends in reception, finance and administration for their welcome and support, and to hospitality for feeding us so well, taking different dietary requirements in their stride.

In February, we held a Lent Quiet Day, led by Sister Lizzie Ruth; four Oblates and two Associates attended. The golden thread running through the day was: "I carry your heart: I hold it within my own." During the morning, we focussed on "My Heart", reflecting on what was in our hearts, considering metaphorically what our hearts looked like, and then, using a pebble, we imagined that our hearts were carried inside Jesus' heart, and what that felt like. The afternoon focussed on "Jesus' Heart", following the same reflections of what we thought was on Jesus' heart, what it might look like metaphorically, and finally, again using a pebble, imagined that Jesus' heart was inside our hearts. It was a very gentle, thought-provoking day, with a real sense of intimacy with Jesus.

In July, we held our annual Oblates' Summer Meeting. We gathered together informally, catching up with news and enjoying coffee, tea and home baked cookies. The day began formally with the Eucharist in St Mary's Chapel. Isobel Rathbone presided and preached, with Georgetta Forster-Pert as Deacon, Mary Harwood played the organ, Georgetta Forster-Pert led our intercessions, and Isobel Rathbone and Anna Sketchley read. Several Sisters joined us, and it was a very blessed time together. After the service we held our business meeting. The Sisters shared with us some of their interesting work from the year, Jennie Keyte read out the annual report from the Council, and Maria Dent delivered the financial statement. An important message was read out to everyone from South Africa. The Convent provided us with a very special lunch, during which there was opportunity to be able to ponder and reflect on eight pieces of art – 'Octave' by Elizabeth Gray-King; Jennie Keyte loaned them from Westhill Endowment on our behalf. After lunch, Jennie Keyte led us in Lectio Devina and a reflective time together. We then started

to work together on the 'CSMV Cycle of Prayer' booklet, led by Maria Dent. It was a privilege to have Oblates and Sisters working together. At the end of the day, there was opportunity to make renewals, and the day was brought to a close with a gift for Georgetta Forster-Pert to thank her for her hard work and commitment to the Oblate Council, and of course with more refreshments and cakes.

In October, we held our annual Oblates' retreat: it was entitled "Connecting with God and Creation" and was led by Dr Alison Brown; seven of us attended. We gathered together in the room 'Peace' for our first meeting, where Alison gave us an overview of the retreat, and an introduction to felting. After supper, Alison demonstrated the process of felting itself. We concluded the day together with Compline in 'Peace' and Alison gave us a piece of her work as a focus for meditation throughout the retreat. There were two focussed practical sessions on Wednesday and Thursday; each of these started with a reflection on God and creativity. In between these sessions we were free to work on our feltings at any time. We also met together between supper and compline to chat and to get to know each other better. Friday morning, following the Eucharist, was a focussed session where we explored and shared our own work, gallery style, giving our work a title and writing 'gallery notes'. We finished the session by composing a Psalm together, and this will be presented in the Oblates' Jottings. We were delighted that Sister Stella and Sister Lizzie Ruth were able to join us on Friday morning, and Sister Stella contributed to the Psalm. We finished the retreat with a talking lunch, and proudly left with our creations.



Above, Oblate Retreat, 2025. From left to right: Ann Lewis, Kerry Schussel, Felicity Heal, Eileen Wetherell, Sister Stella, Alison Brown (retreat leader), Emma D'Aeth, Maria Dent; Joan Plant also attended.



Above left, Sr Stella talking with Alison about one of her own creations. Centre, Sr Lizzie Ruth talking to Ann about her creation. Right, a collage of feltings created by the Oblates.

The Oblate fellowship has been focusing on how to keep us all connected. Currently the London and Wessex groups are active and thriving, and we have re-started the Midlands group, so far via Zoom. The Online Compline still continues, meeting via Zoom every Tuesday and Thursday; if you are interested in joining this, please contact one of the Oblate Councillors, or see the link in Jottings. It is lovely to say Compline with fellow Oblates.

This year we have had the privilege of working with the CSMV Associates. Debbie Leek, Associates' Steering Group, and Sister Trudy, Associates' Sister, joined us in April at our Council planning meeting. We had a very productive meeting considering the following: to have a space where all retreats are viewable and available to both Oblates and Associates; to have a joint Oblates' and Associates' day, in addition to our individual days; to include the Associates in the development of the Prayer Cycle booklet; and to have a directory of spiritual directors (Oblates and Associates) to be available during retreats. In October, Jennie Keyte and Sue du Preez were invited to the Associates' Steering group meeting at the Convent, further building on this relationship. They had lunch together and were then made very welcome at the meeting. They discussed the 23rd May 2026 which has been booked in the Convent diary for a quiet day together. They made some plans and discussed the practicalities of the day. They also discussed more ideas for our future, respecting and still honouring our different relationships with CSMV, whilst benefiting from closer contact with each other. This felt very exciting and inspiring.

