Annual Report for the Parish of West Dean and East Grimstead 2023

Team Rector's report

2023 has been a year of finally getting back to what feels like normal following on form the 2020 pandemic year. In May, we reintroduced the common cup for communion, and our service pattern for the whole year has been full. Team Services happened the 5th Sunday: for Candlemas in January in Winterslow, April in Alderbury, July in Whiteparish, October in Pitton and on New Year's eve at West Dean. These were great chances for us to worship together, and to visit each other's churches sharing fellowship and prayer. Holy Week services were held in West Grimstead, and in May there were Special Services across the churches marking the coronation of King Charles III on the weekend of the 6th May when many from our communities came together. In addition our usual 'fresh expressions' got back into their normal pattern with Café Church in Alderbury, Breakfast Church in West Dean, Breakfast and Eucharist in Whiteparish, and Winterslow starting their monthly Breakfast church in their village hall. These services are great for our communities, and make Jesus known to some who find the traditional worship less appealing. Thank you to all who put so much time and effort into making these happen.

It was with sadness as we said goodbye to Revd Ruth Schofield, our Alderbury based Team Vicar, on Advent Sunday, as she left us for health reasons. Ruth was a great priest, leader, preacher and pastoral guide and we have missed her in many ways, both as part of the ministry team, and locally in the parishes. The process of appointing her replacement is underway, and we hope to be welcoming someone new in the summer of 2024.

Lisa Jones also left us as team administrator early in January, and we were delighted to appoint Rachel Funnell as Team Administrator who started just after Easter with us. Rachel has brought a wealth of skills, and she has now brought the team accounts into a new framework which should ensure transparency and efficiency in the work she does for our parish treasurers in collecting statutory fees. This was in no way a small task, and thanks to Mandy Kerley and her services for bringing us back in line.

Our work in our four primary Schools has continued well, with Alderbury joining with Pitton and Winterslow in the Pickwick Academy trust later in the year. Our Open the Book teams in all our schools continue to bring the bible accounts alive through drama and a reflective prayer time, their work is not only fun, but so hugely valued by all.

2023 has again not been a year without worries and the high price of basic supplies has continued to hit our churches. A huge thank you on behalf of the ministry team, for those key people who keep our churches alive for our communities, both in finance and practical help. We have continued to remain faithful to God as we continue to worship and pray for individuals, our communities and the wider world. We continue to share our gifts to make Jesus known to each other and within our villages. Thank you.

Revd Simon Chambers – Team Rector – March 2024

Team Vicar's report

In 2023 we celebrated two weddings at West Dean, and welcomed two children and one adult to Christ's church in baptism at East Grimstead. It was a year in which we said farewell to Brownie

Lancaster, who had been a faithful member of St Mary's church family for many years. As well as her funeral, there was one more held at St Mary's, one burial of ashes at Holy Trinity Church, and one at St Mary's.

During the year there were services for Remembrance, carol services in both churches, at the Social Club and on the Green in West Dean, and we marked the Coronation of King Charles III with prayers for the new King and singing the National Anthem at our morning Eucharist at West Dean.

Breakfast Church continued to attract a wider group to our worship, with a delicious breakfast served by a skilled team, followed by a short act of worship. This is intended for all ages, and is held in the Village Hall, with music accompanied by guitars and keyboard.

The monthly Iona style service in East Grimstead has been welcomed by a number of regular attendees, including some from other parts of the team. We continued to meet throughout 2023.

As the year progressed, frustratingly my own health deteriorated, and I found myself unable to carry out my ministry fully. In September I took the difficult decision to resign, in order to recover, and left the Clarendon Team with a final service on December 3rd. I am so grateful to colleagues in the ministry team, and also to everyone in the church family, for your fellowship and support. My heartfelt thanks to our PCC, Churchwarden Mike Marx, Treasurer Jane Higgins, and everyone who plays a part in church life. My particular thanks also to Derek Howland, and Brian and Ruth Livesey for all that they do in West Dean, and to Gill Sowerby and Annie Standen for their support at East Grimstead. There are many others without whose support and service our Church worship and other activities could not happen, and I thank you all.

