

# The Church of St Thomas the Martyr, Winchelsea

## **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 10:30am

St Thomas Church, Winchelsea

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## **AGENDA**

### **Welcome and Opening Prayer**

### **Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens**

1. Special resolution under Church Representation Rules  
*to enable a Churchwarden to stand for a seventh successive year in office*
2. Election of Churchwardens

### **The Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

#### Opening Prayer

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the APCM held on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025
3. Matters arising
4. Opening Remarks from the Rector
5. Vacancy Management Group Report
6. The Reports
  - i. Annual Report
  - ii. Accounts & Independent Examiner's Report
  - iii. Fabric Report
  - iv. Electoral Roll Report
  - v. Deanery Synod Report
  - vi. Safeguarding Report
  - vii. Non-Statutory Reports

7. Elections to Deanery Synod
8. Elections to the Parochial Church Council
9. Appointment of Independent Examiner 2026
10. AOB

Closing Prayer

### **Parochial Church Council Meeting**

Opening Prayer

1. Confirmation of Elections
  - i. Churchwardens
  - ii. PCC
  - iii. Deanery Synod
- i. Appointment of Officers
  - i. Vice-Chair
  - ii. Treasurer
  - iii. Secretary
  - iv. Safeguarding (PSO)
  - v. Electoral Roll
2. Safeguarding
  - i. Training Requirements
  - ii. Approval of Benefice Policy
3. Results, Returns and Updates
4. Agree dates for PCC meetings in 2026
5. AOB

Closing Prayer

## **THE PARISH OF WINCHELSEA**

### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

#### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

“We are an open welcoming church, which exists for the community as a whole and where everyone is valued and respected. We are called to serve Christ in the world, sharing the joy of God’s unconditional love in faith and action. We commit ourselves to praying and working for a world where love, reconciliation, equality and peace can prevail.”

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Within the Diocese of Chichester, the Parish of Winchelsea (served by the Church of St Thomas the Martyr) forms a Joint Benefice with the Parish of Icklesham (served by the Church of St Nicholas with All Saints). Since 2023, the Parish of Pett (served by the Church of St Mary and St Peter) has been linked in that the Rector of Winchelsea has also acted as Priest-in-Charge of Pett. Each of these Parishes is governed by its own Parochial Church Council (PCC).

2. At the beginning of February, the Reverend Jonathan Meyer retired having ministered here for seven years. The Parish was thus in Interregnum for the rest of the year, although the process of finding a new incumbent priest commenced in August and a selection was announced in November. It is worth recording, at the outset, our thanks to the Reverend Meyer for all that he achieved in his Ministry and, particularly, for keeping the Church alive through all the difficulties associated with the pandemic.

3. In October 2025, the Diocese launched a consultation process to establish a new Joint Benefice comprising all three Parishes. However, this report deals only with the Parish of Winchelsea.

#### **PCC WINCHELSEA – MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

4. Members of the PCC are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Churchwardens are elected at the Annual Parish Meeting, which precedes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, for a one-year term. Deanery Synod representatives are elected for a three-year term.

5. The following served on the Parochial Church Council during 2025:

Chairman	The Reverend Jonathan Meyer (until February 2025)
Churchwardens	Celia King Nigel Ashton (until May 2025) John Rodley (from June 2025)
Deanery Synod Representatives	Angela Hill Marion Lovell Deborah Rodley
Elected Office Holders	David Harris (Hon. Treasurer and Vice Chair from February 2025) Mary Parker (Hon. Secretary)

Elected Members                      David Jefferies (until April 2025)  
   Pamela Jefferies (until April 2025)  
   Alice Bolton (Safeguarding Officer)  
   Jeremy Naylor  
   Susan Wood  
   Gavin McFadyean  
   Martin Lew-Gor (from April 2025)  
   Catherine Burnett (from April to November 2025)

6. Electoral Roll. There were 81 on the Electoral Roll at the end of 2025, 65 resident and 16 non-resident.

### CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

**Registered charity number:** 1132555 The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Thomas Winchelsea

**Principal address:** St Thomas' Church  
Winchelsea  
East Sussex  
TN36 4EB

**Website:** [www.winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk](http://www.winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk)

7. The PCC Members are all Trustees of the above charity and have complied with their duty in Part 9 of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission. They have also been guided by the following charitable objects this year:

- To maintain a building appropriate for collective or private worship, prayer and reflection.
- To support selected local and national charities throughout the year, including making regular monthly cash and food collections.
- To ensure that church buildings are open daily and are available for use by the community as a whole.