Following feedback from our summer meeting in 2024, Council invited the Sisters to our December meeting; the intention was to find out how the Oblate fellowship

might support them in their ministry. One of their suggestions was to create a “CSMV Cycle of Prayer” booklet, which has a prayer ‘theme’ for each day of the month. Sister Lizzie Ruth guided us with the themes, and they are essentially in four broad, general topics: CSMV and its wider community; Political agendas; Education; and Women’s concerns. As part of this years’ summer meeting in July, we worked together to write the prayers for each day, and the Associates supported us with their specific prayer. The prayers are very simple and intentionally non-specific so that it has longevity as people take up new posts, and educational, political and women’s agendas change. The booklet will be available on the CSMV website, with paper copies posted out to Oblates and Associates, and also made available in the Welcome area.

Oblate resources continue to be reviewed, and updated as appropriate. This year the Oblate Address book has been updated and circulated to Oblates. Circulation of the monthly Oblate newsletter, “Jottings” using Mailerlite has been successful; hardcopies are sent to Oblates who do not have an email address. We also now have a specific Oblate email list to send news and urgent prayer requests in between Jottings. We are very much indebted to Catrin Cuzen for her practical support, exceptional skills and commitment to us. We are also considering how we can utilise the Oblate Library more, especially how we can enable Oblates who are unable to travel to the Convent, access to the books, including the wonderful donation of books from Hugh and Alison Joiner. We are exploring the logistics of creating book boxes for groups to borrow.

In the coming year, we are planning a four-day retreat in September. We have also received an enquiry regarding someone becoming an Oblate, and we are looking forward to supporting her on her journey of discernment.

To conclude, I would like to use our Oblate Council prayer:

We pray that we use God’s gift of life and His gift of grace to the best of our ability for the future of the Oblates of this wonderful Community and that we always aim to love one another as He loves us.

Oblate Maria Dent and the Oblate Council

Oblates SA

Dear Sisters, Oblates, Associates and friends of CSMV,

Loving greetings and all good wishes from the South African Oblates,

We are no longer able to gather for meetings and services so there is little of a practical nature to write about. For an outsider, the question might be, “Why do they bother?” Words of one of our members (in her early 80s) as she approached her renewal of Oblation in 2025, provides the answer.

“You will know that the Oblation at this stage of life is not the passionate response of 41 years ago! Just a thankful offering of an aging one where passion is a fading memory, but commitment remains. With age I remember my earliest years with greater clarity, and so I have renewed gratitude to our faithful God, especially for the CSMV and all linked to them in prayer. Certainly, I have a greater knowledge of the smallness of my offering and the greatness of God’s love. How can I not continue to follow in the footsteps of our Lord

The loyalty and dedication expressed in these words find an echo in all our hearts. Many of us have memories of the elderly Sisters and Oblates we met when Novices ourselves; learning from them, as they aged and adapted to their changing circumstances. Echoes too of the example of both Martha and Mary.

We continue to keep in touch via messages, emails and phone calls and these inform our prayers for one another. But they are also a means of sharing moments of inspiration and hope, encouraging messages and jokes! The three councillors are aging along with everyone else which gives us a depth of understanding to what is shared with us. Perhaps what surprises us most about our members is the ‘spark’ at the heart of every interaction we have with our fellow Oblates. The sense we gain of resilience in frailty, of trust in God and continued renewal of intention to the spirituality and ethos of the Community of St Mary the Virgin, day by day.

We continue to remember the Community in our prayers with love and thanksgiving and send our grateful thanks to you all for your friendship and prayers.

Prue, Marion and Margie
South African Oblates

Associates UK

There are 116 CSMV Associates, of whom 24 live overseas in Botswana, Germany, India, Nigeria, and South Africa. We remember those Associates who have died this year; we pray for them and give thanks for their commitment. We have also been pleased to welcome several new members to the group this year.

Our Steering Group is chaired by Debbie Leek supported by Joy Hance, Seamus Jennings, and Catherine Mann, along with Associate Link Sister, Sr Trudy. This year, Rosey Feuell stepped down as Retreat Secretary, we thank Rosey for her hard work organising many wonderful Retreats for the Associates.

Please see below a final Associates' Report from Rosey.

This September 14 attended Associates' Day in person, plus 4 online, rejoicing in each other's news and company. We enjoyed Eucharist presided by Revd Mary Harwood of Letcombe Regis (*pictured right*), and a varied afternoon of reflection on the journeys of CSMV Sisters, Steering Group under Sister Trudy, and of our speaker Mary Harwood - each story and its spirituality enriching the others. Lunch and tea were excellent.



I have continued the annual Retreats and Quiet Day pattern, with invited speakers on carefully chosen themes for Associates, inquirers, and all-comers: a growing proportion of our visitors. We rejoice that our offer is now well complemented by retreats organised by active CSMV Sisters, especially those for “beginners”, and others exploring well-known themes. We are happy an ever-wider range of people gravitate to Convent events to enjoy space, quiet and spiritual opportunities.

