Parish of Harpenden
Parishioners' Meeting and APCM

Monday 19 May 2025

at

All Saints' Church at 7.45pm







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Parish of Harpenden

Agenda for Parishioner's Meeting followed by APCM
Monday 19 May 2025
All Saints Church, 7.45pm

CONNECT, BELONG, SHARE, GROW
Our mission is to build connections, encourage belonging, and share an appealing faith that grows a vibrant Christian community at every stage of life.
We are an inclusive church, called to be caring, loving and welcoming to all.

7.45pm Meeting of Parishioners to elect Church Wardens

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Election of Church Wardens
   Re-elect Andrew Marsh

8.00pm Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of APCM held on 20 May 2024

3. Election of Representatives to the PCC to fill the following vacancies:
   St Mary's: *(one vacancy)*
   St Nicholas: (*five vacancies)*
   All Saints: (*one vacancy)*

4. To receive:
   (a) Annual Finance Report and
   (b) To approve Brendan Philip Chambers as Independent Financial Examiner

5. To receive reports on:
   (a) The Deanery Synod
   (b) Parochial Church Council
   (c) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
   (d) Electoral Roll
   (e) Safeguarding

6. Any other matter of parochial or general church interest:
   (a) Reports from District Churches on highlights of 2024
   (b) Rector's remarks
   (c) Open discussion/questions on any other matter of parochial or general interest

Notes:
1 Nominations for Church Warden, and PCC vacancies may be made on the evening.

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Parish of Harpenden

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PARISHIONERS and MINUTES of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING for the PARISH OF HARPENDEN held on MONDAY 20 MAY 2024 at 8pm at ALL SAINTS' CHURCH and by ZOOM

The meeting was opened with a reading and a prayer.

The Rector explained that those following the meetings on ZOOM were able to observe proceedings but not vote. However, they were able to ask questions.

MINUTES of the MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to elect CHURCH WARDENS

Churchwardens elected:

1) **Kevin Featherstone** (St Mary's)
   Proposed by Jackie Agg
   Seconded by Lynn Whitwam

No abstentions or against.

2) **Tim Linacre** (St Nicholas)
   Proposed by Marion Goodson
   Seconded by Henry Loweth

No abstentions or against.

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING for the PARISH of HARPENDEN

Chair:
The Rector
Present:
Revd Dennis Stamps, Grace Barnes, Jean McIntosh, Tim Linacre, Kevin Featherstone, Heather Richards, Revd. James Brown, Tony Gilbert, Pauline Gilbert, Peter Mellor, Helen Mellor, Judith Card, Elizabeth Card, Katharine Pearse, Brenda Marshall, Julie Aldridge, Liz Nichols, Patricia Yates, Ann Bisbrown-Lee, Jenny Goulding, Brenda Elliott, Maureen Welsh, Jacqueline Clayton, Hilary Pask, Tamsen Wallis, Scholastica Brimley, Revd Cath Rindl, Jackie Agg, Hilary Doherty, Hilary Hunter, Diana Hiorns, Nina Featherstone, Andrew Marsh, Kate Nesbitt, Tina Karema, Sara Harvey – PCC Secretary
Via Zoom:
Barbara Wharton, Jacquie Hibbert, Tony Quince, Tim, Geoff Payne, Marie Price, George Richards, Maggie Geraghty

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mike Swain, Rachael Threlfall, George Scarlett, Gill Scarlett, Linda Oakes, David Howell, Andy Rose, Suzanne Rose, Ro Marriott, Kirsteen Say, Sarah Cartwright, Fiona Gaskell, Geoff Kelly, Allan Barton, Pippa Alderson, Vicky Platt, Jill Horn, Jane Shoesmith, Pamela Woodford-Smith, Ian Woodford-Smith, Anne McDougall, Helen Stamps, Anne-Marie Kramer, Agneta Burton, Nick Goulding, Lynn Whitwam, David Bisbrown-Lee, Ann Halstead

2. CONFIRMATION of the MINUTES OF APCM HELD ON 22 MAY 2023

Confirmed and no matters arising.

3. ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PCC

St Mary's: One vacancy

1. **Hilary Pask** (Standing for 1st term)
   Proposed by Jacqueline Clayton
   Seconded by Lynn Whitwam

Maureen Lamburn willing to stand for re-election; paperwork not to hand so to be proposed and seconded at the next PCC meeting.

St Nicholas': Seven vacancies

1. **Kirsteen Say** (standing for 1st term)
   Proposed by Rachael Threlfall
   Seconded by Jen McGrandle
2. **Kate Nesbitt** (standing for 1st term)
   Proposed by Christina Karema
   Seconded by David Wren
3. **Christina Karema** (standing for 1st term)
   Proposed by Kate Nesbitt
   Seconded by David Wren
4. **Scholastica Brimley** (standing for 1st term)
   Proposed by Jackie Agg
   Seconded by Rachel Pepperell

All Saints': One vacancy

ALL ELECTED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE

4. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL FINANCE REPORT

Presented by Jackie Agg (JA), PCC Treasurer

APCM report – Treasurer

The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 were circulated with the papers for this meeting. The slides are a summary of the key points.

I'd like to start with a "Thank You". In March 2023 we launched a Giving Appeal, and we are extremely grateful that many of our parishioners responded and increased their giving. Thank you.

