

**ST. GILES CHURCH,
HORSTED KEYNES**



**St Giles Church Vestry Meeting
and
APCM on Thursday 15th May 2025**

AGENDA

and

REPORTS for year ending 31st December 2024

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 25th April 2024**
 - (a) *To agree the minutes as a correct record*
 - (b) *Matters arising*
- 3 **PCC annual report and statutory accounts for 2024**
 - (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 2025
- 5 **Safeguarding report**
To receive the report for 2024 (Page 14)
- 6 **Fabric, goods & ornaments report**
To receive the report for 2024 (Page 5)
- 7 **New electoral roll**
To receive the report for 2024 (Page 5)
- 8 **Church reports**
To receive the other reports for 2024 enclosed here (Page 4 – 18)
- 9 **Elections**
 - (a) *PCC*
- 10 Any other business

to collect the money for us, and very early on they established the raffle. They collect, seemingly without effort, the gifts that become the raffle prizes, they add to the fun but at the same time keep order, and, without them, the lunches would be far less of an event. But health difficulties have forced Lizzie to stand down from this task and recruit a successor. She has certainly earned her retirement, but we will very much miss her in the role; warm, welcoming and above all, encouraging, she brings out the best in people; she'll be a hard act to follow.

We were very sorry that Barry Read died; he was one of the best of men. In recent years he was a regular attender at Village Lunch, but in our earlier years he was one of those providing the lunches. We miss him.

We also continue to enjoy very much the participation of pupils from St. Giles school. 3 or 4 of them come, supervised by a governor, and after eating their packed lunches they help us serve out the puddings (and the second helpings). They seem to enjoy it; we certainly enjoy having their help. Their reward is a helping of the pudding of their choice.

Of course, the event depends upon the willingness and ability of all those (roughly 30) people who, twice per year, take on the role, usually in groups of 5, of deciding what will be cooked, cooking it all and serving it up. It is intensive, but quite enjoyable work, the main enjoyment coming from working together to achieve something worthwhile (though twice per year is enough). Among its merits are that it helps build up the village community; we come to know people better and appreciate them more.

If you would like to take part, as a customer or as a cook, we'd be very pleased to hear from you.

James Nicholson

Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Support Work								4
Cuckfield Deanery Synod	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Electoral Roll	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Fabric	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
First Steps	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Friday After School Club								8
Friends of HK Church	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9
HKafe	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	10
HK HELP	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11
Life and Faith Discussion Group				..	..	..	..	11
Martindale Centre	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Open House	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Parish & Parishioner	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13
Safeguarding	...	..	..	..	..	..	..	14
St. Giles Primary School	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	15
Village Lunch	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17

CHICHESTER DIOCESAN ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY SUPPORT WORK

The difficulties faced by the families FSW helps are as challenging as ever: so many are under stress from, for example, trying to secure support for children with SENs, or facing eviction from privately let accommodation. The most basic requirements, such as pyjamas and school uniform, are hard to provide when you're struggling to put food on the table and heat the home. It is encouraging to learn that many of the clients they visit have told FSW what a difference the help and support of the Family Practitioners has made to them, giving them the guidance and confidence to move on with their lives.

Recently FSW has recruited new members of staff to fill the roles of Senior Family Support Practitioner (Hastings), Digital Fundraising and Communications Officer, and Assistant Community and Volunteer Co-ordinator (East Sussex). They are also keen to recruit more volunteers to help at fundraising events, sorting at the food bank, or with social media etc. Here in Horsted Keynes, where St Giles Church has for many years been a supporter through an annual charitable collection, Harvest and Advent gifts, and the regular collection of items for the food bank, there 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.

FSW's February's work in numbers:

227 individual visits and 632 calls with families supporting 263 adults and 214 children.

47 supported meetings with other agencies

48 group sessions held supporting 566 parents and 229 children

88 food deliveries made

As with many other charities, FSW struggles to finance all the work that needs to be done. Owing to the NI changes, they need to find an additional £34,000 just to stand still, but they are keen to maintain their staffing levels. Among their big fundraisers is the sponsored walk in May, which is a repeat of last year's successful trail around the Cuckmere Valley, taking in the historic churches in the area, and, the perennial favourite, the Open Gardens season where FSW has been invited to provide the teas at over 20 events this year.

absolutely adore. 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.

As a Leadership team, we have the support of a strong governing body. Helen Jones continues to chair the board; her experience and drive is providing excellent strategic direction and challenge to the school.

