

# THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, HAMMERSMITH



Annual Report 2025

## Introduction

The year 2025 has been one of significant transformation, investment, and renewed strategic direction for the Parish of The Church of the Holy Innocents.

The Revd David Matthews continues as Parish Priest, supported by Jane Jales (Licensed Lay Minister), Churchwardens Anthony Biggs and Claudette Gray, and Treasurer Caroline Gordon. The PCC has continued to meet regularly to oversee the governance, mission, and development of the parish.

This year has been marked by:

- Major capital investment in property and facilities
- A new long-term partnership with Ballet Black
- The completion and letting of the 125 Dalling Road flats
- A significant new artistic commission within the church
- Continued commitment to worship, music, and community life

At the same time, the PCC has begun to frame its work more intentionally in line with the wider priorities of the Diocese—seeking to grow a **confident, compassionate and creative church**, rooted in worship and expressed in mission.

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## Mission and Purpose

The PCC continues to promote the whole mission of the Church in the parish through:

- Worship and sacramental life
- Community engagement
- Charitable activity
- Providing space for reflection, arts, and community use

Alongside this, there is a renewed commitment to **discipleship, growth, and shared ministry**, recognising that the long-term flourishing of Holy Innocents depends on developing both the depth and breadth of its life.

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## Art, Worship and the Installation of *The Flight into Egypt*

A major artistic and spiritual milestone of 2025 has been the commissioning and installation of *The Flight into Egypt* by John Afflick. Now placed within the church, the panel serves as a strong visual and theological focal point, enriching both worship and the building's harmony.

### **The Artist: John Afflick**

Born in Liverpool in 1967, Afflick studied Fine Art after serving in the British Army.

Influenced by Renaissance painting, his work is known for craftsmanship and traditional techniques.

Holy Innocents has a long relationship with John Afflick:

- 2007 – *The Holy Innocents* (High Altar panel)
- 2018 – The Paschal Panels
- 2025 – *The Flight into Egypt*, completing the sanctuary’s narrative

This final work was made possible by a legacy from Howard Bennett (1924–2020), former churchwarden.

### **Installation of the Panel**

The installation required careful positioning to align with the church’s architecture. The process involved wall preparation, precise mounting, and skilled craftsmanship, reflecting the dedication of those caring for the building.

### **Theological and Artistic Significance**

The panel depicts the Holy Family fleeing into Egypt, expressing themes of refuge, vulnerability, and divine guidance. Afflick places the story in a setting that resonates with modern experience.

It completes a wider visual narrative in the church:

- Henry Holiday stained glass (1890) in the Baptistry
- The altar and Paschal panels
- *The Flight into Egypt*

Together, these works tell a unified story of incarnation, sacrifice, and redemption.

### **Service of Remembrance– 5 November 2025**

The installation was marked by a special service of thanksgiving, reflection, and community gathering, highlighting the warmth and shared life of the parish.

### **Conclusion**

*The Flight into Egypt* is more than a new artwork. It reflects generosity across generations, continues a living artistic tradition, and affirms the parish’s commitment to beauty, theology, and mission—standing as a defining achievement of the year.

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## **Fabric and Property**

### **Strategic Transformation of Church Spaces**

In response to changing patterns of hall usage, 2025 saw a **major shift in how church buildings are used.**

The most significant development has been the establishment of **Ballet Black** as a **long-term single tenant**, occupying:

- Upper Hall (now a professional dance studio)
- West Hall (offices)
- Supporting spaces

This has:

- Provided **stable and predictable income**
- Reduced administrative burden
- Created a **new artistic and community partnership**

The Old Vestry has been successfully **reconfigured into a flexible community space**, with:

- New kitchen and facilities
- Improved accessibility
- Active use by hirers and church groups

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## 125 Dalling Road Redevelopment

A major highlight of 2025 has been the **full refurbishment of the parish-owned flats at 125 Dalling Road**.

Key achievements:

- Works commenced May 2025 and completed October 2025
- Full structural, mechanical, and energy-efficiency upgrades
- Installation of modern kitchens, bathrooms, insulation, and services
- Addressing long-standing damp and structural issues

The project:

- Was delivered under **strong governance and professional oversight**
- Represented an investment of approximately **£500,000 including VAT and fees**
- Has produced **high-quality, energy-efficient homes**

Both flats were successfully **let at market rent from November 2025**, generating income to support parish ministry. This project represents a **major step forward in financial sustainability and stewardship of church assets**.

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## Ongoing Fabric Challenges

Despite progress, challenges remain:

- Ageing **heating systems (1980s)** nearing failure

- Ongoing **drainage and roof issues**
- Need for **vicarage survey and repairs**

Plans are underway to:

- Commission a **full heating replacement strategy**
- Improve environmental efficiency and sustainability

The significant developments in property and partnerships this year are not ends in themselves, but part of a wider commitment to **sustainable mission and growth**.

The establishment of Ballet Black, the reconfiguration of church spaces, and the redevelopment of 125 Dalling Road together represent a strategic shift towards:

- Greater financial stability
- Reduced administrative burden
- Increased capacity for mission

These changes create the conditions in which the church can move from maintaining its life to **intentional growth in ministry and outreach**.

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## Partnership with Ballet Black

The arrival of **Ballet Black** marks one of the most significant developments in recent years.

Founded to address the under-representation of Black and Asian dancers in classical ballet, Ballet Black has grown into a **nationally and internationally recognised company**.