Revd Ruth Schofield – Team vicar to December 2023

Deanery synod

Alderbury deanery synod met three times in 2023. The Parish was represented by Jane Higgins and Gill Sowerby, and after the APCM by Ruth Livesey and Gill Sowerby. The February meeting was held in Bramshaw, and included updates on the diocesan vision process and Living in Love and Faith. The May meeting included a celebration of Ascension Day with a Eucharist at All Saints Winterslow, followed by a social gathering. In October Bishop Andrew spoke to synod about his role as joint Church of England lead for Church buildings, with both inspiration and more practical advice on how to keep our buildings open and finance their maintenance.

Team Council

There were 5 meetings in 2023. Meetings are alternate months and alternately in St.Mary's Hall, Whaddon or the Team Office in Winterslow.
Meetings have included-
The beginning of a revue of Orders of service - beginning with one for emergency use when a vicar is unable to attend at the last minute (Red Box)
Following the departure of our Team administrator Lisa, arrangements began for appointing a new Team Administrator (Rachel Funnell started after Easter and has settled in brilliantly)
Members' roundups have focused on Worship, Communication, Mission and Children and Families (one topic at each meeting)
Review of safeguarding policy and familiarisation with new Safeguarding Dashboard

Adjustments to the services rota to fill gaps in the vacancy following the much regretted resignation of Revd Ruth Schofield
The Team treasurer stepped down after the APCMs and there is now a vacancy.
There is also still a vacancy for a Team safeguarding officer.

Churchwarden's Report

St Mary's followed a monthly pattern of 2 Eucharistic services & either Morning Worship at St Mary's or Breakfast Church in the Village Hall. The Reverend Ruth Schofield presided over most services. Breakfast Church was generally well attended, with time for a croissant, coffee & chat before a short service.

Late in the year Ruth Schofield announced that she was standing down for health reasons. She had made a huge contribution to pastoral and village life in a short time and we and she were sad that she had to leave us. We thanked her for her wisdom, learning, empathy and her love and understanding of Christ and his message to us all. We were truly blessed to have Ruth and John with us and prayed for them as they started a new chapter in their lives together. The vacancy has subsequently been advertised.

The 2023 Carol Service, Christmas Day and Easter Services were as ever well attended and joyful. We held the St Mary's Remembrance Sunday service by the War Memorial as the church was being repainted inside. About 40 villagers heard Colonel David Scotson of the Gurkha Rifles give an interesting address on the meaning of Memorials and Remembrance from his own experience of war and knowledge of memorials. After the service, a curry lunch was served in the village hall. The service and lunch were beautifully organised to mark this important day and we thank everyone who was involved.

At St Mary's Mike Marx remained church warden. Jane Higgins was PCC and Fete Treasurer, St Mary's Organist, and manager of the rota including the choice of hymns. We thank Jane for all the hard work she does selflessly for the church and village.

At both churches, many members of the congregation have been involved in the regular worship rota, acting as sidespeople, readers and intercessors. We thank all who were involved, particularly Brian & Ruth Livesey and Derek Howland who do so much in so many ways for the church. Their and Jane's contributions to the spirit and fabric of the church have been so valuable to St Mary's and village life.

We thank Ruth Livesey and her artistic and dedicated group of flower arrangers who decorated St Mary's with beautiful floral displays. And thanks are due to Maureen Amor for managing the Electoral roll, Tabitha Kimber for cleaning the church and John Peters for mowing the churchyard and keeping it in good order.

The West Dean fete committee was co-chaired by Nick Hiddleston, Chris Lucas and Matthew Rowe. All 3 have been supporters of St Mary's in fund raising and other ways and we thank them for all they do. The fete is the highlight of the village year and is widely renowned. The partnership between church and village creates goodwill and community spirit and is our largest fundraiser, generating funds for our churches & the hall and WD village projects. We thank the committee, organisers and helpers for the tremendous effort they put in to create another fantastic fete.