	2023 Unrestricted funds	2023 Designated funds	2023 Restricted funds	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Income:				
Donations and legacies	404,447	18,176	4,460	430,083
Charitable activities	161,515	1,636	9,522	172,673
Interest	16,390	-	-	16,390
	585,352	19,812	13,982	619,146
Expenditure:	(536,996)	(11,068)	(22,054)	(570,118)
Net surplus/(deficit)	48,356	8,744	(8,072)	49,028
Transfers	(143)	143	-	-
Net movement in funds	**48,213**	**8,887**	**(8,072)**	**49,028**

As a result of our successful appeal, and some other factors such as increasing our hall rental rates, we have, for the first time in many years, made a surplus on our day-to-day expenditure for 2023. This was £48k on unrestricted funds (the number highlighted at the bottom of the left-hand column).

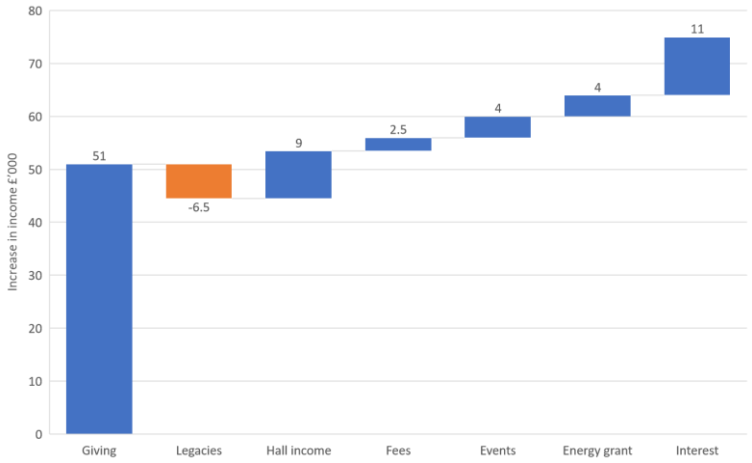
We analyse our income and expenditure between unrestricted funds (our day-to-day expenditure), designated funds and restricted funds – columns 1, 2 and 3 respectively in the table.

As a reminder:

- Restricted funds are funds that can only be used for a specific purpose, either because the donor imposed a restriction or because we said we were raising money for a particular purpose. For example, money left in a legacy specifically for the upkeep of St Mary's, or monies donated for specific charities we are supporting.
- Designated funds have been set aside for a particular purpose – for example a legacy left for All Saints' Church where there is no specification as to how the money should be spent.

It is our unrestricted funds, to cover our day-to-day expenditure that we have been concerned about in recent years. And it is these day-to-day funds that I'm going to focus on for most of this report.

Slide 2 – 2023 increase in unrestricted income (over 2022)

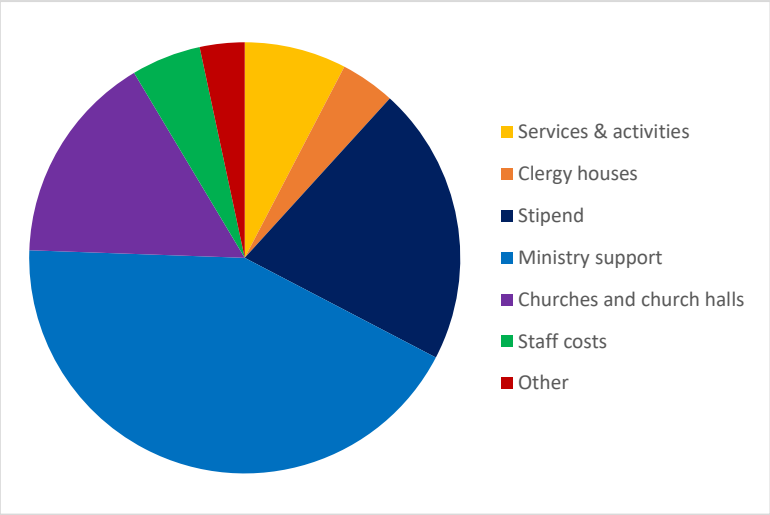


Our unrestricted income has increased by £77k during 2023 (if you ignore the rent, we received in 2022 on St James' Road – which we are no longer renting out as our curate is living there).

- £51k of this increase is from giving (including gift aid). There were a few one-off donations during 2023, but the vast majority of the increase is pledged planned giving through the Parish Giving Scheme.
  We have also seen an increase in Gift Aid receipts during 2023 – partly as a result of the increase in planned giving but also on our non-planned giving too. It is really encouraging that more donors are gift aiding their donations.
- In addition to the giving appeal, the PCC and our DCCs also reviewed our church hall hire rates and discretionary fees that we charge for weddings and funerals, by comparing them to market rates in the area. All Saints' has started renting out some car parking spaces to a local business during 2023. As a result, our income from our church halls increased by £9k and our income from fees by £2.5k.
- Our District churches held a number of events during 2023, such as the Coronation Tea party, the St Mary's Fete and various quiz evenings and gave a proportion of the income to the Parish – this resulted in additional income from events during 2023.
- The Diocese awarded energy grants of £4k for 2023 and our interest income increased substantially too.

This is clearly all very good news, but we must not be complacent. The additional interest income of £11k is very welcome, but it is probably not sustainable in the longer term.

Slide 3 – 2023 expenditure



This slide shows the breakdown of our expenditure from unrestricted funds.

High interest rates usually mean high inflation and we are not exempt from the impact. Our costs increased by £20k over the prior year. Only £1k of this increase was in relation to our Parish Share – the rest is our day-to-day costs of running our parish and the increase in running costs was spread across almost all our expenditure categories.

Our energy costs increased to £34k (from £28k in 2022) – energy costs are included in our churches and church halls category on the slide. This was not as bad as we feared when we set the budget for 2023. Each of our District Churches has fixed rate energy contracts. St Nicholas is the largest energy user and when they renegotiated their gas rates during 2023, they were able to obtain a much more favourable rate. Energy costs continue to be a significant and unpredictable cost for the parish.