In 2025 Mother Esther Lay (Wootton, Woodstock) gave a Quiet Day on “Poetry, Attention and Prayer”, and in October a Conducted Retreat with Revd Miles Welborn, Rector of Lyn Valley Missional Community, North Devon, on the key subject of “Encountering Jesus”. It has been my pleasure to work alongside all our leaders, sometimes assisting with one-to-one work, resources and evening sessions, as well as overseeing feedback, sharing and worship sessions before retreatants leave.

In July we had Read, Rest and Pray, led by myself and Joy, a new retreat concept, borrowed from Oblates' events. There was a less structured programme, liberating

folk to accommodate personal needs for rest, recreation, relaxation and prayer, with some optional opportunities from us. These included 3 talks: Prayer, Poetry, Journalling; Scripture and Repetition; Praying with Music. Individual interviews were available on request, and daily Talking Tea, with Sisters and others, each afternoon.



Our work within the Steering Group involves event administration, communications to Associates, policy discussions, and pastoral concerns/support as appropriate, where we are alerted to needs and bereavements. We are inputting to a Cycle of Prayer in collaboration with the Oblates. Sister Trudy, our Associates' Link Sister, has been sharing anniversaries of joining, and other prayer points, while supporting the more isolated, in her valuable telephone ministry. Sometimes we can offer personal meetings/solutions to Associates where indicated. We look forward very much to shaping the future experience of Associates in different ways, and welcome comments and suggestions.

I'd like to thank all those who have encouraged me in my Retreat work, given useful feedback, and expressed appreciation of what has been helpful spiritually. For me this has, in retirement and alongside my chaplaincy work with the elderly, been one of the best "jobs" in the world. We bless the Sisters as ever for their generous spiritual and personal support.

Rosey Feuell
CSMV Associate



Top right, Sr Lizzie Ruth, Sr Elizabeth Jane, Sr Trudy and Sr Stella on Associates Day. Bottom left: Sr Trudy and Angela. Bottom right, Joy presents Rosey with flowers for all she has done in arranging the Retreats and Quiet Days.

Associates SA

We were so blessed on Saturday 1st February to celebrate Candlemas in the Holy Cross Chapel at Irene Homes. Our celebrant was Father Steve Verryn who is also the son of Mary Verryn, one of our Associates.



Top left, Peggy, Fr Steve and Tracy. Top centre, Fr Steve with his sister, Angela and mother, Mary. Top right and bottom left, Oblates Angela and Prue with Fr Steve. Bottom right, everyone together!

We started the morning with meet and greet and general chit chat. We had decided as before that we could take a friend or two. Ann and Prue were very organized with name labels and soon we proceeded to Chapel

Fr Steve was assisted by Tracy and Peggy who are both residents at the Homes. His message was clear that we need to be the light in the world. A central candle was lit which then lit us each a tea light which Fr Steve blessed.

Prue and Angela, both Oblates renewed their vows. It was such a joyous service.

After the service we met in the Conference Room for a short meeting and refreshments. There was a donation envelope for Irene Homes and one for Fr Steve who had chosen BirdLife SA as his chosen beneficiary. The eats were enjoyed by all and a heartfelt thanks to Ann and Prue for all the arrangements. Too soon it was time to take leave of our CSMV friends who are like family.

Eldene Mason
CSMV Associate

News from Wantage Overseas

Irene Homes, South Africa

At Irene Homes, our mission remains steadfast throughout the year — to provide holistic care and unwavering support to persons with intellectual disabilities. At the heart of our residential program is a vibrant and joyful community where every individual is empowered to thrive.

Our Therapeutic and Protective Workshops form a cornerstone of this approach, offering structured, skill-building activities that promote personal growth, enhance independence, and encourage social and community integration. Through these workshops, participants build confidence, develop practical skills, and engage meaningfully with their peers and our dedicated staff, fostering a sense of purpose and belonging. A showcase for the creative talents nurtured in the workshops is the Raca Eisteddfod held in August, and with 80 entries from our beneficiaries, every participant shone brightly, showcasing their talent, dedication, and hard work. We are very proud to share that all our performers received Diamond awards!



Above, the Irene Homes Choir at the Raca Eisteddfod. Below, CEO Anna-Louise Olivier with resident, Emelia from our St. Joseph House, celebrating her birthday.

January 2025 saw a new CEO welcomed to the Homes, Anna-Louise Olivier. Anna-Louise embodies the heart of social change — leading with compassion, inspiring through action, and building connections that uplift entire communities. In September she was chosen as one of this year’s “Proteas of Mzansi”. This prestigious recognition honours ten extraordinary women across South Africa whose work is igniting hope, driving transformation, and strengthening the social fabric of our nation.

