

**ST. GILES CHURCH,
HORSTED KEYNES**



**St Giles Church Vestry Meeting
and
APCM on Thursday 7th May 2026**

AGENDA

and

REPORTS for year ending 31st December 2025

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING AGENDA

A meeting to elect churchwardens will be held before the APCM:

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Minutes of Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Thursday 15th May 2025**
 - (a) *To agree the minutes as a correct record*
 - (b) *Matters arising*
- 3 **PCC annual report and statutory accounts for 2025**
 - (a) *Presentation of examined Statutory Accounts*
 - (b) *Future financing*
 - (c) *To receive the Annual Report*
- 4 **Appointment of Independent Examiner**
To appoint accounts examiner for 2026
- 5 **Safeguarding report**
To receive the report for 2025 (Page 13)
- 6 **Fabric, goods & ornaments report**
To receive the report for 2025 (Page 5)
- 7 **Electoral roll**
To receive the report for 2025 (Page 5)
- 8 **Church reports**
To receive the other reports for 2025 enclosed here (Page 4 – 18)
- 9 **Elections**
 - (a) *Deanery Synod*
 - (b) *PCC*
- 10 **Any other business**

we all do. We are very grateful to the school, and to those who volunteer to accompany the young people.

The people we most appreciate, however, are the five cooks per month who volunteer plan, prepare, cook up, serve up and clear up after the lunches. The lunchers certainly appreciate them. It is quite pleasurable; the shared effort in a good cause. But at the same time, it's nice when it stops; we're glad to be on duty only twice per year. If you've never experienced Village lunch, and would like to try it, or, better still, if you'd like to help to provide the lunch, we'd be very pleased indeed to welcome you.

James Nicholson

Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work							4
Cuckfield Deanery Synod	..	..	..	..			5
Electoral Roll	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Fabric	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
First Steps	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
Friends of HK Church	..	..	..	..	..		8
HKafe	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
HK HELP	..	..	..	..	..	..	11
Life and Faith Discussion Group				..	..	..	11
Martindale Centre	..	..	..	..	..		12
Open House	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Parish & Parishioner	..	..	..	..	..		13
Safeguarding	...	..	..	..	..	..	14
St. Giles Primary School		..	..	..	..		14
Village Lunch	..	..	..	..	..	..	17

CHICHESTER DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY SUPPORT WORK

In common with the charity sector generally, FSW struggles to finance all the work that needs to be done. It was a relief, therefore, last autumn when the Diocese reinstated the annual grant of £36,000 that had previously been withdrawn, which gave FSW reassurance of support. However, in these particularly challenging times for everyone, and with endless often complex cases on the waiting list, FSW is finding it increasingly difficult to raise adequate funds to provide the level of service it aims to give. Consequently, it has recently been necessary to make two of its practitioners redundant, along with other cuts within the office team. Martin Auton-Lloyd, CEO, hopes it will be possible to rebuild the team in time when the situation improves.

Among the big fundraisers are the Arlington Bluebell Walk, various concerts and suppers and, the perennial favourite, the Open Gardens season where FSW provides the teas at around 20 events.

FSW is always seeking more volunteers to help at these fundraising events, sorting at the food bank, or with social media etc. There also remains a vacancy for someone to sit on the Cuckfield committee to promote FSW's work and be a point of contact in the village.

Here in Horsted Keynes, St Giles Church has for many years been a supporter through a bi-monthly annual charitable collection, the donation at Harvest Festival of non-perishable food and, in Advent, Christmas gifts for the children supported by the charity, not forgetting the regular delivery of items for the food bank kindly donated by the community.

March's work in numbers:

- 230 home visits to families
- 558 phone calls/remote support to 230 parents and 182 children
- 60 supported meetings with other agencies
- 43 group sessions, 363 adults and 238 children supported
- 85 food deliveries made
- 53 volunteers who volunteered
- 556 total number of volunteer hours

community and remain committed to giving back, fostering strong partnerships, and ensuring that St Giles continues to play a meaningful role in the life of our village.

