



(Reg Charity No: 1132488)

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

### Meeting Information:

**Date:** SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2025

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**Location:** ST MARGARET'S CHURCH      **Meeting type:** APCM

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**Chair:** Tessa Haughton      **Minute Taker:** M E Bovill

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**1 – WELCOME** by Tessa Haughton and Opening Prayers

**2 – APOLOGIES:** Sherrian Guest, Marianne Hickman, Keith Hine

### MEETING OF THE PARISHIONERS

Churchwardens are elected annually under the provisions of the Churchwardens Measure 2001 by the Annual Meeting of Parishioners, as the senior laypeople of the parish and congregation. Their term of office is one year, and they may serve for up to six consecutive terms of office, unless the Annual Meeting passes a resolution to set aside this rule. They are the Bishops' officers, and are admitted to office each year by the Archdeacon, on behalf of the Bishop.

### 3 – ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS:

#### St Margaret's Ditchling:

**Name:** Keith Hine  
Proposer: Virginia De La Pole    Second: Elizabeth Curry  
All present in agreement

#### St Martin's Westmeston

**Name:** Paul Charman  
Proposer: Elizabeth Curry    Second: Nicki Amas  
All present in agreement

**Church Warden of the Beacon Parish**

Name: **Tessa Haughton**

Proposer: Virginia de la Pole    Seconder: A J Blanchard

All present in agreement

Voted and agreed by all present therefore duly elected

**Meeting closed**



## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Held on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2025, during a Vacancy

### 1 MINUTES

- Tessa Haughton (TH) asked for approval of the Minutes of the APCM held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, The Minutes were agreed by all present and then signed and dated by Tessa Haughton

### 2 MATTERS ARISING

- No matters arising

### 3 ELECTORAL ROLL – Electoral Roll Officer Paul Charman

- A new full version of the Electoral Roll (ER) with names has been on display for 14 days for everyone to check
- Several new names have been added during this time.
- End of March, 2025, there were **111 names** on the ER, **33 names** being outside of the Beacon Parish.
- However, this is a reduction from the previous ER
- The revised shortened Electoral Roll will be available for the next 14 days.
- PC would advise parishioners to check their full details are correct on the ER and if not please inform him
- If any parishioner has not signed up to be on the ER please contact PC for an application form to complete then return to PC or one of the Churchwardens

### 4 ANNUAL REPORT and ACCOUNTS 2025 – Treasurer Ian Henley

- The Beacon Parish of Ditchling, Streat, and Westmeston continued its core mission in 2024 of promoting the Gospel through pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical engagement. Under the leadership of Reverend David Wallis, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and dedicated volunteers oversaw a year of spiritual, community, and financial progress, despite some structural and financial challenges.
- Support for the Church grew slightly, with 195 parishioners on the electoral roll at the start of the year. St Margaret's Church hosted regular Sunday and Wednesday Communion services, while Streat Church and St Martin's Westmeston hosted Sunday services throughout the year. St George's Park,

a large retirement village, remained a vital part of the Parish's outreach, with increasing attendance at its fortnightly services.