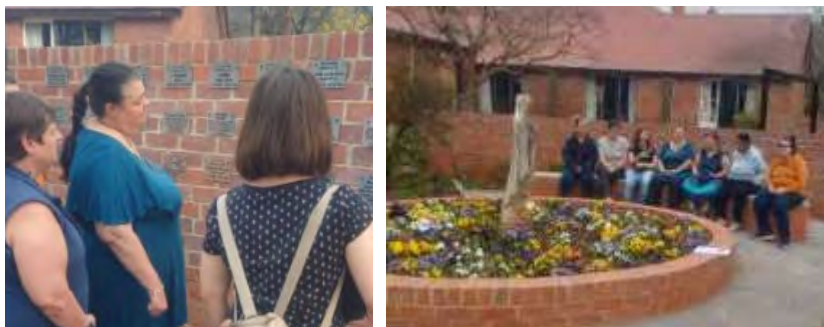


The Holy Cross Chapel is the beating heart of Irene Homes — a sacred space that nurtures the spiritual well-being of our community. The Irene Homes Servers play a unique and vital role in supporting this well-attended place of worship. Currently, eleven dedicated servers lead the worship services on Sundays, offer prayers, assist with the Chalice during the Eucharist, and faithfully prepare the Chapel as Sacristans. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Bryn, Peggy, Tessa, Monica, Candace, Susan, Sandile, Tracy, Helen, Hilary, and Rene for their ongoing commitment and service to the ministry of the Holy Cross Chapel.



Above, the Irene Homes Servers after undertaking a special servers' training session.

The Holy Cross Garden of Remembrance has undergone a renovation thanks to the kind sponsorship of Eldene Mason, a Trinity Parishioner, CSMV Associate and a very good friend of the Homes. We are grateful for this peaceful space that allows our residents to connect, remember, and find comfort together.



Above, the newly renovated Garden of Remembrance.

This report captures just a small slice of the rich life of Irene Homes, follow more news and updates on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IreneHomes4IntellectuallyDisabled>

Instagram: @irenehomesnp0

Sign up to the newsletter: info@irenehomes.co.za

Irene Homes

Memories of Irene Homes

CSMV Associate, Rose Shimwell kindly donated to the Convent Archive her wonderful collection of photographs, her project diary and other memories from her time spent at Irene Homes as a Project Trust student from 1974-5. Rose and Pandy were the first Project Trust students at Irene Homes. Below are a few of these photographs.



Top left, Sr Gertrude Constance and Mother Muriel Grace
Above, the Sisters with Mother Joan
Below left, Sr Gertrude Constance sketching
Below right, Morning Tea for 'The Girls', the residents of Irene Homes



Left, a watercolour sketch of Holy Cross, Irene Homes by Rose Shimwell.



"Holy Cross Irene Homes"

Botswana

Our donations to causes in Botswana are gratefully managed by CSMV Associate Margaret Taylor. Together we support The Holy Cross Hospice, Gaborone for the elderly and terminally ill as well as the Gabane Community Home Based Care Centre offering pre-school education and care for local families and orphaned children.

The pre-school has faced a very challenging time for a variety of reasons, but with support both locally and from afar, they have been able to continue to serve those children who need it most. At the beginning of the school year, the pre-school was thrilled to enrol more fee-paying students than last year, which means that the places for those vulnerable children are now secured. Much like pre-school in the UK, at the end of each school year the older children are ready for primary school and the little ones who've had an easier year with plenty of singing and games, are ready to go to the centre pre-primary class.

The Holy Cross Hospice is housed in the CSMV Sisters' old home, Loratong in New Stands in Gaborone. After some tough years, things are looking much brighter with a new manager and services returning closer to pre-pandemic levels. This year, the nurse blessed me with a request that I go with her for a morning's home visiting. We met an elderly man, blind and bedridden, looked after by a granddaughter, herself living in one room with two children. A youngish mother with cancer, 5-month-old twins and having had a leg amputated since the twins' birth, was particularly pleased to see the nurse. A lovely gentle woman, she, like nearly all the other patients living in one room, was dependent on her husband who we met cooking on a gas ring in the same small room, he assured me he was "the best chef"! Another man with cancer, and wheelchair bound, had five children and a wife, all living in two small rooms. The last patient had gone for cancer therapy, but the visit gave the nurse the chance to talk to the patient's sister at some length about the emotional problems their family faced.

What a special morning. I am often shocked by the apparent wealth and lifestyle of many in Gaborone, as in any capital city, but here was the other side of life, incredibly patient and accepting ill people, living in pretty dire circumstances. Once again I'm left in no doubt of the benefit to the hospice of CSMV's financial help.

A very big thank you to CSMV and all those who donate.

Margaret Taylor
CSMV Associate

The Society of St Mary the Virgin India, SSMVI

The Society of St. Mary the Virgin in India was founded in 1877 with support from the Sisters of CSMV. Below, SSMVI director, Ashish James reports on news from the mission in Pune.