Mrs Coulson, Mr Savage and Ms Jones

VILLAGE LUNCH

2025 was business as usual. Average attendance was lower - 38 as opposed to 40 the previous year, which is a marginal difference. There is a rather smaller surplus with a smaller take up of lunches; the total such surpluses contributed to the Martindale Centre fell from £625 to £574, but somehow, we took more raffle money – up from £773 to £821, so that our total contribution to the Martindale costs we incur was virtually unchanged, at just under £1,400, though, as always making a surplus is not the aim. We haven't raised our prices since 2022, and this in a period of quite rapid food price inflation. Many of our cooks and our customers have argued that we should do so, and we will keep reviewing the situation. The raffle is now organised by Ian and Kathy Woods, who kindly stepped in when Lizzie Heasman's sight began to deteriorate.

One of our teams of five cooks has Angela Peel Cross as a member, and consequently, also had the huge benefit of an extra washer upper – Tony Peel Cross, who would time his arrival to coincide with the finishing of the main course, and then put in an hour or two of washing up the difficult pots and pans etc which can't easily go through the dishwasher. Even when his legs became frailer he would still come, bringing a high stool so that his work could continue. Sadly, Tony has died. We'll very much miss him, not only because of the work he did. Our hearts go out to Angela and all his close friends and family.

The happy practice of help from the year six children at St. Giles School continues. They make quite a difference, clearing the debris of the main course before helping to serve out the puddings. If, for occasional school reasons, they are unable to come, we very much miss them – not only because they work so well.

We, the elderly among the cooks and the diners, very much enjoy contact with the gracious, courteous, competent young pupils – in fact

relationship, and our proximity to the church is often seen as a significant attraction for prospective families.

Enrichment remains a cornerstone of life at St Giles. Through vibrant topics and links with local schools, children have enjoyed numerous opportunities to explore learning beyond the classroom.

Sporting festivals have provided inclusive physical activity, and trips to places such as Fishbourne Palace, Hever Castle, Bowles, Ardingly and Cumnor have enriched children's understanding and brought classroom learning to life.

We continue to invest in maintaining and improving our school buildings and grounds. Recent work has included the replacement of fencing to enhance security, alongside ongoing general maintenance.

Like many small village schools, we face financial pressures and continue to work diligently to maintain a balanced budget in the face of rising costs.

Our PTA has once again provided invaluable support. This year's events—including the Christmas celebration, Quiz Night, Easter Egg Hunt, and preparations for the May Fair on 9th May—have raised vital funds. Thanks to their hard work, we have been able to offer additional workshops and enrichment activities, purchase new laptops, and install new benches, picnic tables and planters to enhance our outdoor spaces. We are, as always, so grateful for all the hard work undertaken by the PTA to support the school and to help give our children those enrichment opportunities which are often difficult to fund in a small school.

We continue to benefit from the support of a strong Federation Governing Body. Helen Jones, as Chair, provides excellent strategic leadership, guiding and challenging both schools with wisdom and dedication.

Finally, St Giles remains deeply rooted in the life of Horsted Keynes. We are very fortunate to be part of such a welcoming and supportive community from helping out at the Village Lunch to taking part in village events, from the volunteers who come and help in school, to those who are part of the Worship Team, PTA and all who contribute in countless ways to the life of the school. We are proud to serve this

As always, FSW is grateful for the generosity of its supporters here in Horsted Keynes - financially, practically and in prayer.

Sally Lamb

CUCKFIELD DEANERY SYNOD

The Synod met at St Wilfrid's Church, Haywards Heath, and came together with a short service of song, prayer and readings. We then divided up into smaller groups of local parishes, with one or two representatives from each parish. We went round the group, hearing about what was happening in each parish, and praying in particular for those who were, or were expecting to be, in a vacancy for a priest. This included St Giles, of course!

After a short time of prayer and reflection in our groups, the synod came together again to conclude the business of the evening and end with a final hymn and closing prayer.

Heidi Mowforth

ELECTORAL ROLL

Fiona Price

FABRIC REPORT

During the year the Fabric Committee met five times, chaired by David Lamb; it consisted of the Chairman, Martin Govas, Philip Miles and John Whiting. All necessary maintenance and fabric protection activities have been addressed and the Church remains in good order. As part of ongoing repair and restoration, works were carried out on the upper tower openings East and West walls. The weathered and unserviceable oak louvres (abatsons) were removed and replaced with similar new louvres. The related stone reveals were restored as part of this project.