- Special services for Christmas, Easter, Remembrance Day, and school events were well-attended. Summer events like outdoor services with refreshments, themed gatherings, and church-based discussion groups fostered deeper community involvement. Despite having to make the youth worker role redundant due to financial constraints, youth engagement remained strong through Little Beacons, school services, and special events, thanks to volunteers and the Reverend Wallis.
- The Parish also made strides in digital outreach, with live-streamed services at St Margaret's reaching an estimated online congregation of 112. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, and memorials continued at a regular pace, and popular community events such as Apple Day, Souper Saturday, and a Christmas Tree Festival enhanced visibility and outreach.
- The Emmanuel Centre in Ditchling remained a valued community resource, producing a small operating surplus. However, the co-tenant, The Point Church, ceased its use of the space during the year.
- Financially, the Parish is in a stable condition. Incoming resources rose c. 20% from 2023, aided by a successful fundraising appeal that boosted Planned and Unplanned Giving. A legacy gift and grant support from foundations and local councils also contributed. The Friends of St Margaret's played a key role in funding church repairs and committing to future improvements.
- Expenses decreased by 9% despite increased maintenance costs. Major expenditures included essential repairs to St Martin's floor and ongoing churchyard maintenance. The Parish Share to the Diocese - the PCC's largest expense - was reduced in 2024 for sustainability, with a commitment to restore it over time (this has in fact been increased for 2025). Donations were made to charities including the Red Cross, Royal British Legion, and the Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity.
- Investment income dipped slightly due to asset liquidations, but net assets grew 1%. Restricted funds for church maintenance remained stable, and unrestricted funds saw a modest rise. A shift to multi-asset investments is planned to mitigate risks tied to market volatility and geopolitical uncertainty.
- Governance remained strong, with frequent PCC and committee meetings ensuring transparency and accountability. Key retirements, including the Treasurer and Bookkeeper, were managed smoothly, and a professional Bookkeeper was hired to streamline operations.
- Safeguarding remained a top priority, with policies updated and training current. The Parish joined a Diocesan pilot program to improve safeguarding practices.
- Looking ahead, the departure of Reverend Wallis in March 2025 presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The PCC remains focused on sustaining giving, enhancing engagement, and maintaining its vibrant ministry during the vacancy.
- I should note that despite the increased income and reduced expenditure, income was still less than expenditure and we posted a deficit of c £12k in 2024. However, an increase in the value of our investments meant our reserves were not depleted by this deficit.
- In summary, the Parish is in a **stable financial position** – but only because of the emergency measures I have described. So, there's more work to do on increasing our Giving so that we enter the future in a sustainable way.

- Before I close, I'd just like to say a huge thank you to the members of our Finance Committee, who help me keep the numbers straight: James Clarry, Stuart Curry, Keith Hine and Tony Seddon. Thanks also to our Bookkeeper Lynn Lashbrook and our Independent Examiners Maxwell Gumbleton
- **Questions from the Congregation**
- What will happen to the Emmanuel Centre (EC) after 2027?
  - Treasurer feels it is still an important asset to the Parish
  - EC is rented out and we are always looking to find additional users.
  - When repairs are taking place in St Margaret's and is out of use for worship, the EC would be available
  - At present breaking-even so minded to keep it
- Is the EC still shared with the Point Church?
  - The Point Church is no longer involved with Emmanuel Centre
  - Now solely the responsibility of the Beacon Parish

## 5 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS, BOOKKEEPER and

### TREASURER:

- **Independent Examiner:** it was proposed that Maxwell Gumbleton in Lewes continue as the Independent Examiners for the Beacon Parish Accounts, proposed by Ian Henley and seconded by Teresa Haughton, all present in agreement.
- **Bookkeeper – Lynn Lashbrook**  
Proposer: Ian Henley; Seconder: Virginia de la Pole. All present in agreement
- **Treasurer – Ian Henley**  
Proposer: Paul Charman Seconder: Heather Evans. All present in agreement

## 6 FABRIC COMMITTEE – Ian Henley, Acting Chair of the Fabric Committee

### Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the Churches of the Beacon Parish for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

#### Introduction

- The Parish has seen a significant amount of work on its fabric during 2024. A total of £52,006 was expended on major works and repairs, a 56% increase on the prior year. We are most grateful for the work of our volunteers and professional contractors, who have enabled this work to be completed. Going into 2025, the fabric of our Churches is in sound condition, though there will be more work to do during the year to come. More details on this work and on completed projects in 2024 can be found below.