### RISK MANAGEMENT and SAFEGUARDING

8. During the year, the PCC has continued to monitor the various risks applicable to the Church and has reviewed its published Health and Safety policy. No accidents were reported this year.

9. The PCC has also reviewed and reissued its Safeguarding policy. The PCC is a member of the Church's Child Protection Advisory Service. Appropriate clearances are held and updated and cleared people are present in a supervisory capacity whenever children attend Church.

### DELIVERING THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

10. In seeking to meet its charitable objects, the PCC has had due regard to carrying out its purpose for the public benefit. Throughout the year the Church has been open every day, a service has taken place every Sunday, along with weekly prayer meetings. The support of retired and visiting clergy has been essential in maintaining this pattern. In addition, all the major festivals were celebrated, a monthly Bible study group met in the New Inn and the

Church provided the venue for the Easter Monday Mayoring ceremony.

11. The Register of Services and the Visitors' Book demonstrate the regular use of the Church, not just as a place of worship, but in meeting a need for private reflection. The monthly Church Market has been a successful fundraiser and a key element of outreach and community engagement, as has been the regular Fellowship Lunches at Winchelsea Beach. The Mothers' Prayers group also met monthly at Winchelsea Beach. A community Harvest Barn Dance was held in the New Hall.

12. Supported Charities. Charities supported this year were Family Support, Demelza, Pett Level Rescue Boat, Rye Food Bank, 'You Raise Me Up,' Rye Hospital, Surviving Christmas, the Royal British Legion, Baby Basics and Farm Africa.

13. Events. Musical Events this year featured nine concerts, seven of which were sponsored by Winchelsea Arts and one by the Rye Festival

14. Special Offices. During the year there were three Baptisms, four Weddings and sixteen Burials or Interments.

15. Churchyard. The PCC has sought to maintain the churchyard as place to be enjoyed by residents and visitors. Community support of this has included a grant from Icklesham Parish Council and private sponsorship of the wildflower circles.

16. Our School. With 148 pupils, St Thomas's Primary School has made considerable use of the Church for services and educational visits. It also led on the production of the Christmas Crib service. A group of congregation members has also been engaged with the 'Open the Book' initiative in the School.

17. New Rector. Following an interview on 2 September, the Revd Nathanael Hayler was appointed Rector of the newly-formed Benefice of Winchelsea, Icklesham and Pett. He was inducted on 28 January 2026.

## **FABRIC**

18. Routine care and maintenance and appropriate statutory inspections have been conducted as has a full review of insurance requirements. The major structural work this year was the renovation of the north chancel window and vestry roof. The cost of this work was £12,000, which was supported by grants and by the Friends of Winchelsea Church. Minor repairs were carried out on the organ, the porch floor and gutter and the west door. The War Memorial and surrounds were cleaned, and repair and repointing work was undertaken on the churchyard paths. Discussion on a new lighting system continued and a new sound system was installed.

## **FINANCE**

19. The Statements of Financial Affairs attached to this report shows the existing investments and reserves. The PCC had planned a small surplus for the year on the general unrestricted fund and the receipts and payments for the year demonstrate that this was achieved. Receipts include a generous legacy from the Estate of the late Reverend Paddy Buxton. A grant to the Winchelsea Beach Community Association towards building improvements was funded from proceeds of the sale of St Richard's Church. The PCC has sought to manage the Church for the benefit of all, but pressure on the operating budget, particularly in terms of utility costs and general inflation, has been a considerable challenge. For similar reasons donations have been harder to attract, both from individuals and grant givers. In this context, we remain grateful for the support that has been given by the Friends of Winchelsea Church, by the Sussex Historic Churches Trust, by Icklesham Parish Council

and by the National Churches Trust.

20. The PCC maintains sufficient operating funds in a current account at Lloyds Bank. All surplus funds are held in deposit accounts held by the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities). Funds relating to the Blanesburgh Bequest are held in a separate CCLA Investment Fund for which the Diocese is Custodian Trustee. The Diocese reports performance annually, which is reflected in the PCC's Annual Accounts.