It gives me immense pleasure to present the SSMVI (Panch Howd Mission) report. For the past 148 years, we have been dedicated to uplifting marginalized children, women, and society at large. With a committed team of 90 staff members serving across various units, SSMVI continues to make meaningful contributions in multiple areas of social development. God has blessed the SSMVI this year in many ways, and a brief report on the achievements of each unit is highlighted below.

St Hilda's High School

St. Hilda's High School has been dedicated to educating girls for the past 121 years. This year, the school was ranked 1st by the District Education Department under its Quality Promotion Campaign 2025, in which more than 1,500 schools participated. *(Pictured below left).*

A memorable reunion was recently held for the Class of 1977, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of their cohort. Many of these alumnae have gone on to achieve remarkable success in their respective careers. *(Pictured below right).*



The students also made their mark in extracurricular activities — one of our girls earned 4th place in the District-Level Karate Competition, a testament to her dedication and perseverance, *(pictured right)*. In academics, the school achieved an impressive 93.38% result in the final examinations conducted by the Maharashtra State Board of Education.



Epiphany School

This academic year has been a vibrant and enriching journey for Epiphany School. The year was marked by a wide range of activities that fostered the holistic development of our students. Epiphany School is the proud recipient of the 'Star Education Award' in the Best School category. The school also achieved a remarkable 100% result in the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C.) examinations this year.



In the recent International Olympiad, several of our students achieved outstanding success across various subjects (*pictured above*). We take great pride in their accomplishments and the honour they have brought to the school through their exceptional performance in these prestigious competitions. Our students also demonstrated excellence in sports. The school team won Gold Medals in both the National-Level Judo Competition (*pictured below*) and the State-Level Women's Judo Championship. Additionally, our athletes secured Silver and Bronze Medals in the Wrestling Tournament, showcasing their dedication, discipline, and competitive spirit.



The school has recently undergone renovation, with additional facilities provided to enhance the learning environment for students. It is steadily progressing toward becoming a fully digital institution, where technology is seamlessly integrated into teaching, learning, and administration.

STEM Lab (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics Lab)

To encourage experiential learning among students, a STEM Lab has been established at both St. Hilda's School and Epiphany School. This facility provides students with valuable opportunities to engage in hands-on experiments and practical activities. (*Pictured right*).



St Mary's Convent, Shanti Sadan School, Lonavala

The school is situated in Lonavala, about 64km from Pune City, and is nestled amidst nature, providing quality education to 425 rural students. On 5th December 2024,

which marks Scout-Guide Day, the school organized a Scout-Guide Camp where students learned essential skills such as tent-making and cooking. It was an enjoyable and enriching experience for all participants.



The Lonavala City Police conducted a 'Smart Girl Awareness Program', training students in self-defense and crisis management to promote the safety and confidence of our girls (*pictured above*). In addition, our students actively participated in the City-Level Cleanliness Drive and a Marathon organized by the City Corporation, demonstrating their commitment to community service and civic responsibility.

St. John's Care Home

St. John's Home is a home dedicated to the care of eleven elderly women. The women are provided with all the facilities and services to make their days bright and beautiful.

St. Michael's Hostel

St. Michael's Hostel is a safe and nurturing home for vulnerable girls, including orphans, girls at high risk, and street children. The hostel focuses on the holistic development of its residents. Over the past year, we have strived to support the growth of these girls through educational assistance, leadership and life skills training, good health care, and psychosocial support.



Educational Activities

We provide comprehensive educational facilities for all girls admitted to the hostel, from Kindergarten to 10th grade. To enhance their academic progress, extra coaching classes are regularly organized. Various groups of volunteers contribute by offering skills training and educational coaching. The girls receive instruction in art and craft, cooking, jewellery making, and other creative skills. They are also trained in self-defense and karate. Additionally, the girls enjoy outings and excursions to places such as Agro Parks and Science Parks, broadening their learning experiences.

Psychosocial Care

Special emphasis is placed on the emotional well-being of the children. We organize various lectures, sessions, and activities focusing on topics such as stress management, adjustment to new environments, facing challenges, and skill building to support their emotional and social development.



We are proud to share that one of our girls has successfully completed her Medical Degree (MBBS) and is now working as a Medical Doctor. Her remarkable achievement has been a source of great inspiration for the other girls and for our dedicated hostel team. Your continued support in this mission will go a long way in transforming the lives of vulnerable girls and helping them realise their full potential.

Restoration, Praise and Worship

The Convent of St. Mary building is very close to the hearts of all those connected with the Panch Howd Mission. For many years, it has stood as a witness to numerous historical moments and has been an integral part of our shared heritage. The restoration of this historic structure has been undertaken to preserve its cultural significance and architectural beauty. Our goal is to bring the Convent back to life, so that future generations can continue to experience its charm, history, and carry forward its mission of serving the less privileged.



The Institute is moving forward under the able leadership of our Chairperson Mrs. Denise Bhalchandra Chakranarayan, Secretary Ms. Pearl Jacobie, and Treasurer Mr. Eugene Bankapur and all the Board Members. We extend our heart felt gratitude to the Wantage Community and all sisters in the CSMV. Your prayers, support and encouragement is a pillar of strength to the SSMVI and we will keep moving forward and walk on the path of the service to the humanity with the passion of Christ Jesus.