Recently we had the opportunity as a school to be part of the village History Weekend and the children wrote about what they loved about the village. All of the comments made me reflect on how much the children really love the community around them and how important it is to them to help them flourish and bring out the best in them. As a school we are very lucky 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 to the life of the school. We hope as a school to continue to give just as much back and continue to play an important role in this wonderful community of Horsted Keynes.

Mrs Coulson

VILLAGE LUNCH

In terms of Village Lunch, our post-Covid new normal means that usually there continued to be an average of more than 40 people sitting down to lunch in 2024. Most are regulars, though they sometimes bring friends or relatives. The relatively high number makes it easier for us to cover costs, and, though it is never our aim to make a surplus, despite no change in our price since October 2022, we accumulated surpluses totalling £625 for the year. As usual this is more than matched by a total raffle profit of £772 this year. We are very pleased therefore to have been able to contribute nearly £1,400 to the heating and cleaning costs the Martindale committee incur.

Peter and Lizzie Heasman began attending Village Lunch in the very first year it operated (2010). From the outset they made themselves useful, helping to stack away tables and chairs. Soon they volunteered

subjects other than maths and English. Our Phonics and reading continue to be a strength of the school, having an incredibly positive impact on pupils' early reading skills. As a school, we continue to work hard to provide pastoral support for pupils, with challenges around mental health.

We have also focused this year on how we can improve our Collective Worship and involve the children more in the worship. This has led to the creation of a Worship Team, led by two of our Year 6s and involving children from across KS2. They have so far led three Collective Worships in school, taken part in Friday services and the highlight this year must be their involvement in the Eucharist service before Easter. Many thanks must go to Fr. Peter for his support with this – it is something that both the church of St Giles and us here at school are keen to develop further. The link between the church and the school is also further enhanced by our Friday Collective Worship team made up of members of the congregation and the wider community. We are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated team of volunteers who bring so much to the Friday services and help bring the stories and themes to life for the children. As a school, we are so grateful for our links and special relationship with the church and continue to look for ways to further strengthen and build on them. We are going to miss Fr. David greatly when he retires but know that he will be leaving us in good hands.

We continue to maintain and develop the school buildings and grounds. In terms of grounds maintenance, we have replaced some fencing around the school to improve security. General maintenance is also ongoing.

We, along with most small village schools, are having to work hard to ensure we have a balanced budget, these issues certainly don't get any easier with the passing years.

The PTA continues to be a great support to us. This year we have had a very successful Christmas Event; Quiz night and the May Fair is planned for the 10th May. The PTA have supported the school providing a range of workshops and events for pupils and most importantly have replaced part of the trim trail with a brand new boat which the children

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

Deanery Synod does not meet very often and the only two I attended last year were services rather than meetings so there isn't really anything to report.

The first meeting this year will be the one at the Martindale, which will certainly go in next year's report.

Heidi Mowforth

ELECTORAL ROLL

There were 118 names on Electoral Roll for the 2024 year. 2 deceased during the year leaving 116 at year end.

22 of these were register living outside the parish and there was one new name on the register during the year.

As there is a six-yearly requirement for a complete revision of the roll, 2025 will be a newly revised roll. A big push has been made to get more names on the roll to show a healthy membership going into the imminent Interregnum.

Fiona Price

FABRIC REPORT

During the year the Fabric Committee met twice with supplementary meetings as necessary particularly regarding the proposed annex. The meetings were chaired by David Lamb and our thanks to him and the other members for their continued commitment and effort in maintaining the excellent condition of the Church, frequently commented on by visitors.

Prompt action in previous years has ensured that no significant work was required this year. However the provision of a replacement Flag Pole was investigated and prices obtained. As there was no funding for a replacement, a request for made for help, the generosity of donors

ensured a new up to date pole was in place for Remembrance Sunday to fly the Union Flag as normal.

The normal programme of maintenance work was carried out the log and actions being, as usual efficiently managed by Phil Miles. Martin Govas carried out a study of heating options and proposals, given the ban on the continued use of oil, the proposal gave a practical electric solution which will be further developed when required.

In support of wildlife 'swift boxes ' were installed in the tower with no intrusion into the existing fabric and maintain protection against pigeon ingress. It was also decided to limit Church external lighting to Christmas and other selected Services.

It was with deep disappointment and shock that, on the recommendation of Historic England the Planning application for the Annex was refused. However, the 'Annex Working Party' continue to work toward amendments to ensure the project's progress, our thanks to their sustained efforts.

Goods and Ornaments:

The normal purchases of items and materials were made to ensure stocks were maintained. There were no disposals or acquisitions.