21. In accordance with Charity Commission guidance, the PCC maintains a reserve equivalent to six months' budgeted expenditure. For 2026, this equates to £62,229. This policy is reviewed by the PCC annually. Funds above this sum and which are not restricted are available to match fund projects or to finance future projects such as the delivery of major fabric expenditure following periodic structure reports by the Diocesan Architect.

The financial statements for the year follow.

<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>					
<b>As at: 31 December 2025</b>					
	General (Unrestricted) Fund	Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total	Prior Year
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Current Assets - Investments</b>					
CCLA Blanesburgh Bequest (Diocese)			22,703	22,703	23,648
<b>Current Assets- Cash At Bank And In Hand</b>					
Lloyds - Current Account	20,457			20,457	6,080
CCLA Guide Book - Deposit Account	3,681		43	3,724	3,562
CCLA PCC - General Deposit Account	7,505	315,679	2,750	325,934	325,628
CCLA Lighting & Sound Appeal - Deposit Account			1,562	1,562	20,649
CCLA Joseph McCrindle - Deposit Account			12,019	12,019	11,499
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>39,077</b>	<b>386,399</b>	<b>391,066</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Funds Due to Diocese			145	145	1,090
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>38,932</b>	<b>386,254</b>	<b>389,976</b>
<b>Represented by</b>					
General (Unrestricted)	31,643	-	43	31,686	5,784
Designated - Sale of St Richards		315,679	-	315,679	315,373
Restricted - Blanesburgh			22,703	22,703	23,648
Restricted - Choir			700	700	700
Restricted - Churchyard			1,218	1,218	1,401
Restricted - Joseph			12,019	12,019	11,499
Restricted - Lighting & Sound			2,249	2,249	21,014
Restricted - Special Giving			-	-	7,169
Restricted - Wild Flower			-	-	3,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>38,932</b>	<b>386,254</b>	<b>389,976</b>

**Summary of Receipts and Payments**  
**1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025**

	General Unrestricted Fund	Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Prior Year
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Tax Efficient Giving	19,350			19,350	21,007
Collections at Services	6,019			6,019	4,153
Appeals			7,950	7,950	27,414
Black Box	8,339			8,339	8,862
Digital Machine	13,931		838	14,769	11,447
Ride & Stride - Sussex Historic Churches Trust	412			412	
Other Donations	7367		10	7377	6,677
Gift Aid Recovered	6,572		5,312	11,884	6,744
Legacies	20,151			20,151	
Grants - National Churches Trust	5,000			5,000	0
Grants - Sussex Historic Churches Trust & Listed Building VAT	4,804			4,804	22,127
Grants - Friends of Winchelsea Church	16,340			16,340	4,505
Church Markets	3,202			3,202	3,337
Harvest Supper	175			175	1,115
Church Lettings	2,430			2,430	2,193
Fees ex DBF Wedding, Funerals & Burials	10,376			10,376	7,680
Bank & CCLA Interest	161	14,342	1,434	15,937	18,478
CBF Investment Fund Dividend	657			657	642
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>125,286</b>	<b>14,342</b>	<b>15,544</b>	<b>155,172</b>	<b>146,381</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Donations to External Mission & Charities	23,560			23,560	3,977
Parish Share	60,000			60,000	66,000
Costs ex DBF re - Weddings, Funerals Etc.	2,010			2,010	1,191
Insurance	5,231			5,231	5,093
Salaries, Wage and Honoraria	5,355			5,355	4,254
Recruitment of New Incumbent	641			641	-
Clergy Expenses	-322			-322	1,989
Rectory Running Costs	587			587	4,857
Staff Expenses - Choir & Music	679			679	543
Mission & Evangelism Costs	207			207	1,691
Church Running Costs	2,942			2,942	11,952
Service Costs, Candles, Wine, etc	1,176			1,176	1,183
Printing, Stationery & Sundries	1,767			1,767	1,824
Church Utilities	6,753			6,753	5,080
Cost Of Church Activities/Trading eg Magazine, Bookstall	1,110			1,110	1,889
Churchyard Maintenance Cost			3,963	3,963	4,018
Minor Church Repairs & Maintenance	1,826			1,826	14,661
Major Church Repairs & Maintenance	9,638			9,638	3,235

New Building Projects (Light & Sound)			30,009	30,009	3,473
Accounting Software Subscription	180			180	204
Bank Charges	638			638	525
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>123,978</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,972</b>	<b>157,950</b>	<b>137,636</b>
<b>Difference in Receipts and Payments</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>14,342</b>	<b>-18,428</b>	<b>-2,778</b>	<b>8,745</b>