Some adjustments were made to the display cabinet located on the wall at the North West corner of the North Asle. This was to facilitate the display of locally found flint artifacts.

The normal programme of maintenance works was carried out and recorded in the maintenance log by Phil Miles.

Visitors frequently comment on the excellent quality of the maintenance of the Church fabric; this is due to the diligence and skill applied. Thanks are due to the Fabric Committee, contractors and trades persons responsible for this.

Goods and Ornaments:

The normal purchases of expendable items were made during the year, there were no other disposals or acquisitions.

Church Yard:

The following report was prepared by the Church Yard Committee led by Hilary Nicholson with Judith Bowron, Helen Townsend, Thelma Mason, Barbara Fairweather and Phil Miles; thanks are due to all for carrying out the demanding task of operating and maintaining this important asset to the Church and Parish.

During the year our contractor, Richard Soper, undertook regular cuts according to the schedule worked out for the budget. Our volunteers have worked hard in the working parties during the year but numbers of helpers are dwindling. In the Summer a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award student offered an hour a week for a year to undertake various jobs in the churchyard and he has been very helpful and successful. In particular, he has marvellously cleared the northern side of the far burial ground of nettles, thistles and blackberries, revealing a large area which we will now be able to use in the future. Our local Hackers group has also been very helpful with churchyard maintenance.

In March we marked our Faculty reserved grave spaces with wooden plaques beautifully made by Nigel Peel Cross and a local blacksmith. In May we received a visit from the local Biodiversity group. The local Wildlife Group were also involved with this.

Simon Doherr, a local landscape designer, continued the Memorial Path, which he had originally built, for the interment of ashes. This amounted to another five metres of burial space which should give another five years of use.

Simon also very generously offered to revamp the 'rosebeds'. He will

opportunity to achieve their full potential. Phonics and early reading continue to be a particular strength, with excellent progress evident across the school. Pastoral care also remains a key priority, especially as we continue to see increased challenges around anxiety and mental health. Supporting the wellbeing of our children remains at the heart of our work.

With our SIAMS inspection expected soon, one of our school improvement goals this year has been to ensure we are fully prepared, with a clear self-evaluation and a shared understanding among all stakeholders of who we are and what we stand for as a Church school. We have begun to explore more deeply what spirituality means for us at St Giles, and how it is lived out through our interactions, our teaching, and the opportunities we provide. We are grateful to the diocese for their input and have worked closely with St Peter's as we develop this important area.

Our Worship Team continues to flourish. This year, six Worship Leads have taken responsibility for planning and leading worship, both in school and in church and working closely with the rest of the Worship Team. They have taken the initiative this year to start up a Worship Club on a Wednesday lunchtime with crafts, bible stories and songs to help children understand some of the teachings of the bible. They have already led three Collective Worship services and contributed to Friday services, as well as supporting two Eucharist services, with a third planned for Ascension on 15th May. We extend our thanks to Canon David Tickner for leading our Easter and upcoming Ascension services, especially following Fr Peter's move to his new parish before Christmas.

Our collaboration with St Giles Church continues to deepen. We now share a similar style of service for All Age worship and are keen to develop the children's involvement in Sunday services.

Our Friday Collective Worship Team, made up of church members and community volunteers, remains a treasured link. Their dedication, creativity and storytelling bring worship to life in rich and meaningful ways for our pupils. Many parents comment on the strength of this

local group of Safeguarding Officers in the Cuckfield area meeting together, this I have expressed an interest in.

Thelma Mason

ST. GILES PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has been another full and productive year here at St Giles. This year has seen the formalisation of our partnership with St Peter's in Ardingly as we joined together to form the Bright Futures Federation. Alongside this, we have been preparing for our SIAMS inspection—still eagerly awaited—and continuing our core commitment: ensuring that everything we do within the school is designed to bring out the best in every child and to preserve the unique, distinctive features of our Church school.