The church fundraising committee of Patrick Cordingley, Nick Hiddleston, Jane Higgins, Derek Howland, Chris Lucas, Mike Marx, Julie Rowe and Gill Sowerby organised a series of events between May and October. These were a talk by Kate Adie, a Summer Ball, the Open Gardens, a Safari Supper, lunch on

the Hill at the Cordingleys and the Harvest Supper. Special thanks go to: Melissa and Patrick Cordingley for the Kate Adie talk and hosting the lunch on the Hill; The Summer Ball Committee; Derek Howland for his management of the Open Gardens, together with Jane Higgins, and the Safari Supper. Julie Rowe and others for the Harvest supper. These events, together with a Grant from Community First initiated by Nick Hiddleston and organised by Jane Higgins, funded the Major Maintenance of internal scaffolding and painting the inside of the church by Gary Wolfe and other works. Thank you to all involved.

Mike Marx, Church Warden St Mary's West Dean, April 2024

Holy Trinity, East Grimstead

We had a good start to the year 2023. The carol service had been full to bursting as usual.

Our vicar, Ruth Schofield, had inaugurated an Iona Service once a month at 5 pm. We did continue during the dark winter nights but considered only having a 5pm service during BST in future. This service was popular and refreshing and will continue in summer 2024.

Otherwise, there was the once a month 11am Parish Eucharist. The attendance varied but was always welcomed.

Fund raising was somewhat neglected during 2023. We hope to get back on track in 2024. Meanwhile, there has been minimum maintenance on the church and grounds.

Once again, thank you to the people who keep the flowers in church. This is especially so for our annual Festivals. Our cleaner of many years gave notice and it was decided to clean ourselves. Again, thanks to those who help.

It was very sad to hear that our vicar, Ruth, was leaving us at the end of the year. We wish her all the best as she moves on. We now await the filling of this vacancy

Gill Sowerby PCC membe

Fabric report

During this period, the Maintenance and H&S PCC Sub-group has met as required

The sub-group consists of Derek Howland (Chair), Mike Marx (Warden), Jane Higgins (Treasurer) and Brian Livesey who adds his professional expertise as a Chartered Surveyor.

My thanks to this team who continue to support the essential maintenance of our churches.

Work completed as at 31 Dec 2023

- **Fire extinguisher testing** for SM and HT completed
- **PAT testing** for SM and HT electrical appliances completed
- **Quinquennial Surveys** - reports from 2022 surveys received for both churches
- **HT Plaster fall inside main door** – this has now been repaired
- **SM Replacement of lighting.** Replacement of lights with energy efficient LED units. Lights in vestry and flower room also replaced.

- **SM High level decoration** of walls and ceiling including minor plaster repairs– required scaffolding throughout church.
- **SM External redecoration** including front door, railings, ferramenta, north and south churchyard gates
- **SM Replacement of tiles on bellcot** and roof following storm damage

Work outstanding as at 31 Dec 2023

- **H&S Risk assessments** for SM and HT.
- **SM Notice Board by gate** Repair / replacement required following storm damage.
- **SM Minor water ingress below bellcot.**
- **HT Replacement of tile battens on Vestry Roof**. SG Roofing (who undertook the previous work on HT roof) reported that the tile battens on the Vestry roof are rotten and should be replaced and the roof re-tiled. This has been further investigated. List B application rejected – new application to be submitted once funds are available. New estimate required.
- **SM Replacement of wooden floor** - 2 small areas in choir and pulpit areas - faculty approved
- **SM Plaster repairs** – area behind pulpit - faculty approved
- **Lightning conductor checks** at both churches failed in 2022 – remedial actions being considered.
- **Works identified in Quinquennial Survey reports.** In particular:
    - **SM** Ground level around west end of church to be reduced below damp course
    - **SM** Brickwork and flintstone repairs and repointing
    - **HT** Damp in vestry
    - **SM** village working party to undertake minor issues raised by QQS report

Derek Howland - Chair, PCC Maintenance and H&S Sub-group

Financial Report

Because of the repair work to the St Mary's, West Dean and the fund raising involved, there was a lot of financial activity in 2023. We are still 'in the red' as far as income and expenditure are concerned and still owe £4.5k to the diocese, but we are getting near the end of the major repair projects.