### Summary of Funds Movement 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

Fund	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Gains and Losses	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Blanesburgh Bequest - Restricted	23,648				-945	22,703
Choir - Restricted	700					700
Churchyard Maintenance - Restricted	1,401	3,780	3,963			1,218
General Unrestricted	5,741	125,286	123,978	24,593		31,642
Joseph McCrindle - Restricted	11,499	520				12,019
Light & Sound - Restricted	21,014	11,244	30,009			2,249
Sale of St Richards - Designated	315,373	14,342		-14,036		315,679
Special Giving - Restricted	7,169			-7,169		
Wildflower - Restricted	3,388			-3,388		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>389,933</b>	<b>155,172</b>	<b>157,950</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-945</b>	<b>386,210</b>

#### Note to the Financial Reports

The financial reports have been prepared on a cashbook accounting basis, i.e. receipts and payments for the year have not been adjusted to reflect creditors; accruals; stock debtors and prepayments. The reports have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the current Church Accounting regulations.

The Blanesburgh Bequest is a restricted fund for the repair and maintenance of the organ using interest and capital.

The Choir Fund is a restricted fund solely for the monies received following the closure of the Winchelsea Singers in 2020.

The Churchyard Maintenance Fund is a restricted fund comprising donations from the congregation and Winchelsea residents specifically for the maintaining the churchyard. There is an annual appeal and an application is made each year to Icklesham Parish Council for a grant..

The Joseph McCrindle Legacy is a restricted fund for the general beautification of the church and its fixtures and fittings.

The Light and Sound Appeal is a restricted fund for donations towards the installation of new sound and lighting systems in the church. The fund was created following the launch of the

appeal in November 2024.

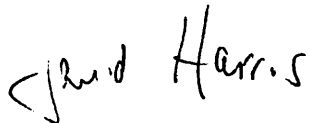
The Sale of St Richard's Fund is a designated fund, agreed by the PCC in 2023 to monitor the use of the proceeds from the sale of the church at Winchelsea Beach in the summer of 2023.

### LOOKING AHEAD

22. Our priorities for 2026 will be:

- To work with the new Rector to achieve tangible, spiritual and measurable spiritual and material development across the joint Benefice, as it is developed.
- To examine with the new Rector how income streams might be enhanced, particularly encouraging stewardship and generosity in regular giving and in accessing potential grant givers.
- To work towards resolving outstanding matters regarding organ sustainability and the lighting project.

23. I am pleased to acknowledge and thank all those who have voluntarily given so much time to maintaining the life of the Church and its service to the whole community throughout the year. Many of these have already been mentioned in this report. It is too easy to take for granted the vital contribution of so many people within and beyond the regular congregation. The fact is that we could not manage without you all. Lastly, we fully appreciate the help of the Diocese, Archdeaconry and Deanery in so many ways that often go unnoticed, but upon which we sometimes depend.



David Harris  
Vice-Chair (to 28 January 2026)  
For and on behalf of the PCC

## The Parish of Winchelsea

### Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Parish of Winchelsea

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Parish of Winchelsea for the year ended 31 December 2025.

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of The Parish of Winchelsea you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of The Parish of Winchelsea's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

#### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of The Parish of Winchelsea as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....  
James Moreno FCCA

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

39 Leigh Road  
Cobham  
Surrey  
KT11 2LF

## ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

29 March 2026

### **NUMBERS ON THE ROLL:**

In the last year we have seen six added to the St Thomas Electoral Roll. As we move into the second year of the six year cycle we are now 83 in number, up from the 77 who had registered this time last year.

Of the 83 registered 15 on the roll are non-resident (outside the parish) which means 68 are resident within the parish boundaries.

### **DIGITAL RECORDS:**

The plan is to encourage everyone to register with an electronic address. For a number of reasons this is not always possible and of the 83 on the Roll five have not provided an e-mail address.

### **FUTURE:**

My plan is to leave the PCC this year to make way for others to contribute to the running of the Church, however, I have been asked if I would continue to run the Electoral Roll. Technically, this raises safeguarding issues around GDPR rules protecting people's data, but subject to the agreement of the new PCC committee I am willing to continue.