Church Yard:

The following report was prepared by the Church Yard Committee led by Hilary Nicholson, our thanks to all for carrying out the demanding task of maintaining this wonderful asset to the Church and the Parish. Our contractor, Richard Soper, had to deal with a difficult year from a mowing point of view. The weather was very varied and unexpected, especially at the beginning of the year, which meant that the mowing schedule was put out. Richard agreed to carry on with the contract. It was decided that a patch of grass near the church porch should be left to grow long to encourage wild flowers. This turned out not be such a success as the previous year's location, on the north side of the church. The village Wildlife Group attempted to encourage wild flowers in the far eastern area of the churchyard by sowing yellow rattle, which unfortunately does not seem to have been successful

I have completed both my basic and my foundation courses, have still to complete my Leadership Course.
Thelma Mason

ST. GILES PRIMARY SCHOOL

It has been another busy year here at St Giles. We have continued to work in partnership with St. Peter's in Ardingly, had a successful Ofsted inspection in October and continued to work hard as a staff to ensure 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 similar school development aims and enjoy extra-curricular enrichment opportunities together. Jamie Savage as our Executive Headteacher and myself maintain our clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the school. The Governing Body are currently looking at reviewing and developing the partnership.

Our staff, both teaching and support staff remain a strength of the school. Although we have lost our wraparound care supervisor and a couple of midday meal supervisors, staff have rallied around to cover until we can replace them. Pupil numbers are steady and although the school continues to have a good reputation locally, the number of children of school age has dropped, reflecting national trends.

Our Ofsted inspection in October came at a time when our Year 5 and 6 children were on their residential trip. Despite this, the inspectors recognised the tireless work that goes on across the whole school to provide all of our pupils with a good standard of education and the report highlighted many key strengths. Some of the opening statements in the report help to sum up everything we strive to achieve here at St Giles: "pupils delight in attending this friendly school.....pupils uphold the school's value of nurture well.....this contributes to a culture where pupils feel part of the school family."

This year our focus for school development has been on our maths teaching and also on how we can assess what pupils have learnt in

Penny Carter to drop off to the various deliverers, and we are hugely grateful to her.

Fortunately, my sister, Moira, stepped forward and said she would take on the task (no arm twisting was involved at all!) so thank you to her.

A huge thank you also to all involved in delivering the magazine, not forgetting Peter Heasman who posts the magazines to those on the mailing list.

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

Sally Lamb – Editor P&P

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

I have been in post just over one year, my previous experience was within my role in a social services child care team in Crawley, West Sussex. I am a member of the PCC and attend regular meetings.

The main area of focus for Safeguarding at St. Giles is the HKafe Youth Club; Leader Chris Wheatley has her DBS certificate and her training.

Volunteers, who are on a rota basis have been requested to obtain their DBS certificate and do the basic training. This had not been the need in the past. The 17 year old male helper, currently does not require this.

There has been one indirect referral, this was discussed over a Zoom meeting and was agreed that it was not a safeguarding issue.

The Safeguarding team at Chichester Diocese are easily contactable for advice. The Diocese's website has hugely improved for Safeguarding officers with far clearer information, which is easy to find. There are regular newsletters sent out.

It has been noted that the Parish Dashboard will replace the SQP from May this year, I will go through this with Father Peter when the full format is available.

My details as Safeguarding Officer are on our website, in the Church Vestry and in the P & P Newsletter which is distributed to all households within Horsted Keynes.

My own DBS checks appear to have disappeared into the 'Ether'. I have completed another application.

The tree work, carried out by KPS, was undertaken in the latter part of the year. During this work it was found that disease had damaged other trees, which would have to be dealt with in 2025.

In the Autumn, Frank Wright, a hedge layer of some repute, cleared the northern boundary of the churchyard with the school playing field and 'laid' the hedge. It was hoped that this work would encourage good growth along the boundary and allow light and air into the thick growth of old trees. It was very interesting to see this old skill being put to use. This work was funded by a very generous grant from the Sussex Lunt Trust, for which we are very grateful.

The PCC approved the application to the 'Weald to Waves' scheme which is designed to allow a wide corridor of land to be free for animal and bird migration.

A temporary notice outlining the churchyard rules was erected near the lychgate. It was hoped it might mitigate the number of plastic flowers, pots, toys, etc. being left on the memorial path.

The entry to the churchyard via the lychgate was considered to be a safety risk. A very unexpected and generous offer came from a parishioner who ground the offending trip hazard down and it is now safe.

The usual maintenance went on throughout the year with the very much appreciated help from volunteers, especially in trying to keep the rosebeds looking good. The most recently planted roses have not thrived, and other ideas are being discussed.