Our partnership with St Peter's is continuing to thrive and both schools have been able to work together on shared development priorities and enjoy enrichment opportunities as a federation. Our Executive Headteacher and both Heads of School maintain clearly defined roles and responsibilities, supporting strong and consistent leadership across our settings.

Our staff—both teaching and support—remain one of the greatest strengths of St Giles. Although we are currently without a wraparound care supervisor and have vacancies for midday meal supervisors, staff have generously stepped in to ensure continuity for our children. Last summer we saw a higher-than-usual number of pupils move on, leading to a reduction from five classes to four. However, this year we have welcomed several new pupils from local schools. Our numbers remain healthy and stable, and St Giles continues to enjoy a strong reputation within the community. Despite national declines in pupil numbers, our projected intake for September is encouraging.

Our school development focus this year has remained firmly on the quality of maths teaching and on developing effective ways to assess learning across the wider curriculum. Alongside this, we have undertaken significant work on strengthening our inclusive provision, ensuring that every child—regardless of starting point—has the

completely clear the beds of old plants (keeping anything which was thriving) and replant with perennials to cut down on maintenance. He is also willing to undertake the ongoing maintenance. This is a wonderfully encouraging offer, meaning that the volunteers won't have to spend hours on their knees clearing the weeds. We are truly grateful to him for this. The only cost to us is the cost of the plants he is planning to use which will be sponsored by the Friends of Horsted Keynes Church.

The ash trees continue to be a worry with ash dieback disease. We have had worryingly large quotes from various tree surgeons, but are now waiting for a visit from West Sussex Council Tree Officer to give advice on what is realistically needed.

Barbara Fairweather, John Whiting and Hilary Nicholson

FIRST STEPS

As mentioned last year, First Steps has really come of age, now being in its 22nd year. Not a lot has changed in what we provide – the Martindale is set up each Wednesday morning in term time with a variety of toys and activities to meet the needs of all, from the tiny babies to the pretty much ready for school 4 year olds, who fit us in alongside their pre-school days – and of course the Mums and other carers. Teas and coffee are on tap throughout the morning, but the tots have a set snack time around the table. And naturally we end with a short singing time each week, with the children learning that the session is closing when we start to sing the Hokey Cokey!

Our team of Amanda, Elaine, Linda and myself is often supplemented by the regular arrival of Pat if one of us had had the temerity not to be there one or more weeks. I am grateful to all our volunteers for the friendly focus with which we together welcome our 'clientele'! Like HKafe, First Steps is run under the umbrella of St Giles Church and we remain grateful that we are able to offer this opportunity to our young families however many or few they may be.

Chris Wheatley

FRIENDS OF HK CHURCH

Since the Friends' committee is officially a committee of the PCC, we don't publish a separate Friends' account for the APCM; all our accounts appear as part of the Church accounts. Moreover, we hold our own AGM. But here are a few details for last year (2025)

Income:

Total voluntary Income £3,847
Fundraising (net of costs) £3,024
Dividends Received £493
Investment income £670
Total Income £8,034
Expenditure Annex Project £1,630
Churchyard £4,500
Routine maintenance £299
Other sundry expenses £180
Total Expenditure £6,609
Surplus of income over expenditure £1,425
Reserves valuation (at year end) £41,872

Our Events:

Annual Meeting. We were addressed by Alistair Whitby, of the Ouse and Arun Rivers Trust. He described those rivers and their tributaries as 'the veins and arteries of our landscape', and therefore essential to the environment's good health. He listed many of the reasons why the waterways are becoming worse despite their work, but nonetheless he left us feeling positive and optimistic, with stories of improvements and 'nature bouncing back'.

Open Gardens Day. We rejoiced to see the beautiful day; success of this event is particularly weather dependant. But this was heat enough to deter people from venturing out. Nonetheless, with 26 gardens open, most providing at least some shade, we had a very successful day, with many visitors from well outside the village, while teas and a plant sale on the Green attracted sales among many who hadn't toured the gardens. We raised £1,200.

Variety Night. This was a joyful celebration of comedy, dance, music and more, drawing enthusiastic audiences to all three performances.