The diocesan parish share remains our most significant expenditure – our contribution for 2023 was £342k or 64% of our expenditure. The parish share is our contribution to the Diocese, to support the work of the Diocese. It is in two parts – a firstly a stipend contribution and secondly a ministry support contribution. The amount that each parish in the diocese is asked to pay for the stipend contribution depends on the number of clergy in that parish. The ministry support contribution for each parish is calculated on a rather complex formula - broadly head count plus an 'ability to pay' share factor. It should be noted that our Diocese has worked very hard over the last few years to minimise the increases to the parish share.

Summary

	2023 Unrestricted funds	2023 Designated funds	2023 Restricted funds	2023 Total
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Income:				
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Expenditure:	(536,996)	(11,068)	(22,054)	(570,118)
Net surplus/(deficit)	48,356	8,744	(8,072)	49,028
Transfers	(143)	143	-	-
Net movement in funds	**48,213**	**8,887**	**(8,072)**	**49,028**

So overall we made a profit of £48k on our day-to-day expenditure. It is however worth noting that without the appeal and the increase in giving, we would have incurred a loss for 2023.

Designated funds

Turning to the second column, our designated funds income is made up pf a variety of donations for specific churches, including money from the Childwick Trust, coffee money at All Saints and St Nicholas and money for all three District Churches from the annual Bike 'n' Hike plus income from some of our social events during the year.

Expenditure from designated funds includes repairs and maintenance on our church buildings and donations to charities from our various events.

Restricted funds

Our restricted income almost all relates to money collected/raised for other charities. This included donations for the Bishops Harvest Appeal, DEC Ukraine (as a result of the music concert held), money raised by St Mary's for Jeel al Amal and the income from Cornelia's coffee shop.

Expenditure from restricted funds includes some repairs and maintenance on our church buildings plus donations to charities.

Charitable giving

Our charitable giving needs to be looked at in total across unrestricted, designated and restricted funds.

During 2023 we gave just over £18,000 to charity – some of this was from social events held, such as St Mary's Fete and the Coronation Tea Party. Other monies were raised by Cornelia's Coffee Shop and from specific collections at services.

Summary

Thanks to our successful giving appeal we made a profit in 2023. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. We are reliant on donations from our congregations and the income from renting out our church halls. Inflation is still high; energy costs are still high, and our church buildings need maintaining so we should not expect our costs to decrease. We are very grateful to those who have been able to increase their giving.

Please continue, if you are able to, to give through planned giving as this allows us to plan and budget effectively as a parish. We use the Parish Giving Scheme which makes it very easy for individuals to set up giving with payment by direct debit. It also makes reclaiming Gift Aid (where appropriate) very efficient.

We are a busy and active parish with lots of activities taking place including our very successful fellowship groups, our work with local schools and regular visits to retirement and residential homes. If you haven't yet had a chance to read our Trustees report, may I encourage you to do so.

I would like to thank everyone who served on our Finance Committee during 2023 for their continued hard work and support.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dennis. Dennis has a very good understanding of church finances and we, as a Parish, have been very fortunate to benefit from this.

Jackie Agg

May 2024

The Report having been presented; questions were invited. A point from the floor asked whether the collections for British Humanitarian Aid were included in the figure of £18,000 noted as Charitable Giving. JA stated that this was not included as the funds did not go through our accounts. A further point was raised stating that £18K amounts to only 3% of our donations and that direct giving is the most effective way to

raise funds. JA agreed that we could do more but pointed out that there are other forms of giving which are not counted in cash such as Foodbank donations which have no monetary value but are charitable giving, nonetheless.

Tim Linacre, Finance Committee Chair stated that he wished to formally thank JA as Treasurer for all her hard work on behalf of the Parish. He also thanked everyone for their generosity which had enabled the Parish Share to be paid in full once again.

(a) Proposed that we duly approve the Annual Finance Report – passed unanimously.

(b) To approve Brendan Philip Chambers of Fusion Accountancy as Independent Financial Examiner – approved unanimously

5. TO RECEIVE REPORTS ON:

(a) The Deanery Synod
(b) Parochial Church Council
(c) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments
(d) Electoral Roll
(e) Safeguarding
(f) Chalice Assistants

(a) The Deanery Synod report

The new Rural Dean from 1 June 2024 will be Revd Jo Burke. Richard Hurst has stepped down as one of the Deanery Synod reps for St Mary's and Jenny Goulding is happy to stand in his place. The nomination forms have been completed but were not to hand so formal approval will take place at the next PCC meeting scheduled for 17 June 2024; forms to be passed to the PCC Secretary before that date.

(b) PCC

No questions – advised new members to make a note of forthcoming meeting dates.

(c) Fabric, Goods and Ornaments

No comments or questions. Thanks were expressed to all those responsible for maintaining the buildings.

(d) Electoral Roll

No comments or questions.

(e) Safeguarding Report

The Rector stated that the issue of Safeguarding was taken very seriously within the Parish and that we do well in ensuring that training is completed and that any issues are reported. A point raised from the floor suggested noting in the Annual Report whether any alerts had been raised and whether anything raised had required action. It was agreed to raise this with the Parish Safeguarding Officer as something to think about for future reports.

(f) Chalice Assistants

<u>St Nicholas'</u>
Helen Stamps and Jackie Murray to come off the list
Wendy Kirby to be added
<u>St Mary's</u>
Hilary Pask to be added

Unanimously approved

6. ANY OTHER MATTERS OF PAROCHIAL OR GENERAL CHURCH INTEREST:

(a) Reports from District Churches on highlights of 2023

The reports distributed ahead of the meeting highlighted the extensive work and activities of our three churches.