### Artistic Excellence

A recent press review highlights:

- Their commissioning of **over 70 new works**
- Productions described as “*crackingly good*” and “*emotionally powerful*”
- Work such as *Ingoma* praised as “*glorious*” and deeply affecting

Their performances combine:

- Technical excellence
- Strong narrative storytelling
- Innovative contemporary choreography

They have recently performed at major venues including the **Royal Opera House**, further cementing their reputation as a **leading force in British dance**.

## Community and Youth Work

Ballet Black is also widely recognised for:

- **Education and outreach programmes**
- Engagement with **young people and aspiring dancers**
- Creating pathways into professional dance

## Impact on the Parish

The partnership:

- Brings artistic vitality into the church community
- Strengthens the church's role as a cultural hub
- Provides long-term financial stability through a single tenant model

Importantly, it also reflects a vision of the church as **outward-facing, engaged, and creative in its mission**, aligning with diocesan priorities for a church that serves and connects with its wider community.

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## Worship, Music and Church Life

### Music

Music continues to be central to parish life:

- Regular choral music at Sunday services
- Increased use of anthems
- Concerts and special liturgical performances

The music ministry has:

- Maintained a **strong core choir**
- Expanded participation for special services
- Continued collaboration with professional musicians

This ministry remains a key expression of the church's identity and outreach.

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## **Rotas and Volunteers (Lay Ministry Development)**

The life of the church continues to depend on dedicated volunteers:

- Servers: reduced numbers but strong commitment
- Readers: growing participation and leadership
- Sacristans: transition to new team leadership
- Intercessors: smaller team but committed
- Flowers: vibrant and creative contribution

However, this year has also highlighted the need for a more intentional approach to **developing lay leadership and ministry teams**.

In line with diocesan priorities around shared ministry, the PCC recognises that:

- Ministry must be more widely owned across the congregation
- New leaders need to be identified, trained, and supported
- Younger members must be encouraged into active roles

Developing a **broader, more resilient ministry team** is essential if Holy Innocents is to grow sustainably.

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## **Children and Families**

Work with children and families continues to develop:

- Regular Junior Church sessions
- Efforts to engage families despite competing Sunday activities
- Growing number of young families joining the church

The parish remains committed to strengthening this ministry, recognising that **growth in children and families is central to becoming a growing church**.

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## **Safeguarding**

No safeguarding incidents reported.

Continued progress on safeguarding training and compliance.

Safeguarding remains a core priority of the PCC and an essential foundation for a **safe and flourishing church community**.

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# Financial Review

## Overview

2025 has been a year of **significant financial investment and transition**.

- **Total income:** £240,599
- **Total expenditure:** £595,637
- **Net movement in funds:** (£252,286)

This deficit reflects:

- Major capital investment in **125 Dalling Road (£500,000 expenditure)**
  - Strategic redevelopment of church facilities
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## Income and Generosity

Average voluntary giving (£60k+) has been supported by generous one-off donations, alongside significant rental income (£126k), including £94,600 from Ballet Black.

However, the PCC recognises that **generosity is a core mark of discipleship**, and that the current level of regular giving is not yet sufficient to sustain long-term growth.

Looking ahead:

- Regular voluntary giving needs to increase significantly
- A target of **£100,000 in annual giving** is identified as necessary
- Total annual income should grow to **exceed £250,000 sustainably**

This will require:

- Teaching and encouraging Christian giving as part of discipleship
- Broadening the base of regular givers
- Moving from reliance on one-off gifts to sustained commitment

This is not simply a financial matter, but a **spiritual and missional priority**.

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## Assets and Financial Position

- Investment property value increased to £1.15m

- General fund reserves remain within policy targets
- Rental income now provides greater long-term stability

These foundations now need to be matched by **growth in congregational giving and engagement**.

## **Strategic Priorities**

Looking ahead, the PCC commits to aligning more intentionally with diocesan priorities, seeking to grow a **confident, compassionate and creative church**.

Key priorities are:

### **1. Growth in discipleship and worship**

Deepening faith and participation across the congregation, including renewed focus on children, young people, and families.

### **2. Development of lay leadership and ministry teams**

Actively identifying, training, and supporting lay leaders so that ministry is shared, sustainable, and capable of growth.

### **3. Growth in generosity and financial sustainability**

Increasing regular giving towards £100,000 annually and building income beyond £250,000 to enable mission and development.

### **4. Investment in staffing and capacity**

Recognising that growth requires capacity, with the aim of appointing additional staff as income allows.

### **5. Becoming a growing, outward-facing church**

Building on partnerships, worship, and community engagement to grow both numerically and spiritually.

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## **Conclusion**

2025 has been a transformational year for The Church of the Holy Innocents.

Through:

- Strategic property investment
- New partnerships
- Strong governance

the parish has strengthened its financial base and positioned itself for the future.

The next phase is clear.

Holy Innocents is called not only to sustain what has been built, but to **grow—spiritually, numerically, and financially**.

This will require:

- A strengthened and expanded ministry team
- A step change in generosity and regular giving
- Investment in people as well as buildings
- A shared commitment to lay leadership and discipleship

With God’s grace, and through the faithful commitment of clergy, PCC, and congregation, Holy Innocents is well placed to become a **growing, confident and outward-looking church**, serving its parish and aligned with the wider mission of the Church.

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## Appendices

- Full Financial Statements (2025)
  - Income & Expenditure Analysis
  - 125 Dalling Road Project Report
  - Rota Reports
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