PARISH & PARISHIONER

As always, thank you to all who regularly support the P&P: the regular contributors who keep us up to date with the village activities through their reports, and to everyone who provides interesting articles for the magazine. Fortunately, there are still many local events to publicise through the pages of our parish magazine.

Unfortunately, the magazine fund didn't manage to squeeze into the black over the past financial year, despite the much valued support of our readers, advertisers and the grant from the Parish Council. However, we remain committed to delivering the P&P free to every household in the parish – there is also a link to the magazine on the church website.

Thank you, as ever, to all the volunteers involved in getting the P&P to every home each month. Last summer, Penny Carter handed over the distribution role, after she and Dick (now sadly departed) had given unstinting service for over 10 years.

Fortunately, Lynne and Tony Mulcare kindly stepped forward and said they would take on the task of dropping off the various bundles (sorted into their appropriate batches by Moira) to the delivery team. A massive thank you to all involved, not forgetting Peter Heasman who faithfully posts the magazine to the addresses on the mailing list. The next few months may be rather challenging to me as MS Publisher, the software programme I have used to produce the magazine for over 26 years, is no longer going to be supported from the autumn, so I will have to learn how to use a different system. Wish me luck!

Thank you to everyone for your support over the past year.

Sally Lamb, Editor

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

There have been no safeguarding issues reported. Since Peter Sutton has left, I have taken over the role of Lead Recruiter which enables me to do the DBS checks through the Diocese provider Thirty One: Eight. I have successfully enrolled with them and completed one check. I have not attended any advanced training, which is always at Chichester, but have been contacted by the Safeguarding Team recently regarding a

MARTINDALE CENTRE

The Martindale Centre continues to provide a gathering place for many different groups from within the village and further afield, ranging across the complete age range from toddlers to the more mature! Some act under the umbrella of the P.C.C. but everyone is welcome, including Pilgrims en route to Worth Abbey in Holy Week.

Due to various well supported fund-raising events held during the year, we managed to end 2025 with a positive balance of £822.00.

This is due to our hard-working Management Committee, consisting of Jackie Binfield, Paul Fairweather, Lizzie Oesterlin, Hilary Nicholson, Alison Smith, and Adrian Woods. Sadly, Selina Ay has resigned due to family pressures.

The Martindale Centre has been appointed as the Resilience Centre in Horsted Keynes as part of a National initiative. We are providing storage for equipment which may be used in emergencies and planning is in hand for practical help for anyone who might need it.

Marion Lott

OPEN HOUSE

Open House was, once again, the grateful recipient of one of the PCC's special charity donations during the year. The charity is extremely appreciative of our support, especially as we are quite some distance from them in Crawley. During the year we were pleased to welcome again Ian Wilkins, who gave a wonderfully descriptive view of the work of Open House. It is no longer just a hostel for the homeless (good enough though that would be) but also has a drop-in day centre so people can have a shower, some food, company and access facilities to help them plan their future. There are now workshops to teach people skills for future opportunities for work and help with administration such as applying for benefits, etc.

During the year we collected food and clothing, and just before Christmas, we took a car boot full of clothes and seasonal food items to help them celebrate.

Hilary Nicholson, Helen Townsend, Phil Miles

Laughter filled the hall, the dancers dazzled, and the musicians delivered unforgettable moments. The event brought people together in true community spirit, and we raised £1,800.

Burns Night Supper. It was an evening filled with warmth, laughter and a fine celebration of Scottish tradition. We were so grateful for the very many who worked so hard to make the night the success it was, with particular mention of Pat Martin – talent-spotted for her work in Village Lunch – and all her team, and of David Buchanan, son-in-law of our fondly missed Barry and Beth Read. His piping was stirring, and his leading (and playing for) the dances was brilliant. With many traditional speeches and songs, it was all wonderfully enjoyable and raised £1,900.