All Saints' - Revd James gave a personal note of thanks to Dennis as a Rector, Pastor and Preacher as well as being a good colleague. He further added that Dennis was endlessly reliable and also kind and offered both his professional and personal thanks.

St Mary's – Nothing further to add to the report but to note the splendid work being undertaken by the ECO Church and the forthcoming fete on 13 July 2024.

St Nicholas' – The Coronation Tea Party was a particular highlight from 2023 – it was suggested that all do take a look at the mosaic prepared by the children in the church hall vestibule – a fitting tribute. In addition, the Ukrainian Concert which raised £1300, was also a marvellous community event.

The Rector said that he found it a pleasure to read these reports which are a compendium of what has been achieved during the last year and show the gifts and talents supporting our ministry and mission here in the Parish.

(b) Rector's remarks

First, I would like to thank my clergy colleagues, Sally Goodson, James Brown and Cath Rindl. I and the parish are blessed to have these dedicated persons share in the ministry of the parish. Personally, they have been encouraging and supportive to me. I am very grateful.

I wish to thank all our Readers for their ministry. Many of them continue to take funerals, look after many in the parish pastorally, and lead and assist in services as needed. Thanks also to our LLW's who have also helped with our worship. And thank you to our Pastoral Care teams who have continued as they were able to support many in the parish pastorally.

My heartfelt thanks to Sara and Pauline who staff our parish office. They do a marvellous job coping with all the challenges and supporting our three parishes. They also show great care to the people who come into the office.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Kevin and Tim who have served as Church Wardens this past year. They are a tremendous help to me and to the parish. I appreciate all they do, mostly behind the scenes, and their wisdom, support, and encouragement, in assisting in our shared mission and ministry.

Thank you also to all who serve on the PCC for the time and energy you give to help with church and district matters.

Special thanks to Sara Harvey our PCC Secretary who has kept us organised. And Mike who takes the minutes.

I am very grateful to Jackie Agg, our parish treasurer and to Caroline Martin who is her deputy and to the whole team of treasurers, parish and district. I want to thank our Finance Committee for their work in overseeing our finances and advising the PCC. We are well served indeed. Given what was accomplished in 2023 with giving, I want to thank our Giving Committee for their help with the giving appeal last year.

I want to thank all who have volunteered their technical expertise and talents to ensure our worship services got online and have gone out week after week with few problems. Especially wish to thank personally, Giles Croot, Kelvin Goodson, Jenny and Nick Goulding, and Philip le Riche, and others as who assist them.

Also, thanks to Marie Price who oversees the music ministry in the parish, mostly at St Nicholas, but helping as needed in all three churches.

I am grateful to each District Church and their DCCs who ensure each church maintains its mission and ministry effectively, maintains the buildings, and serves the local area. Thank you to all who serve in this way.

Finally, thank you to everyone who contributes to our mission and ministry and life of our three churches. The amazing level of Mission and Ministry is evident in the Annual Report and in the District annual reports.

I am so grateful to so many who do so well to help us Connect, Belong, Share and Grow as a community of faith, Living God's Love, serving and transforming our community and going deeper into God.

This will be my last APCM. It has been an immense privilege to serve as your Rector for 11.5 years. The Archdeacon asked me the highlight of my time here and I said right away, the amazing people I have had the privilege of working with. It is bittersweet to be leaving, but I am getting old, and I want to spend more time with family and less time working, so retirement (or semi-retirement looms).

In one sense, when a Rector leaves, everything changes, and nothing changes. A new Rector will bring new energy and ideas and a different way of doing things, hopefully for the better. But nothing changes, in that the parish continues as it has for centuries to offer quality worship, service to one another and the wider community, and mission to connect with those seeking faith. Rectors come and go, but you, the people, who are the church continue as the ongoing life of the church.

A new Rector will come to help the parish reformulate its mission with you. This can be an exciting and creative time. May I encourage you to be open to new things, willing to put down tired and old things where needed, and to be open to the Holy Spirit leading the parish into a new season of proclaiming the word and works of God and serving others.

As I have said before, we have a good and gracious God who longs to touch his world, this community, this parish, with his love and grace. May you continue to draw near to God in prayer and worship so that the Holy Spirit of God can fill you and guide you into God's good purposes.

(c) Open Discussion

KF took to the floor and in a wide-ranging tribute thanked Dennis for his leadership, sensitivity and for being an effective team player and manager during his time as Rector.

During Dennis' tenure he has nurtured the ministry of others – including 4 incumbents, 3 curates, 3 going forward to ordination, 3 as licensed readers, and 9 lay leaders of worship.

The Parish finances have stabilised during his time as Rector, and membership of the Electoral Roll has remained broadly the same which is testament in itself to his leadership.

KF offered warm appreciation for all the hard work and commitment that Dennis has given. A round of applause followed.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm with a prayer and The Grace

2024 REPORTS

WHEATHAMPSTEAD DEANERY SYNOD 2024

In clergy news, 2024 saw news of Bishop Alan's impending retirement. It may take as much as 2 years to find his replacement. Wheathampstead Deanery wishes him all the best for his retirement.

Revd Dennis Stamps, our Rural Dean for a number of years, retired from St Nicholas' Harpenden, and left the Deanery to take up a part-time post nearer to his family in the Shill Valley and Broadshire benefice in rural west Oxfordshire. We were sorry to see him go, but happy that he will be starting a new venture that will see him spending more time with his wife and family. The Deanery welcomed Revd Mark Rodel, who was licensed as an Associate Minister in the Parish of Harpenden in September 2024 and he now officiates at occasional services around the Parish on Sundays. His official role is Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry within the Diocese.