#### St Martin's Westmeston Floor project

- The largest new project in this reporting period was the repair and replacement of the floor in the south-west corner of St Martin's Church Westmeston.
- The project was identified as necessary by a Quinquennial Report in 2012 but deemed to require urgent attention following the 2019 inspection, as the floor was bulging upwards due to corrosion of below floor level steel beams and hence there was a safety concern to address. In addition to the remedial works, it was decided that some pews should be removed and the wood re-used to fashion a cabinet at the front of the Church, to house the audio equipment.
- The contract was awarded, after tender, to Oriole Constructors, who offered the best value for money. The work was undertaken during June and July and was completed, to a high standard, on time and under budget. Total cost of the works, including professional fees, was just over £30,000 including VAT, most of which could be reclaimed under the Listed Places of Worship scheme. Funding was sourced from legacies of generous former parishioners.
- Governance of this work was overseen directly by the PCC, supported by the Finance Committee and the project was managed by Churchwarden Paul Charman.

### **Streat Church toilet and servery project**

- This project, which started in 2023, was completed in 2024 and has delivered a very welcome upgrade to the amenities of one of our ancient Churches, which now has a new toilet and servery. This project involved the need to bring a water supply to the Streat Church and to provide associated sewerage and pumps, draining to a cesspit in the South churchyard that had to be installed as no utility sewerage connection is possible. The latter also required the PCC to obtain a deed of easement from the landowner to dig a trench across the privately owned bridleway. Bad weather added to the challenges of delivery.
- The final stage payments were made in 2024, totalling c £8,500 net of VAT, most of which was reclaimed.
- Costs for this project were funded by the Streat Barn Mission Fund, which was set up in 2015 with the proceeds from the sale of Streat Barn.

### **Quinquennial inspections**

- Our three Churches require inspections every 5 years by the Diocesan architect. These inspections were made in August and September 2024 and a number of findings were reported. These fall into three categories: those requiring attention immediately, within 12 months and within 12-24 months. They cover general building work, roof repairs, timberwork and glazing repairs.
- The Fabric Committee has considered the requirements and obtained quotes from contractors, which are in the course of being evaluated. Remedial work is expected to commence during 2025 and costs have been estimated at c. £45,000 net of VAT (which we expect to reclaim). This would be funded from

legacies. However, further inspection is required of the tower at St Martin's, which could increase this sum materially.

### **St Margaret's Church – Hilary Bourne curtains**

- Former parishioner Hilda Bourne, who lived in Ditchling until the age of 103, and worshipped in St Margaret's for 46 years, has been commemorated by her daughter Hilary, who made and donated some beautiful curtains for the West door of the Church and another set behind the altar in the South Chapel. The curtains by the West Door were falling into disrepair and Jenny KilBride Roberts was successful in raising the funds required to restore these curtains to their former glory. A total of c £11,000 has been raised or has been pledged from the Turner-Dumbrell Foundation, the Newby Trust and the Church Buildings Trust and restoration work has (at the time of writing in April 2025) been nearly completed. Some final measurement work remains to be done before they are re-installed but installation will be deferred until the work on St Margaret's chancel floor has been completed (see below).
- The curtains behind the altar in the South Chapel need relatively little work. Some of the hanging straps have perished and these will need to be replaced. This should be a relatively easy task and we hope to have these returned shortly as well. It is also hoped that we can move the embroidered panel which has the inscription on it to further up the curtains so this can be seen by visitors to the church.
- The PCC is most grateful to our donors and to the work of Jenny and Tessa Houghton (Churchwarden) in enabling these wonderful and historical artefacts to be restored.

### **St Margaret's Church – Chancel floor re-ordering project**

- The PCC made the decision in 2024 to re-fashion the floor space in the Chancel area of the Church. The front choir stalls had already been removed for safety reasons and the remaining stalls were rarely used and considered very uncomfortable. By removing the remaining stalls, the floor space will be considerably enlarged, enabling the area to be used more effectively for events, community engagement and improving the safety and comfort of Churchgoers when the Church is full (for example at our Crib Service over the Christmas period).
- An application was submitted to the Diocese in 2024 and was approved in March 2025. Work started on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and is expected to last for approximately 8 weeks, during which time the Church will be closed, except for Sunday services. The Chancel area will be screened off during those services.
- Total cost of this project, including professional fees, is expected to be c £46,000 net of VAT (which we expect to reclaim). This will be funded by the Friends of St Margaret's (FoSM). We are most grateful to the Trustees of FoSM for their generosity, which has facilitated a major embellishment to our Church.