During the year Tony Skeel, a very valued member of the committee, retired, and the committee is now six in number. The committee continue to work towards the churchyard being more environmentally friendly, in order to encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

Barbara Fairweather, John Whiting and Hilary Nicholson

FIRST STEPS

For those of us helping to make this group happen, it continues to be a joy. Our numbers may be lower than some years and we have probably had fewer young babies bringing their caring adults to meet both our team and other families who have tiny people in their midst.

When families have their first baby it sometimes takes them a while to find us, so if you meet anyone in the village with a young child, please let them know that we meet in term time on Wednesday mornings at the Martindale 9.30-11.30, under the umbrella of St Giles Church, and that they're very welcome to come and check us out.

First Steps will celebrate its 21 st birthday next September – and we continue to pursue our main objective, which is to provide a warm, welcoming and safe place where young families can find their place in our community, meeting others at the same stage of life as themselves and potentially making lifelong friendships.

Chris Wheatley

FRIDAY 'GOD IS OUR ROCK' AFTERSCHOOL CLUB

The After School club takes place during term-time on Fridays from 3.15 - 4.15 pm at St Giles School. This year we have had 6 adult leaders (Katie/Chris/James/Barbara/Ash/Christine) who meet at the beginning of each term to plan & lead sessions. We get an average of about 12 children, across the age-range of the school & the sessions are lively.

Sadly, it has been decided to wind-up the enterprise at the end of the Summer Term, due to a number of the adults being unable to continue. Begun in September 2022, the Friday "God is our Rock" After School Club has run for three academic years.

All credit to Katie Spetch for masterminding the creation & running of the group; and thanks to Hilary Douch/Alison Coulson for accommodating us on the school premises. Also thanks to the adult helpers, with additional support from Kevin Coulson for a few 'bonfire' sessions! And thanks, of course, to all the children & their families who have taken part. We've had some fun, learnt from each other and built on friendships & connections within our community.

Christine Murdoch

OPEN HOUSE

We are grateful to the P.C.C. for once again allowing one of the special annual collections to be held for Open House in the latter part of 2024. Over £500 was sent to them from these collections. Apart from the donations, we also take occasional carfulls of food or clothing. There was a special December appeal for Christmassy items of food, and we were delighted to take cakes, biscuits, decorations and other items to Open House in time for Christmas.

We also were pleased to once again receive Ian Wilkins of Open House at a September service when he updated us on the current situation. He outlined the problems they have with not enough accommodation for all those requesting it. The hostel is full, and the needs are still many. They now have six houses for people who are ready to move on from the hostel.

On behalf of Open House, Ian was very appreciative of the support and care we give them, especially as we are not in Crawley as many of their supporters are.

Hilary Nicholson, Helen Townsend, Phil Miles

PARISH & PARISHIONER

Thank you to all the regular contributors who keep us up to date with the village activities, and to everyone who provides copy for the magazine. It's good to know that the village is still such a vibrant and active community.

Unfortunately, the magazine fund didn't manage to squeeze into the black over the past financial year, despite the greatly appreciated 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.

As always, mention must be made of the volunteers who conscientiously deliver the P&P to every home in the parish each month. At the end of 2024 Jan Humphries decided to retire from her role as distributor of the P&P. For ten years she had faithfully sorted the magazines into the appropriate-sized batches ready for Dick and

hostess, when we generally have a chat about what has happened to us, our village, our country or the world, sometimes the discussion is serious, - or it can be quite lively and lighthearted.

Refreshments over, we begin with prayers then what we have decided to study is usually taken from one of the books of the Bible . For this session we decided that we would look at the most difficult book to understand in the Bible (to me anyway) Revelation (no s note), and with the aid of a Study Guide, it proved quite interesting and we were able to understand most what of John's visions were about. We also followed this years' Lent Course (The Nicene Creed). We found it interesting to hear the contributors' reflections on this.

We are a small friendly group of ladies and gentlemen. If you feel you would like to escape for an hour or so and learn more about Life & Faith, you are most welcome to come and join us.

Barbara Fairweather

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 2024 with a positive balance of nearly £4000.

This is due to our hard-working Management Committee, consisting of Jackie Binfield, Paul Fairweather, Hilary Nicholson, Alison Smith, Adrian Woods, and recent recruits Selena Ay and Lizzie Oesterlin. Sadly, Alan Johnson has resigned due to other priorities but continues to support our efforts, which is much appreciated.