We were privileged to see Revd Jo Burke from Flamstead made our new Rural Dean by Archdeacon Charles Hudson at a special ceremony during our July Synod. Revd Jo had held the post of Deputy Rural Dean during the previous year.

Revd Ritah Namakula, curate at St John's, Harpenden, was priested in July. Revd Jo welcomed a curate in the summer to Flamstead – Revd Sam Davis.

The vacancy in Kimpton and Ayot St Lawrence was filled in late September, and we welcome Revd Liz Guest to that parish.

There have been 3 synod meetings in 2024:

In January we gathered at St Mary's, Redbourn. Our final synod under the leadership of Revd Dennis was an opportunity to share our parish highs and lows – addressing three questions:

1. Something that went really well at Christmas or something new you did that went well.
2. Something that is going well in the parish or some new initiative
3. Something that is a challenge or struggle in the parish at this time.

In July we met at St Leonard's, Sandridge, and as well as thew aforementioned commissioning of Revd Jo, we had a very informative presentation from Polly Eaton, the Diocesan Eco Officer.
October saw us meeting in St Mary's, Kinsbourne Green, and we heard a fascinating talk from the Dispute Advisory Service, given by Jacob Kurien and Corinne McCrum.
Membership of Diocesan Synod saw its 3-yearly revision in 2024.

Sue May Deanery Secretary

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2024

PCC OFFICERS

Kevin Featherstone and Tim Linacre (until November 2024) Andrew Marsh (from November 2024) were elected Parish Wardens
Sara Harvey was co-opted as PCC Secretary
Jackie Agg was appointed Parish Treasurer
Ro Marriott was appointed Electoral Roll Officer
Michelle McCulloch was co-opted as Parish Safeguarding Officer
Michael Swain was appointed Minute Secretary

APPROVAL OF FOUNDATION GOVERNOR FOR ST NICHOLAS' VA SCHOOL

Sara Longden

PARISH POLICIES

The following Parish policies were reviewed:-
January 2025
The Church of England's Safeguarding Policy
The Parish of Harpenden's Safeguarding Policy
Parish of Harpenden: Best practice guidelines for working with both children and young people and also vulnerable adults
Diocesan Statement on Domestic Abuse
Ex-Offenders Recruitment Policy
Financial Management
March 2025
Risk Register update
The following new policies were formally approved:-
April 2025
Complaints Policy
Harassment and Bullying Policy

MISSION

Lent Groups undertaken at each of the three churches using the book – Women of Holy Week by Paula Gooder – as a basis for discussion – very popular and well attended.
Report on Children, Family and Youth Mission in the Parish updated by Revd Cath Rindl in September 2024.
Links with Harpenden Bereavement Café and High Street Methodist Church in pursuit of mission objectives continues.
St Mary's MAP was updated with positive engagement from both the regular weekly congregations and also those who attend Simply Worship services.
First Holy Communion course arranged from April 2025 after a year off whilst in vacancy.
Review of passporting system for St George's School – Michelle McCulloch to set up a small working party to review the process and to report back to PCC in due course.

DISTRICT NEWS

Lighting in car park at All Saints' updated – shared costs with Perrin Myddelton.
All Saints' Heating System – two teams set up to consider the replacement of the heating system at All Saints' – a Design Team and a Fundraising Team.

New AV system in place at St Mary's

Heating system at St Nicholas' – discussions over many meetings regarding the replacement of the heating system at St Nicholas' following the failure of the boiler in July 2024 and the need to replace it before the winter of 2025/6 whilst being mindful of the Church of England target to achieve Net Zero.

STATUTORY AND REGULAR ITEMS

Safeguarding – Training continues to be renewed by volunteers across the Parish. It is hoped to expand the Safeguarding Team with three Training Administrators – one for each church to help with the increased workload.

Health and Safety – First Aid course undertaken in November 2024 by 12 volunteers from across the Parish.

Sara Harvey, PCC Secretary

MEETING DATES – 2025/6

Standing Committee	**PCC meetings**
4 June 2025	18 June 2025 - St Mary's
10 September 2025	24 September 2025 - St Nicholas'
12 November 2025	26 November 2025 - All Saints
11 February 2026	25 February - St Nicholas'
15 April 2026	29 April 2026 - St Mary's
APCM:	20 May 2026 - All Saints

Sara Harvey, PCC Secretary

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Parish of Harpenden

REPORT OF THE FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCHES OF THE PARISH

(under Section 5 of the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991)

In July and September, we had the Archdeacon's Inspection for all three churches which went well

St. Nicholas'

The gas boiler in Church failed its annual inspection in August and was closed off. A visit by Tom Abraham, the Net Zero Carbon Officer for the Diocese, was made shortly afterwards. He gave an assessment, listed various options, and provided details of energy consultants. Three energy consultants were selected, and each visited the church in December. A report was commissioned from R. T. King, and this was received in January 2025. With the winter approaching, we purchased blankets and 24kw temporary heaters to take the chill away. The lack of heat and higher humidity levels stopped our organ working properly and impaired the tuning from time to time, as well as making the walls and general fabric damper.

- To update, beyond the reporting period here: the R. T. King report - a 'first stage' report - was required to set out the energy conservation options with consideration to the CofE path to net zero and to recommend the preferred approach. It gave a strong recommendation that a new gas boiler should be installed, on grounds of cost, efficiency and speed. It gave little attention to the 'net zero' target, however. The PCC agreed, therefore, to forward the report to the Diocese, together with a commitment to consider other, 'green' flanking measures (e.g. in the Hall), and to seek its advice before applying for 'faculty' approval. The Diocese responded that the Report was an insufficient basis on which to decide on the boiler replacement. Following a meeting, which now included the Archdeacon and Patrick as our Rector, an agenda and provisional schedule was agreed. Advice was given on the faculty application and steps that can be taken in parallel, to speed up the process. It is likely that a new system will be based on gas boilers, supported (in due course) by 'green' alternatives. The current schedule envisages a new heating system being in place before the coming winter.