Ashish James
Director of SSMVI

News from UK Supported Causes

Wantage Parish Music Guild

For Many years CSMV has been an avid supporter of the Wantage Parish Music Guild with a grant for young choral and organ scholars, with a particular emphasis on the religious and musical education of children and young people. Director of Music, Phil Johnson, gives an update below.

This year has been a successful year building and consolidating on our now solid foundations. We have had several new additions to the Junior Choir taking our numbers up to an average of around 16, this was our ultimate target number so that's a really big deal for us. The downside of that is that we have 2 of our Junior Choir, our Head Chorister - Olivia Cox, and another senior chorister - Amanda Ifeanyi, who are now over 14 and moving out of the Junior Choir. Our aim had been to coincide this step with the opening of a Young People's Choir; this is proving to be an extremely difficult task. We have succeeded in bringing in a couple more people in this age bracket, which means that we now have 5 young people between 14 and 21. This is, of course, some measure of success, however we need at least 1 more to be able to make the choir viable as an individual entity. We have had 3 further young people try us out, but they ultimately decided not to make a commitment.



Above, Junior Choir rehearsal conducted by Assistant Director of Music, Barbara Kennedy

We also said goodbye to Thomas Dennill, and Amelia Stay who were in this age bracket. Thomas has left to study medicine at Lancaster University, and Amelia has left to study music at Oxford University. We are extremely proud of both of them, both for their general achievement and for their commitment and talent in sacred music.

Over the course of the coming 12 months, we are seeking to further establish our quota of youths. I don't anticipate that this will be an easy task, but we are extremely grateful for the continued support of CSMV which allows us to continue our work educating children and young people in worship and in music.

Phil Johnson
Director of Music, Wantage Parish



Above, Junior Choir rehearsal conducted by Assistant Director of Music, Barbara Kennedy



Above, Choral workshop conducted by a nationally renowned director - Jo Tomlinson

BeSpace

Creating space for prayer and reflection in schools and communities; founder and CEO Catherine Clayton writes about the work of BeSpace during their very special 15th Anniversary Year.

It has been a year of joy and thanksgiving at BeSpace.

Celebrating 15 years

In March, we gathered at Wantage C of E School with over 100 friends, partners, supporters, and pioneers to celebrate 15 years of prayer and reflection spaces across Oxfordshire. Together, we gave thanks for



an incredible journey: more than 700 spaces created, **over 64,000 children given the opportunity to pray**, and nearly 80% of them have visited further prayer and reflection spaces. Today, over 40% of schools in the county have hosted a prayer and reflection space, an amazing testimony to God's work in our schools. The celebrations are pictured.



Joyful Giving

Our celebrations took many forms. Two of our wonderful volunteers (pictured right), who regularly lead prayer spaces in three village schools north of Oxford, hosted a Six-Hour Storytelling Marathon to raise funds for BeSpace. Dressed up as characters from *The Gruffalo*, *The BFG*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* to name a few, they read children's stories aloud non-stop for six hours in their local church, inviting the community to join in the fun. This joyful



effort raised over £1,000 for BeSpace, a wonderfully creative way to mark 15 years of this ministry in Oxfordshire.

15 Hours of Prayer

In June, we set aside 15 hours of continuous prayer at Christ Church Abingdon. Through creative stations of thanks and intercession, we praised God for all He has done and sought His vision for the next 15 years. People from across Oxfordshire joined, signing up hour by hour to pray for schools, children, and young people. Pictured is one of the prayer stations.



Impact in Schools

Over the past academic year alone, 60 schools partnered with their local churches, offering prayer and reflection spaces to more than 12,300 students. Each of those young people encountered stillness, a chance to explore prayer, reflection and an invitation in this way, to grow in their relationship with God.

"It was wonderful to watch the children engaging in the whole experience and sharing their reflections in the different areas. Some of our children that often find quiet times challenging were able to experience the feeling of calm and reflection during a busy week. I am looking forward to another prayer space so that children can continue to build and nurture their prayer and reflection over time."

Headteacher's feedback

Looking Ahead

As we step into a new season, we are excited to host our first contemplative retreat for secondary school students in October. This marks the beginning of a new chapter developing retreats that invite children and young people to go deeper in their spiritual journey, building on the foundation of prayer and reflection spaces they experience.

Giving Thanks

We celebrate God's faithfulness over the past 15 years, and we look with expectation to all He will do in the years to come.

Catherine Clayton CEO and Founder

To find more about the work of BeSpace, visit their website www.bespace.be

Medaille Trust

The Community continues to support the work of the Medaille Trust, one of the UK's leading organisations providing support for survivors of modern slavery. The Moving On Project is the specific area of the Trust's work supported by CSMV.