We were greatly saddened by the deaths of four people who, in different ways, made great contributions to our work. Rory Clarke was our patron, and was very helpful and supportive, especially in persuading people to join us, but also in supporting our events – providing items for us to auction, opening his garden, and attending all of our performances and annual meetings. Ann Govas was also an active supporter from the outset. Her talk on the people who had inspired our stained-glass windows enlightened us all – literally, as we lit them from outside. Much more research into our history followed. She too supported all our events. We came to depend on her. Richard Harrison, as church warden, paved the way for the establishment of a 'Friends', and, as Fabric Committee chairman, led our work on many restorations, repairs and improvements. Peter Harknett was the steeplejack (and showman) who led the half re-shingling of our spire and, aged 86, climbed to its top to replace the weather vane he'd restored. He too, like Ann, addressed our Annual Meeting.

Our Committee.

Dawn Hitchen, our resourceful and energetic chairman, had to leave us in the Autumn when Steve became our ambassador on Ryhadd. As deputy, Becky George stood in, but declined to be our chairman permanently. Paul Welch kindly joined us, and has, among many other things, has overhauled our web site. Emma Bell continues as our treasurer, and recently Kay MacNaughton agreed to be our chairman,

much to our delight. Alice Wintergold and James Nicholson (Secretary) complete the committee. We are also joined at most of our meetings by Martin Govas, who kindly provides much wise advice, and our liaison with the PCC.

James Nicholson

HKafe

HKafe has continued to provide a term-time weekly opportunity for the secondary school-age young people of Horsted Keynes to gather at the Martindale Centre on Tuesday afternoons as they arrive back in the village on the school bus. We offer them a free waffle/pancake, cooked onsite by our volunteer band. Other low-priced snacks are offered to purchase. Activities include table tennis, pool and various table top games. The youngsters love a weekly challenge – e.g. who can sit unsupported against the wall for longest – the winner being given an extra free pancake/waffle.

Numbers fluctuate from 5 a session upwards. In the most recent half term we had 13 attend on three consecutive Tuesdays. A number of year 10s are still coming regularly.

Unfortunately we have not as yet recruited a qualified youth worker, although I am still hoping to have a discussion in the near future with the youth worker employed by Cuckfield Church. Our volunteer group is small but committed. We were delighted to recruit Ryan during the last year, who brings youth and enthusiasm to the team and the young! Our team of 5 (Caroline, Fioma, Ryan, Thelma and myself) means that the volunteers each cover every other week and I try to be there each week, so that 3 are on duty at each session.

We had one unfortunate incident during the year when a small window in the main hall was broken and we await information as to the costs of replacing this.

Unfortunately since Lucy Soper stepped down from leading the Youth Council, this has not met, so the link between the Youth Council and HKafe no longer exists.

As volunteers we all enjoy being 'on duty' but I would really value the presence of a younger, trained youth worker and understand that if we can recruit a suitable person, the PCC has continued to budget for such

as appointment on a sessional basis – for which we are truly grateful - and I believe that the Parish Council is still supportive. Meanwhile we would also appreciate one or two more regular volunteers – anyone interested?

Chris Wheatley

HK HELP

We hope it's a comfort to know that the HK HELP telephone numbers, published in P & P monthly, continue to provide an option for anyone stuck without transport, particularly in need of a lift to a medical appointment or pharmacy pick up.

After many years of heading HK HELP, and indeed being the inspiration for its formalisation, Peter Heasman withdrew his contact number in November. As for so many other acts of neighbourly service, the village owes Peter very much indeed for his ever-willing kindness in terms of lifts and practical help. Retirement and moving home meant that Fr David Murdoch's name also had to come off the list of helpers, so it was very welcome when James Nicholson agreed to include his contact details as an H K helper alongside David Lamb. We are hopeful that another helper will volunteer soon.

David Lamb

LIFE & FAITH DISCUSSION GROUP

We have a core of 7 regular attendees and meet mostly in the home of Sylvia and Terry, and sometimes Terry is able to join our discussions. As usual we have studied a variety of texts which this year have included Iranian born and now Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani's reflection: Cries for a lost Homeland. Powerful and poignant. Alongside the evening Lent group, we have followed the Diocesan Lent material and in recent weeks have revisited the gospel of Matthew. Our group is informal and relaxed and discussions wait until tea and coffee is served. We continue to meet on Thursday afternoons from 2.15. Come and check us out!

Chris Wheatley