The wardens have worked hard on this matter and have appreciated the advice of Neil Hewitt.

The Quinquennial inspection report of church fabric was conducted in 2024. The majority of the works of repair identified were in "category 7", which are not urgent but should be kept under observation. There have been some works identified under "category 2" which should be addressed within the next 18 months. These include repairs to the Remembrance Garden's stonework and the "W9" window: the work for both is in hand.

We continue to ensure that the church building and surrounding grounds are properly maintained. In 2024 the following projects were completed:

- An emergency clearance of gutters above the North Aisle roof in February following further leaking near the sound desk. A more thorough clearance of moss with poles and application of biocide to the cleared roofs that drain into the gulley was subsequently completed. These works appear to have been successful with no subsequent leaks reported in that area.
- The School refurbished the hall kitchen during Summer holidays, replacing the two large gas range cookers and installing an electric combi oven. The Parish contributed 20% towards the cost as our share of future usage.

- The Church tower flooded twice in September and again in December. This has been a recurring problem in recent years with heavy rain flowing as a river down Kirkwick Avenue, and into the bell tower under the door. The Council has been informed. The height of the kerb has been raised, and additional gulleys have been installed at the bottom of Kirkwick Avenue.
- The Hall sound system was upgraded in November to allow sound to be controlled independently in Cornelia's and the main hall; and also, to provide a connection for external speakers in Cornelia's garden for outside events without trailing wires.

Preparations have commenced offsite on the following significant projects which will be finalised in 2025:

- The Remembrance garden repair and extension. The stone coping that has crumbled is planned to be repaired by replacing all the top layer with overhanging coping and a sill, this should help the stone weather better. To provide additional space for memorial plaques, two metres on the office extension north gable and new large space on the west gable of the printing room will be converted to this use. A Corinthian Stone quote has been approved by the Parish and nearly by the Diocese. This work, initially anticipated for Summer 2024, should now go ahead in late spring 2025.
- The mullions around the Rothamsted window in the North aisle are cracked and the stone needs repairing. The work, which The John Lawes Trust have kindly agreed to fund, is planned for completion at the same time as the Remembrance Garden work.

St Mary's

The following work was undertaken in 2024:

- Plastic extractor fan flap replaced in ladies toilet (a Quinquennial recommendation)
- Toilet seat replaced
- Plug fixed in church
- New pc tablet bought
- Tap replaced in the kitchen
- Hall flat roof repaired, following leaks.
- Wasp nest removed
- Roof gullies cleaned and part of the roof resealed.
- Purchased 3x purificators.

All Saints'

- The parking scheme established in association with Perrin Myddelton, a local firm of solicitors, was extended to a longer-term arrangement.
- A light was installed in the middle of the car park to provide better lighting for car park users late at night.
- Work has been done to repair potholes in the near car park and improve the surface of the far car park.
- We contended with a flood in the near car park when the river burst its banks but no lasting damage has been done.
- A fallen tree in the far car park had to be removed, and we have had another couple of dead trees removed from around the car park too.
- A ramp has been installed by the pavement at the back of the hall, and rails have been added beside the steps leading to the main entrance to the church.
- A ramp has also been installed inside the church near the fire exit allowing unimpeded step-free access.

- The boiler room door has been replaced.
- Lighting at the back of the hall and at the front of the church has been replaced.
- Some of the emergency lights inside the church and hall have been replaced.
- Apple trees have been planted on the land next to the church as part of our Land Management Plan.
- Plans are being progressed to replace the heating system in both the church and the hall, and, in the meantime, work to replace windows has been put on hold given this might be superseded by work on the heating.

Kevin Featherstone

Tim Linacre (till November 2024) / Andrew Marsh (from November 2024).

Parish Wardens

(and on behalf of the district wardens in each Church, to whom we record our thanks).

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Parish of Harpenden

Parish of Harpenden Electoral Roll

Report for APCM 19th May 2025

This year was a full revision year and for the first time we decided to use Church Suite for the administration of the Electoral Roll process.

Our total for 2025 is 424 - down 177 from 601 in 2024 and down 160 since the last revision in 2019.

There are 63 new members to the ER this year – 7 for All Saints, 18 for St Mary's and 38 for St Nicholas'

The details are as follows:

	St Nicholas'	St Mary's	All Saints'	Total
Total 2025	263	90	71	**424**

Below shows the changes to the ER over the last five years, since the last revision.

Church	April 2025	% of 2024	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022	April 2021	Oct 2020	April 2019	April 2013
All Saints'	71	72.4%	98	95	75	77	79	77	90
St Mary's	90	81.8%	111	112	114	117	117	118	105
St Nicholas'	263	67.1%	392	389	388	399	393	389	398
Total	**424**	**70.7%**	**601**	**596**	**577**	**593**	**589**	**584**	593

This has been my final year as the ER Officer for the Parish of Harpenden. Having undertaken the role for the past 10 years, covering two full revisions, I feel it is now time to pass the baton on to someone new. It has been a privilege to serve the Parish in this way.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me during the past 10 years - my fellow ER Officers, Loretta Ramswell and Kate Nesbitt, the clergy and Sara and Pauline in the Parish Office for all their assistance. Particular thanks to Sara for all her work getting to grips with how to use Church Suite for the ER.

Full copies of the roll are available for viewing, on request, please contact your ER representative or the Parish Office if you need to access a copy.