The Martindale Centre has been proposed as the Resilience Centre in Horsted Keynes. It is very early days in the planning process, but it will be good to provide a venue for folk seeking shelter in any difficulty.

Marion Lott

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 (2024)

<u>Income:</u>	Total voluntary Income 3,300
	Fundraising (net of costs) 4,331
	Dividends Received 486
	Investment income 592
	<u>Total Income 8,709</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>	Annex Project 911
	Churchyard 7,000
	Other sundry expenses 138
	<u>Total Expenditure 8,049</u>
	<u>Surplus of income over expenditure 660</u>
	<u>Reserves valuation (at year end) 41,587</u>

2024 was a year of change for us. In 2023 we had put on seven different events, all successful, enjoyable and profitable, but exhausting. At around that time we lost three highly talented committee members for a variety of different reasons. We knew that our fast pace was partly to blame. We decided to limit ourselves to three per year.

Our Events

Annual Meeting. Keith Dachler OBE addressed us. He was, in his early working life, an estate manager in East Sussex, where he learned the value of bio-diverse grass meadows. With interest and advice from Wye College, DEFRA and others he found he could increase the number of species of plants and insects and yet farm 3,000 acres profitably. He gave encouraging advice on how we might run our churchyard.

Barn Dance at the Bluebell Vineyard. It was a beautiful mid-summer's evening, though cold. Swallows swooped and dipped into the lake beneath our picnic terrace, ducks paddled and geese landed. The band and their caller were excellent, the bar was well run and the picnic

suppers delicious. 70 of us, ranging in age from five to much more, danced the evening away.

The Wizard of Oz. These performances were in the church itself, and a huge quantity of work and talent went into this visual and musical spectacular, showcasing the immense talent and dedication the village can provide. Our performers were nothing short of marvellous, whether they had large parts or small ones; Dalia Rampling was particularly impressive. The set, the special effects, the music, the dancing, the acting – all were spectacular. It was also profitable for us. We were so very grateful to all the very many people who took any part in it.

Our Committee.

Dawn Hitchen continues as our chairman, resourceful, energetic and imaginative as ever. Becky George deputises, and Emma Bell is our able Treasurer. Alice Wintergold and James Nicholson continue to provide their usual good service. Mark Wallwork, who now spends half his time living elsewhere, has had to stand down. But Kay MacNaughton, who had to stand down two years ago, has, much to our joy, been able to re-join us. We are also joined at most of our meetings by Martin Govas, who kindly provides liaison with the PCC.

James Nicholson

HKafe

2024 proved to be a year of unexpected change. Despite having enjoyed their taster session while still at St Giles we did not have any of the new Year 7s join us in September 2023. This was partly due to their being a very small year group, most of whom do not live in the village. However we continued with a regular core of Year 8s. Which is how we thought the year would end, with Josh Watson as our sessionally employed youth worker, via his employers, All Saints Church Danehill. Unfortunately however, at fairly short notice, Josh was made redundant at the end of the summer term 2024, as Danehill PCC reviewed their finances. There was no opportunity for us to discuss this development until the decision had been made. Meg and Steve Coppin (former voluntary but experienced youth workers at

Danehill) provided support to HKafe until the October 2024 half term. This was particularly helpful as I was unable to be present in the autumn term.

Since then the group has been run by the regular volunteers – Caroline, Christine, Dymna, Fiona and myself, with the occasional assist from Barbara and the recent welcome addition of Thelma. We have also intermittently recently had the assistance of young helper, Jonah, a further welcome and also this time a youthful addition! A number of discussions have subsequently taken place with Danehill, Lindfield and even Cuckfield churches to see if we could recruit a qualified youth worker for our session, so far without success.

We will be very sorry to lose our volunteer Christine, as she retires with Fr David. In her time with HKafe, Christine has been a most reliable, cheerful and much valued member of the team. Thank you Christine, we will really miss you.

Hopefully there will soon be at least one new volunteer recruit. The time is coming for discussions between the PCC, those who run HKafe, together with the youth council and the Parish Council, about future provision for the young in our community.

Chris Wheatley

HK HELP

Since the pandemic our services have not been in a huge demand, however during the last year there have been some calls for hospital visits.

It has mainly been calls, for transport to and fro, to the village lunch plus the occasional request to sort out some collections of prescriptions when a car has failed to start or won't.

There are usually quite a few phone calls asking for information about something concerning the aspects of village life, be it village lunch, weddings or funerals.

Peter Heasman

LIFE & FAITH DISCUSSION GROUP

We meet every Thursday afternoon at 2.15pm starting with a welcome and cup of coffee or tea and biscuits, provided by Sylvia our