The Moving On Project (MOP) offers long-term, community-based support to men and women affected by, or at risk of, human trafficking and modern slavery. There are five MOP hubs across the UK, each with at least one local coordinator, a caseworker, and a team of volunteers. Rather than duplicating government-funded services, these hubs act as a vital safety net for survivors who may have been left without specialist support.

"The fight against modern slavery is one of the defining human rights challenges of our time. Despite legislative progress and increased awareness, thousands of survivors continue to face significant hurdles long after escaping exploitation. ... A very special thank you to all who have funded our MOP project since its inception; your generosity ensures that this vital work can continue."

Dani Wardman, CEO Medaille Trust

The project's aim is to build trusting relationships, providing survivors with the security and confidence they need to take steps towards a better life. MOP teams work directly with survivors, supporting a wide range of needs including accommodation, access to health services, mental health care, financial management, employment and training, personal safety, engagement with police, legal matters, repatriation or resettlement, and community integration.



Above: the indomitable staff of the MOP.

A report published in February 2025, in partnership with the think tank Theos, highlighted the Moving On Project as a model for a more flexible and trauma-informed approach to charitable support. The full report is available at www.medaille-trust.org.uk/news/MOP-report-launch.

Find out more at www.medaille-trust.org.uk

Discovering Prayer

Sadly, it has not been possible to secure the additional funding required to continue the ongoing work of Discovering Prayer. Over its 12-year history Discovering Prayer has helped over 70,000 people experience new forms of prayer with many wonderful stories of renewal in people's relationship with God. The intention is to find a way to make the library of 100s of audio tracks available for free. To stay in touch, please contact Michelle on michelle.eyre.prayer@gmail.com

We thank Michelle and her team for their dedication to Discovering Prayer and wish them well.

News from the Trustees

This year we bade farewell to three of our Trustees the Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Revd Fr Darren McFarland and Sandie Capel. We thank them for their many years of service and valued contribution to the running of CSMV. We wish them well.

In 2025 we welcomed two new trustees, Pauline Rudd and Revd Philippa White. We give thanks for their commitment to CSMV.



Pauline Rudd

I have been an Associate of CSMV since my university days and the Community has been my spiritual home throughout all the ups and downs of my life. Across the years many sisters have nurtured my spiritual growth by their own deeper understanding of the ways of the heart and to them I am forever thankful. I worship at St James, Radley where I am the unlikely church treasurer.

I have been blessed with four children and ten grandchildren, I am a founding member of the International Society for Science and Religion and a member of the School of Contemplative life. I am a biochemist in teams developing technologies to ensure the quality of pharmaceuticals and to enable the study of the mechanisms of cancer metastasis and the intricacies of the immune system.

I am semi-retired, having led research teams in Oxford, Dublin and Singapore, and I continue to work in the background, sometimes to give perspective and context to ideas and often to support younger creative scientists. I have given numerous international scientific presentations and been part of many collaborations, often

with countries in the aftermath of war. I have also given many invited talks about science and religion, often focusing on science as a contemplative practice, to followers of many religions and none across the world. Engaging with this ever changing landscape is still a focus of my spiritual life.

Scientists discover daily the power of collaboration, friendship and inclusivity to strengthen those who have fewer opportunities or are in need. We have learned that all our lives are enriched when we learn from colleagues of all colours, cultures and creeds. They are values we espouse and try to live by as we work to understand the natural world and to offer our insights to the world.

I feel very privileged to be a member of the Board of Trustees. I hope when I have learned more to be in a position to support the aspirations of the Community in these difficult times when the light that we try to live by is so much needed in a world full of pain.



Revd Philippa White

I have been in the diocese of Oxford for the last seven years, most of which I've spent at Christ Church Cathedral – I've just moved to become Bishop's Chaplain, based at Church House in Kidlington and looking after Bishop Steven and his office. I've been one of the Sisters' regular Eucharistic presidents for the last few years and am really delighted to be taking on the Trustee role as well. I am looking forward to being able to help the Sisters and staff to consider and shape the life of CSMV to sustain it as a blessing both for them and for the wider Church.

Leave a Legacy

We are deeply grateful to our many friends and followers whose support upholds and enriches our ministry and Religious Life. To enable the Community to thrive, grow and continue to fulfil its charitable objectives we look to the future. Living and growing in faith has always been at the heart of the Community and, since its foundation in 1848, CSMV has been supported generously by legacies from those whose lives it has touched and who wish to further its ministry of:

- Living and growing in faith, and in particular sustaining the life of the Community of Sisters which is at the centre of CSMV.
- Supporting education founded on Anglican Christian principles.
- Caring for the vulnerable, in particular women and girls and those who are ill.

Making a gift in your will is a wonderful way to support and sustain the life and work of the Community, ensuring it can remain a place of worship and hospitality for many generations to come.

There are several different ways to leave a legacy in your will:

A Residual Gift – A proportion of your estate once expenses have been met.

A Pecuniary Gift – A specified sum of money.