I would ask the APCM to approve the revised Electoral Roll for 2025.

Ro Marriott
Parish Electoral Roll Officer

SAFEGUARDING

The parish has many volunteers working in various roles across the parish, all of whom provide valuable support and service in the busy life of the parish.

The PCC has adopted the Promoting a Safer Church Policy Statement of the Church of England. The Policy Statement promotes a safer safeguarding environment and culture. In practice, the parish follows Safer Recruitment guidance (including carrying out DBS checks) where relevant to parish roles and has in place relevant risk assessments, the Code of Safer Working Practice and Best Practice Guidelines for working with Young People and Vulnerable Adults, as provided by the Diocese. The parish has committed to respond appropriately and proportionately, in accordance with the Policy Statement and guidance, to any safeguarding allegations and to work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and / or relevant

statutory agencies when necessary. The Policy Statement is reviewed regularly and promoted in our churches (look for the blue posters and guidelines which provide relevant contact details. Please take time to read them).

The Church of England runs an online Safeguarding training programme for parish volunteers. Safeguarding officers undertake additional training. Training is compulsory for many parish volunteer roles. Our volunteers at church have been asked to complete training where they are obliged to do so. This includes PCC and DCC members. The parish safeguarding team respectfully requests that all relevant volunteers complete training as soon as possible when asked to do so.

Thank you to all our volunteers who offer their time and skills in support of our parish community and help us in our Diocesan and parish commitment to safeguard all God's people.

Michelle McCulloch Parish Safeguarding Officer May 2025

DISTRICT WARDENS REPORTS

St Nicholas'

2024 will be remembered at St Nicholas' for two main events: the departure of Dennis and the failure of the church boiler. So much more happened during the year, but these were the most prominent.

Dennis Stamps retired as Rector after twelve years following his appointment as 'Associate Vicar, House for Duty' in the Shill Valley and Broadshire benefice in the Oxford Diocese, a part time position and one nearer to his family. Dennis' final day on Sunday 9 June was a marvellous celebration of his time with us and a fitting tribute to his wonderful leadership. The Parish came together to create a memorable send-off and so many people joined and contributed to the special day.

Following Dennis' departure, the recruitment of our next Rector commenced. Fortunately, the vacancy period was relatively short with a new rector Revd Patrick Moriarty being welcomed in March 2025.

In September, we welcomed Mark Rodel to the Parish when he was Licenced as an Associate Minister. The role complements his position as Deputy Director of Mission and Ministry in the diocese. Mark has been a regular presider and preacher at our services, and we look forward to his continued services in 2025.

We considered ourselves extremely fortunate that Revd Cath Rindl was with us as our priested curate until December, following which she was appointed to Henley-in-Arden. We celebrated Cath's time with us at a Parish wide service after Christmas, at which she presided and preached.

Moving onto the heating, the church boiler was condemned by the gas engineer at its annual summer service. Thankfully the church offices, hall and Cornelia's were unaffected as they are heated by separate boilers. To make the most of the warmth of the hall, the Cunningham Room was adapted over the winter into a temporary chapel for the services with lower attendance and typically attended by those more vulnerable. Hence, with the exception of Christmas Day, from November the Sunday 8am, Wednesday 10.30am and Saturday 10.30am services have been held there. Morning Praise was also relocated to the church hall, again with the exception of Christmas Day.

After a lot of work involving the District Wardens and Parish Wardens and following on from visits by engineers and the Diocesan Net Zero lead, a report was prepared, with a view to applying for a faculty from the Diocese so that the heating system can be functioning as a priority in time for winter 2025/26. This approach will need to be approved by the Diocese before we can progress to detailed design and installation.

Easter 2024 services were well attended, and the Easter Garden once again saw the installation of the large cross. The small crosses for decoration again proved to be very popular and provided an eye-catching display for those walking by, helping to engage people and spread the message of Easter. We were delighted that St Nicholas' School children were again very keen to participate by decorating 150 crosses.

Morning Praise hosted a very enjoyable, albeit lightly attended, Harvest Festival picnic for the whole church in October. The lack of attendees was probably due to the very poor weather which caused the picnic to relocate into Cornelia's where we were all able to socialise together in the warmth.

Two Health and Safety refresher training days were held in May. As a church we have a duty to ensure the health and safety of everyone who may use our buildings including clergy, staff, volunteers, congregation and visitors. We are very grateful to Simon Brown who gave the sessions.

The traditional Christmas Fayre was held in December and, as in prior years, was spread out to use the whole available space of the church building, hall and Cornelia's. It was a wonderful atmosphere, and lovely to see so many people again including a choir from The Academy School, members of Harpenden Concert Band and our church choir who all performed some wonderful music. Thanks to all the stall holders and those who took part. Net proceeds from the fayre totalled just over £3,100, which was split 50% to Open Door homeless charity & Médecins Sans Frontières, and 50% to the parish.

Cornelia's Café continues to provide an excellent environment for parishioners to meet and to welcome newcomers to the church. The café continues to open three mornings a week, and Wednesday afternoons. We are so thankful for the volunteers who provide such a friendly and welcoming environment to everyone visiting. The Cornelia's committee was very pleased to approve charitable donations totalling £7,500 during the year.

The community demonstrated their ongoing compassion for those in need by the continuation of the 6 monthly collection of second-hand goods for British Humanitarian Aid. BHA has been helping the community of Chernihiv, Ukraine for over 20 years and the Harpenden community has been contributing almost since the beginning.

The Quinquennial inspection report of church fabric was conducted in 2024. The majority of the works of repair identified were in "category 7", which are not urgent but should be kept under observation. There have been some works identified under "category 2" which should be addressed within the next 18 months. These include repairs to the Remembrance Garden's stonework and the "W9" window: the work for both is in hand.