Jeremy R Naylor

St Thomas Electoral Roll officer

## **Benefice of Winchelsea, Icklesham and Pett**

APCM Safeguarding Report 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Since last year's report. I am now the safeguarding officer and lead recruiter for all three churches. However, as I am only on the PCC for Winchelsea, Nathanael has kindly agreed to be my representative during the other meetings.

We both have access to the Diocesan dashboard, which helps parishes with their safeguarding compliance. As we have only recently taken over the running of Icklesham and Pett's, there is more to do for these two, but is in hand, and we are making steady progress through the list. Winchelsea is in a healthier place with the majority of PCC members up to date with their safeguarding training.

I completed the enhanced training last year which was very interesting and enlightening.

Over the last year no parish safeguarding concerns have been raised with me.

Safeguarding within the Diocese: The INEQE Report was graded good (Independent Safeguarding Audit of Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance and Chichester Cathedral). This is like the Ofsted for churches. More information can be found -

<https://www.chichester.anglican.org/documents/ineqe-report-2025/>

All three churches have the most recent safeguarding posters and safeguarding information displayed in their porches. As well as contacting Nathanael or I on [SafeguardingStTom@gmail.com](mailto:SafeguardingStTom@gmail.com) about any safeguarding queries and concerns. I would also like to highlight there is a safe spaces helpline on 03003031056 or you can visit the website <https://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk>.

Alice Bolton  
Safeguarding Officer

03/04/26

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

For the APCM on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026

The first meeting was on 20<sup>th</sup> February at St. Mary's Church Northiam and was chaired by Angela Hawksley who began by welcoming the new Rural Dean, the Reverend Kate Bailey, and the new Lay Secretary, Sylvia Wickens. A welcome to the parish of St Mary's was followed by a brief profile of the parish and its links with the local primary school and also its growing links to Frewen School and its work within the wider village community. The Reverend Kate then mentioned the Church of England guide for Deanery Synods and the need to promote and support the Deanery within the wider church. A lively discussion followed as to how we can support each other at a local and then at a wider level and when we should pass issues upward to the Diocesan Synod when it was appropriate to do so. The possibility of having a dedicated children's worker to run an event within the Deanery and the funding of this by the Diocesan Investment Programme was then discussed. The Reverend Paul White then reminded the meeting that we are an area with an ageing demographic and this should be borne in mind before a decision was made. Pastoral care was very important in every parish throughout the Deanery. The Reverend Kate was looking forward to supporting both clergy and laity and was planning to be in touch with all the churchwardens and clergy. In the coming weeks. A pilgrimage to Chichester Cathedral had been proposed as part of their 950<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

The second meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May was held at St Andrews' Fairlight and we were welcomed by the Reverend Sandi Wickens who handed out a colourful handout and an insight into the diversity of the three parishes in her benefice which had four churches and two almshouses. The Reverend Matthew Foy then talked about the document that had been circulated prior to the meeting about Deanery re-organisation and he explained the reasoning behind the proposals and detailed the three options mentioned in the document. A general discussion followed but the decision was made that the matter would be reviewed again in 2026. The Reverend Kate Bailey had been supporting parishes throughout the Deanery by attending APCMs, PCC meetings and finding lay preachers to take Sunday services where they were awaiting a new incumbent. It was felt that training in safeguarding, first aid and pastoral assistance would be beneficial and the Reverend Kate would look into this.

The third meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> September at St. Mary's Northiam. The Reverend Buff Forbes Stone, in her role as Chichester Diocesan Environment Officer, gave an informative presentation which included interaction with and questions from those present. There was to be a Rye Deanery Finance Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November open to all PCC members. Angela Hawksley advised the meeting that she wished to retire as Lay Chair. She would be happy to help and support her successor. It was her wish that Deanery Synod should have a voice and a purpose and that it would pass on information to the Diocese and share information from it. Deborah Rodley asked why Rye Churches Together was no longer mentioned and the Reverend Kate said she would invite someone from it to speak at our next meeting.