A Reversionary Gift – Assets can be left to the Community while allowing another individual to benefit from them during their lifetime.

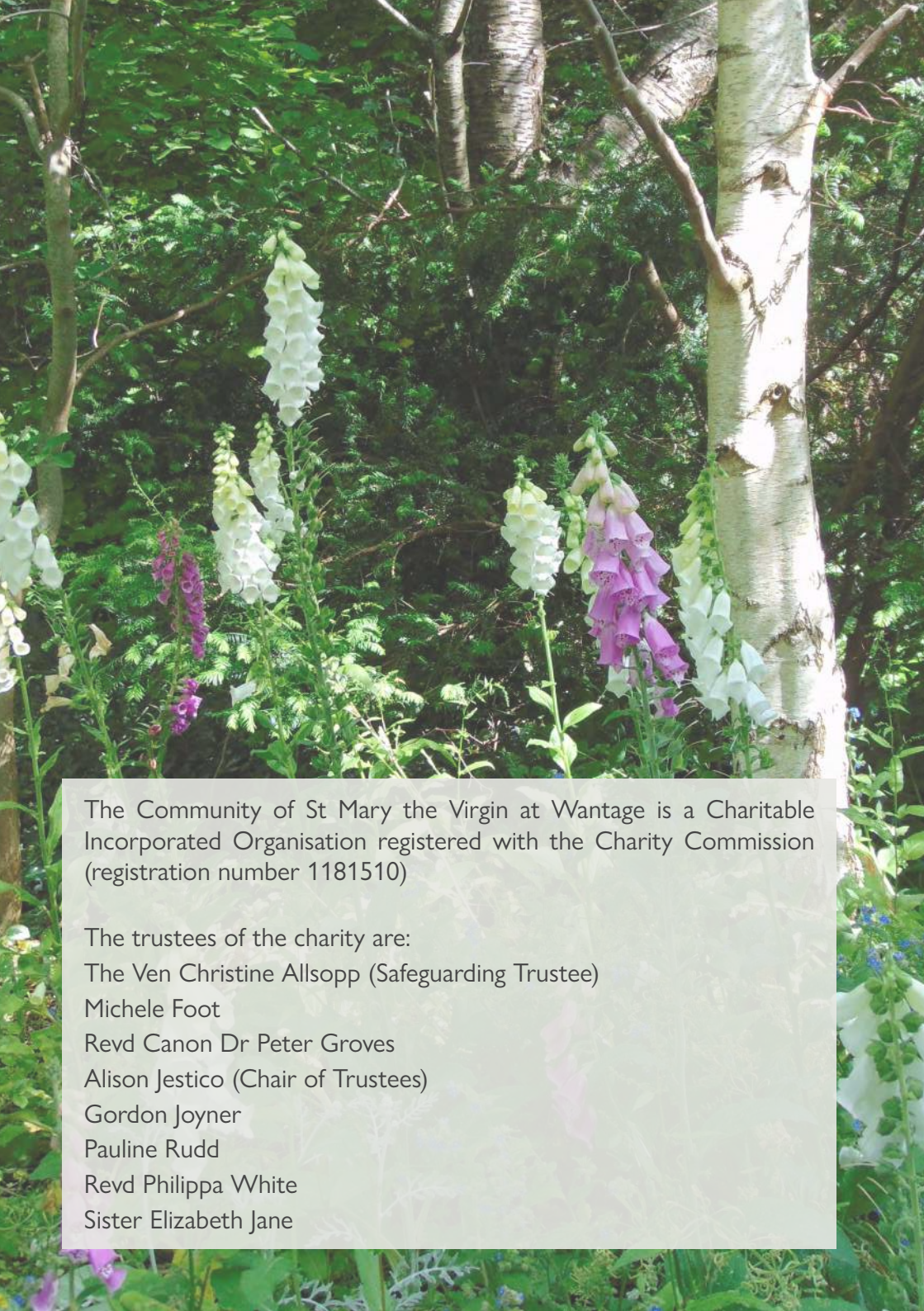
Gifts made to the Community in your will can reduce liability for Inheritance Tax on your estate as well as being of enormous value to the Community. It would be a good idea to find a solicitor who is able to advise you on the best way forward.

Consider Getting in Touch

If you are thinking about leaving a legacy in your will, please consider letting us know. This will give us the opportunity to talk to you about how your gift could be used and to thank you in person.

We are very happy to speak to you in person or over the phone. Please contact the Bursary in confidence on bursar@csmv.co.uk or 01235 763141.

Talking to us about making a gift in your will does not commit you in any way should you later change your mind.



The Community of St Mary the Virgin at Wantage is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission (registration number 1181510)

The trustees of the charity are:

The Ven Christine Allsopp (Safeguarding Trustee)

Michele Foot

Revd Canon Dr Peter Groves

Alison Jestico (Chair of Trustees)

Gordon Joyner

Pauline Rudd

Revd Philippa White

Sister Elizabeth Jane

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