Our church continues to provide fellowship, uniting us in shared worship and a compelling range of activities centred around our love of God and our support for each other. There are so many people whose generous contributions of time, expertise, money and support enable St Nicholas' to fulfil its mission and continue to be the warm, supportive community we are fortunate to be part of; we are immensely grateful for all you do.

Vicky Platt and Rachael Threlfall

All Saints'

In 2024 we saw a small increase in numbers of those on the Electoral Roll, and consistency of numbers in the wider definition of All Saints' 'worshipping community', broadly comprising those who tend to come to services around once a month or so. Attendance levels have been strong at special services at Christmas and Easter.

All Saints' has continued to offer a variety of opportunities for worship. Our monthly All Age service has become an established fixture, introducing something different with an array of activities for, as the name suggests, all ages, and paving the way for members of the congregation who have not previously led services to get involved in that way.

Other special services have attracted members of the community who might be less inclined to attend more longstanding forms of worship. For example, again, we provided 'Beer and Carols' at the Marquis of Granby as well as our now firmly established Fire Pit Carols. Prayer walks have also been arranged at different times of year, including Lent and Advent as well as a series of summer and autumn walks, making the most of the Batford Springs Nature Reserve next to the Church. Established weekday activities such as

Busy Bunnies and Tea Cake and Chat have continued, and a new Knit and Knatter group has started. Various home groups have continued to meet during the week, and we also arrange visits to Willow Court Residential Care Home and Lea Springs Independent Living Centre, offering their residents the chance to sing favourite hymns and songs as well as to chat. We have strong relationships with local schools too, with James organising visits to the Church as well as attending a number of assemblies, lunch clubs and occasional mentoring.

In terms of social activities, we have had another busy year including the Maundy Thursday Supper, a picnic in August, a barn dance arranged for Harvest, the All Saints' Day Lunch in November, and a quiz.

The building continues to be used heavily by the community, providing a meeting place for a range of local charities and groups. We should give special mention to the Harpenden Child Contact Centre and the Harpenden Money Advice Centre, both of which were founded at All Saints', continuing to provide excellent support with the help of dedicated groups of volunteers. We have longstanding association with other groups and appreciate their ongoing relationship and use of our facilities, ensuring the hall calendar is kept busy.

We have also strengthened our relationship with a local firm of solicitors who rent some car park spaces from us now on a longer-term basis, generating some additional income for the Church.

Our efforts with our Land Management Plan have continued with recent focus on planting of apple trees after one of our Sunday services, getting many members of the congregation involved including a number of children. Another fixture now is the annual Repair Fair that we host, creating scope for broken electrical items to be fixed and re-used as well as for clothing and fabric to be altered and repaired. On the Eco Church theme, we also hosted a special service for the whole Deanery on the theme of creation care.

In terms of our own repairs needed to Church buildings and grounds, there have been many over the past year. We were fortunate to avoid significant damage caused by a fallen tree in the car park as well as flooding when the river burst its banks although they both required urgent action. We have undertaken fairly extensive updating of the lighting outside of the building including installation of a light in the middle of the car park. Work is also in progress to undertake a significant upgrade of our heating system following considerable efforts made to see whether the existing system could be made to work better. That is likely to be a major source of expenditure for the coming year but a necessary and worthwhile investment for the future.

As ever, we thank the many individuals who help in numerous and varied ways, usually without fanfare, but all contributing to the multi-faceted nature of our Church life.

Ben Fairhead and Sue Alexander **District Wardens** **May 2025**

St Mary's

2024 has once again been a busy year for this very special church community. When people come here, they feel the warm welcome, the kindness and friendship, and the hospitality we offer.
Our Mission, as a parish, is to build connections, encourage belonging and share an appealing faith that grows a vibrant Christian community at every stage of life. We are an inclusive church called to be caring, loving and welcoming to all.

The core message of our Mission Action Plan is that we have four services in one church: Sunday at 9.30am, Simply Worship on Sundays at 4.30pm, Tuesday at 10am and Sunday communion service at 11am.We recognise each as an important part of a whole. As always these services are enthusiastically led by Sally, Nick, Jenny, Hilary, and Nina. Our Tuesday 10 am congregation is thriving and Simply Worship and Sunday morning numbers are stable.

It is great to be able to report that social events have resumed to full strength this year. These include our Tuesday Afternoon Group - an important outreach to members of our community and our Little Lunch club – new chefs and drivers were welcomed to ensure a sufficient team of helpers is available each month. In addition, we had a quiz in March and bring and share lunch in September. We also hosted quiet days for the Deanery and our Mothers Union.

Our outreach activities have continued including our much appreciated visits to Homedell House for our monthly service of communion and our 3 Songs of Praise services followed by tea. In addition, we continue to support the local food bank and held a very successful annual fete with our scouting partners.

In July we had a successful Archdeacon's Inspection.

St Mary's Eco Church project has continued as a major focus of our Mission Action Plan. We gained our Silver award in June 2023. We have continued our efforts in recycling, litter picking, and use of Eco friendly cleaning products where possible. We focussed on developing a wild flower meadow and a bug church in the summer and carried our surveys of birds and wild flowers.

Our Christmas Choir, under the leadership of Jenny Goulding, gave us a really lovely Carol service. We held a simply Nativity service in December and moved our Christingle service into January.

Our wonderful building requires considerable care and maintenance, and we are so lucky to have many people (too many to name) who volunteer tirelessly to carry out work and roles both inside and outside the church. We acknowledge wholeheartedly the work they do. Thank you to you all.

Lynn Whitwam and Jacqueline Clayton District Wardens