There was a net loss in assets of £1545 compared to 2022. Considering the amount of money paid out this year for repairs and to repay the loan, that is not such a bad result. Total assets at the end of 2023 were **£15584** which includes the £4997 held on behalf of the village fete committee and the £4500 which is outstanding on the Diocesan loan. There was £13700 in the current account.

Our Church of England Investment Fund, at the year end, stands at £5469, an increase of £614 over 2022

The Baring Trust increased in value by £223 and there was a modest gain in the Wakefield Trust (£104).

This year our expenditure exceeded income by £6490 (£4058 in 2022). As always we are very grateful for the faithful and regular giving through the Parish Giving Scheme (£9320) and by standing orders (£2340). We have both gained and lost subscribers from both churches in 2023. Cash collections came to £1282 and continue to be less important to our financial health. Our income from all forms of giving therefore came to £12942, which is £850 more than in 2022. This is encouraging, but we are still short of covering the cost of the Share.

The diocesan Share payment increased from £14432 in 2022 to £15710 in 2023. The 0.5% discount for paying by direct debit reduced this to £14790.

In 2023 we received back £2227 from HMRC on money collected in 2022 and a further £2175 from 2023 through PGS. Total £4402.

The principle of keeping 4 months of reserves (£7k) available for emergencies still stands. The diocesan loan (originally £20000) has kept our cash flow manageable while we deal with large repair bills. In 2023 we have paid back a further £6000 so the outstanding loan is now £4500. We are paying back £1500 quarterly.

The field in East Grimstead that belongs to the Church is still rented out on an annual basis at £350. In 2023, Holy Trinity raised £1970 in donations.

In West Dean, 6 major events were organised by the fundraising committee and they raised about £7.5k before Gift Aid. Personal donations came to £783.

West Dean Fete was held in June 2023 and was a roaring success. There was £10,000 profit for distribution in the village. 45% came to the church £4500, 15% (£1500) went to the village hall 10% to West Dean Club (£1000), and the rest was distributed around the village after a bidding process by interest groups – Chantry group, river group, archive project, Busy Bees toddler group and Rectory Hill pathway. Both the Hall and the Club bid for and received a top-up. A donation was also made to the Battle of Britain Memorial Fund. The fete has saved larger reserves this year and now holds nearly £5k in the accounts.

The utility bills came to £2799 in 2023. This is a big increase on 2022 (£1350) but reflects the big price rises in electricity bills and Total catching up with unclaimed money from SM in 2022. Electricity at HT is now paid through one meter rather than two, and the rationalisation turned out to be a good move because of the high standing charges.

Maintenance costs at Holy Trinity came to £375. This included some necessary plastering and the standard fire extinguisher check.

At St Mary's major repairs have taken place. Roof repairs cost £468, the new LED lights came to £2613, plastering was £120, the scaffolding necessary in order to decorate £8032, and the decoration of the Church, both inside and out, £7070. That came to a grand total of £18303. VAT was reclaimed where possible from these works (£1774). We gratefully received a generous grant of £6902 for this work from the Landfill Community Fund. The total for grants and LPW claims was £8675. These grants have mitigated the costs of these particular major projects and, with the fund-raising effort, helped us to stay afloat.

General maintenance at St Mary's (£25) was the standard fire extinguisher check.

We sent cash collections to the Royal British Legion, and the Women's Refuge

The Clarendon Team expenses increased from £276 to £372 per qtr after the first payment this year (£1392). The fees that the PCC received from weddings and funerals came to £1323.

We would like to thank our accounts examiner Mr David Cook.

Jane Higgins – PCC Treasurer

Electoral Roll for West Dean and East Grimstead

The Electoral Roll number for 2024 is 33