## **St Margaret's Church – repairs to boiler**

- We were also grateful to FoSM for their support on repairs to the boiler pumps in St Margaret's in 2024. Total costs of these works were c £5000.

## **Listed Places of Worship scheme**

- APCM should be aware that the terms of the above scheme were changed in the March 2025 budget. There was previously no limit on the amount of VAT that could be re-claimed from the scheme. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2025, this amount has been capped at £25,000 p.a. per listed place of worship. This cap is not expected to impact on claims made by this PCC in 2025.

## **Governance**

- The fabric of the churches in the Beacon Parish is overseen by a Fabric Committee. This committee did not meet in 2024. It has been reconstituted in 2025, under the Acting Chairmanship of Ian Henley (PCC Treasurer), Luke Biersteker (a PCC member/ Trustee and a qualified building surveyor) and a Churchwarden ex officio (for the time being Paul Charman)
- Finally, may I say a big thank you to our Fabric Committee members Luke and Paul and also to Mark Chapman, who has joined us as an attendee for the time being. A special thank you to Mike Sewell, who was the Fabric Committee Chair for many years and responsible for overseeing many major repairs and improvements in our Parish. I have taken over as Acting Chair until I can find a willing volunteer to take it on.

## **7 DEANERY SYNOD UPDATE – Tessa Haughton**

- Tessa Haughton reported that she had attended, with Revd Wallis, the Deanery Synod meetings over the past year when available and reported back to the PCC on occasion.
- **Deanery Synod Representative – Tessa Haughton**  
Proposer: Brenda Hall; Seconder: Deborah Miarkowska. All present in agreement

## **8 ELECTION OF PCC MEMBERS**

**PCC Members who are stepping down** – Sherrian Guest, Heather Evans, Deborah Miarkowska. Special thanks to Mike Sewell, Churchwarden at Streat and Sue Sewell who has served as our Bookkeeper for 17 years. We shall miss them both greatly when they leave the parish later this month to live in Shepperton and are so very grateful for all you have done over so many years for our Church community.

The following have agreed to stand for a further year:

- Luke Biersteker, Lydia Biersteker, Margaret Bovill, Ian Henley, Virginia De La Pole
- Voted en-bloc and duly elected to the PCC from May 2025 to May 2026.

- *(The PCC also includes the Churchwardens: Tessa Haughton, Keith Hine, Paul Charman)*

## **9 APPOINTMENT OF WELCOMERS/SIDES PERSONS – Maz Hine (MH)**

- The following have been reappointed: Maz Hine, Carl Belfield, Brenda Hall and Stuart Curry
- If any parishioner would like to join the team, please speak to Maz Hine
- Welcomers set the tone and first impressions very important
- For large events ie Christmas/Easter, Maz Hine will continue to ask parishioners to help

## **10 VOTE OF THANKS - Ian Henley**

- 3 CWs, Tessa, Keith and Paul – noting huge workload of vacancy management
- Whilst talking about CWs, I feel I must mention a much-loved former CW, recently departed, Andrew Martin, who committed many years of his life to the service of this Parish. We thank him too and miss him terribly.
- PCC Members for staying on Luke, Lydia, Ian and Margaret together with the Churchwardens
- Tessa for continuing to be our Safeguarding Officer
- Our vergers Ginny, who quietly manages all our services so that they run like clockwork
- Sidesmen/women and all in the Welcome teams led by Maz, especially for their work on the big services at Christmas and Easter
- Maz and Keith and others for their pastoral visits and interventions through the year and everyone else who leads prayers on Sundays
- Our teachers: Keith & Maz Hine (GMF and Bible Course), Peter Sills (6 Steps)
- Our Little Beacons leaders: Lydia and Luke Biersteker.
- Our youth workers: Keith, Liz, Heather, Tessa
- Events team – Nikki, Jenny and Julia and all their helpers, noting in particular
  1. Flower Festival - Brenda
  2. Christmas Tree festival - Sherrian
  3. Concerts - Heather
- Coffee and cake providers both at School and after Sunday services
- Our flower providers who make our Churches look so wonderful
- Ray and Kay Macpherson for their work at St George's
- Our car park attendants at Westmeston, Gerald and Michael, who brave all weathers and to our friends at Streat Place who allow us to use their driveway
- Our Finance Committee and Fabric Committee members – recall they are all volunteers too and give up a lot of their time to serve this Parish
- Donors – TY for stepping up when asked
- Legacy providers – Don Lewis, Margaret Moore, Judy Walker, Rowena Cager
- Grantors: TDF, Newby Trust, Church Buildings Council, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Friends of St Margaret's, Ditchling Parish Council, Westmeston Parish Council, Streat Meeting