Angela M. Hill  
Marion Lovell  
Deborah Rodley

Deanery Synod Representatives

# APPENDIX 1

## PARISH OF WINCHELSEA

### ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY MARTYR – WINCHELSEA

SATURDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025

#### ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING

Present: David Harris – vice chair (DH); Celia King – Church Warden (CK); Mary Parker – Secretary (MP) plus 34 members others

CK opened the meeting with a prayer

1. Apologies were received from Nigel Ashton; Martin Lew Gor; John Case; Cynthia Martin; Jennifer Smith; John and Anne Spencer; and Alice Bolton who would be late because of having Safeguarding training.
2. Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
CK. Pointed out that in item 2 it should read that she continues her 5-year term. With this amendment they were passed as a correct record.
3. Election of church wardens  
A special resolution was proposed that “ Celia King, having completed 6 years as Church Warden should be permitted to stand for a further year as Church Warden”  
Nigel Ashton was elected last year as church warden and is willing to stand again. CK is also willing to stand. Both had been proposed and seconded. There being no other candidates it was proposed that “ Celia King and Nigel Ashton be elected as Church Wardens” Proposed by DH and seconded by MP and passed unanimously by a show of hands.
4. Vice Chair  
DH explained that he had been treasurer since April 2023 and when the Rector announced his retirement he was co-opted on to the PCC and elected as Vice Chair on by the PCC on 18th January.

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

2 people left the meeting as they were not on the church electoral roll.

### 1. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024

These had been made available to everybody. It was proposed that **“the meeting accept the minutes as a correct record of the meeting”** Proposer John Manuel and seconder Marion Lovell. Passed unanimously by a show of hands.

### 2. Annual Report for 2024

DH explained that the report had been written by Rev. Jonathan Meyer (JM) in January before he retired.

The financial parts were written by DH. The report was discussed by the PCC on 29<sup>th</sup> March and it was approved to be presented as a draft to the APCM. However, having circulated it, representations have been made by the Chairman of the “Friends” objecting to the clause near the end of the section that JM had drafted and asked for it to be removed. The Vacancy Management Group agreed to redact that clause. DH asked everybody to remove the clause from their devices or from their paper copies and ignore it. He pointed out that this does not mean that does not recognise the difficulties that need to be resolved. Comments were invited and Tom Hoffman requested that a further sentence in section 6 after “...the work on the ruined transepts had been completed,” should also be removed and DH agreed that it would be done. A proposal was made that **“the meeting accept the Report with those amendments made.”** Proposer Tom Hoffman, seconded by Jane Elms and passed unanimously with a show of hands.

### 3. Statutory Reports

The fabric report, Deanery Synod report, the Safeguarding report and the treasurer’s report with the independent examiner’s report were all accepted with no comments. DH said that Ian Menzies, the independent examiner was retiring and we would need to find someone else to do it next year. It was proposed that **“the PCC should appoint a new independent examiner”** Proposer Charlotte Beecroft, seconded by John Rodley

Electoral Roll Report. Jeremy Naylor, the electoral roll officer reported that the roll had been completely renewed and the new roll has under dropped to 78 and therefore the PCC could have only 9 elected members. There are some people who were on the roll before but have not applied again although they are still resident in the parish. It is not known why this is, but it is not within his remit to follow this up.

#### **4. Non-Statutory Reports**

The Music Report, the Flower Circles Report and the School Report were all accepted.

#### **5. Election of PCC Members**

The Church wardens and Deanery Synod representatives are ex-officio members. The Deanery synod representatives are Deborah Rodley, Marion Lovell and Angela Hill. They are elected for three years and have one more year to serve. Nomination forms have been received from Catherine Burnett and Martin Lew Gor who were not previously on the PCC and David Harris and Gavin McFadyean who were co-opted to the PCC during the year. They each stood and gave a brief resume of themselves except for Martin Lew Gor who had sent his apologies, and his resume was read out by DH. The remaining members of the PCC are Alice Bolton, Jeremy Naylor, Susan Wood and Mary Parker. It was proposed **“that all 4 new candidates should be elected to the PCC and the other 4 already on the PCC should remain.”** Proposer GM, Seconder AH.

David and Pamela Jeffries, who have served on the PCC for many years had decided it was time to stand down. John Rodley gave a short speech of thanks to them for all they have done over the years both at St Thomas and at St Richard's. A vote of thanks to them which was received with applause.