- Contractors and employees: Paul Charman, our gardener (and his team of volunteers on Churchyard duties), Cleaners, Builders, Website builder, Organist
- Ministers who have helped and will be helping us through vacancy
- Revd Wallis and Sally Wallis had 18 good years. Revd Wallis came in at a difficult time of change. No minister can please all the people all the time but we have much to be thankful for. Few Parishes can boast the stability we have had.
- Last but by no means least, you our Parishioners: you are the engine of our community, your loyalty buoys us up week after week and your enthusiasm is needed now more than ever

### **State of the nation**

- Very successful year in the Church calendar: growing as a Christian community, thanks to Revd Wallis' ministry and the help of our volunteer teachers; having fun and laughing, whilst mourning the loss of some very special friends
- Major project completed at Westmeston on time and under budget; Streat project completed
- Stable finances, sound fabric and projects taking us forward (chancel and weathervane)
- Programme of services taking us right out to the year end – relish the variety!
- in short, a happy, healthy Parish – a stable foundation on which to grow

### **The Future**

- No-one likes uncertainty but it is a fact of life. But rejoice in the opportunity!
- Look forward in hope; accept the liminal (q.v. Peter Sills!) space; wait and trust that we will arrive in a better, stronger place
- Pastoral reorganisations are very difficult to manage for the Diocese. It will take time but the ministry and work of the Parish will not stop
- We are preparing for our s 11 meeting and writing the Parish Profile – please contribute and encourage others to do so. What kind of Parish do you want? All ideas to the Churchwardens or me or to [admin@beaconparish.co.uk](mailto:admin@beaconparish.co.uk)
- Finally: we shall be open with you. When we know, you will know. But please be kind to us – speak to us first if you have concerns or questions, we shall do our best to answer.

### ***IH invited Parishioners for comments/questions:***

- A comment was made that Revd Wallis did not regularly visit the sick and dying throughout the Parish
- A request was made for reinstatement of the 8 am Holy Communion Service and a Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve
- Ian Henley made a note of the above (noting that extra services represented an extra demand on the time and goodwill of volunteers) and confirmed that,

where appropriate, these points will be considered when drafting the Parish Profile for presentation to the Archdeacon

Meeting was closed

## FIRST MEETING OF NEWLY ELECTED PCC

### Meeting Information:

Date: **SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2025**

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Location **ST MARGARET'S CHURCH** Meeting type: **TO ELECT**

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Chair **TESSA HAUGHTON** Minute Taker: M E Bovill

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**VICE CHAIR:** Tessa Haughton

Proposed: Ian Henley; Seconded: Luke Biersteker  
All present in agreement

**TREASURER:** Robert Ian Stuart Henley

Proposed: Tessa Haughton; Seconded: Paul Charman  
All present in agreement

**BOOKKEEPER:** Lynn Lashbrook

Proposed: Ian Henley; Seconded: Tessa Haughton  
All present in agreement

**SECRETARY:** Margaret Bovill

Proposed: Tessa Haughton; Seconded: Paul Charman  
All present in agreement

**DATE OF NEXT PCC MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2025, at 6.00PM**  
**Meeting Closed**