#### **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i. DH stated that he is very apprehensive about the year ahead because of the vacancy and there is much work to be done and documents to prepare for our parish profile. Similar documents will also be drafted by Pett and Icklesham. Our benefice will be extended to include Pett and the larger benefice will mean there is more work for the new incumbent. There are models of how this can work which will need to be studied. The bishop has served a notice of suspension which prevents our patron, the Guild of all Souls, from presenting a candidate for a rector. Instead, the Bishop will appoint a priest in charge.
- ii. It is a matter of concern that our regular income is not covering our expenses and that we are having to rely on donations and income from our legacies and the interest from money from the sale of St Richards to make up the shortfall. The PCC is looking at a drive towards increasing stewardship giving. This may mean a move towards Parish giving which is a scheme run by the diocese whereby they take by direct debit an annual sum which increases each year with inflation and they would also manage the gift aid.

- iii. Light and sound Appeal. This is a major step and will include a total rewiring of the church. The aim is to enhance our worship and for everybody to be able to hear the word of God. There will be a meeting of the DAC on 8<sup>th</sup> May when the faculty would be granted, and we begin getting tenders for the work
- iv. The PCC have discussed the list of recommendations from the Benefice Away Day in Bexhill in February. Some of these are already in place and some were rejected for good reasons. This does not preclude the PCCs of Pett and Icklesham from acting independently.
- v. There were no comments on these items. David Page expressed his thanks to the church wardens ,treasurer and secretary and the sides people and all the people who were working hard to manage the church business and making the services run smoothly. This was greeted with applause.

The meeting closed with a prayer

Meeting ended at 12.40.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

# Vacancy Management Group Report

During the recent vacancy at our Church, the need arose for a dedicated team to oversee essential operations and ensure continuity within our congregation. To address this, a Vacancy Management Group was formed, tasked with the responsibility of guiding the Church through this transitional period.

The Vacancy Management Group was established at the outset of the vacancy, comprising representatives from various areas within the Church community. Members were selected to provide a balanced perspective and to cover a broad range of functions, including worship, pastoral care, finance, property, and communications. The team comprised of Celia King, Nigel Ashton followed by John Rodley, Charlotte Beecroft, David Harris, David Page, Gavin McFadyean and Mary Parker. The group met every Friday via Zoom.

The primary objective of the Vacancy Management Group was to maintain the smooth running of Church activities and to support members of the congregation during the absence of a permanent minister. Key responsibilities included:

- Organising and leading weekly worship services, often inviting guest preachers.
- Providing pastoral support to members of the congregation, ensuring that those in need received appropriate care and attention. Particularly weddings and funerals.
- Managing administrative tasks, such as finance, property maintenance, and compliance with denominational requirements.
- Serving as the main point of contact between the Church and external bodies, including the wider denomination and local community organisations.
- Facilitating regular communication with the congregation to keep everyone informed of developments and to encourage continued involvement in Church life.

Throughout the vacancy, the Vacancy Management Group played a vital role in sustaining the spiritual and operational life of our Church. The collaborative approach ensured that no single area was neglected and that members felt supported. The group's work was instrumental in preparing the Church for the arrival of a new minister, leaving a legacy of teamwork and resilience.

The creation and function of the Vacancy Management Group demonstrated the strength and adaptability of our Church community. The experiences and lessons learned during this period have enriched our congregation and provided a model for future periods of transition.

Celia King

## The Music Report 2025

It is a pleasure to report that the choir is alive and working well. If all are present we have 14 members. It is rare to have everyone together and numbers can drop as low as 4, this is quite challenging. I do wish to thank those members who are really committed to their choir duties.

Repertoire remains fairly static, but we have a lot of music to call on.

During the year the choir visited Icklesham on a couple of occasions, we are always made very welcome.

At the 9 lessons and carols service, we sang a new Carol written especially for us by Matt Geer - it was gentle and expressive, and a pleasure to sing.

The organ continues to be unreliable in many aspects which is very frustrating for anyone that plays it, we are fortunate that our remunerated organist, David Birchenough, is versatile enough to disguise many of these faults.

Due to the change in personal circumstances, we have sadly lost the help given by Richard Williams. It was always a pleasure to welcome him and his wife Rosemary in the choir, but when one door closes another often opens, and we now have Steven Page playing for us on a regular basis. We are grateful for the help given at practises by Ben Chishick each month and occasional help from Peter Hatch.

With the appointment of a new Rector it is more likely that some changes may happen! This could be exciting!

New members of any voice are always welcome to come and try out the choir. Practice for the Sunday service begins at 10am. You do not have to be able to read music, all are welcome.

The choir still allows me to direct them, which I really enjoy.

Marion Lovell – May 2026