

**Holy Trinity Cuckfield
Parochial Church Council
UK Registered Charity No. 1131432**

**Minutes of the
Annual Meeting of Parishioners
&
Annual Parochial Church Meeting for the Year Ended 31st December 2024**

11.30 a.m. Sunday 18th May 2025 in Church

1. **The Meetings opened** with prayer by Fr Daniel Valentine, Chair.
2. **Attendance:** for the AMP was 55 parishioners and for the APCM 55 church members.
3. **Apologies:** Jacqui Allcock, Janice Brinley Codd, Jill Brotherton, Anthony Nicky & Sam Lawrence, Eileen MacDougal, Pat & Rod Montague.
4. **Minutes:** the Minutes of the meetings held on Sunday 26th May 2024 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman on a motion proposed Dick Whidborne, seconded Mary Pape, approved *nem con*.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners for the Election of Churchwardens:

5. The Chair reported that, having received one nomination in the name of Jane Coan (Brian Cutler's retirement having been marked by tribute at the 09.45 service), Jane was duly elected by assent, unopposed and with acclaim. The Chair recorded his deep thanks to both wardens for their service, and to Jane for standing again.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting:

Annual Report & Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31st December 2024

6. The Chairman introduced and gave an overview of the Annual Review, highlighting the performance review which showed the key statistics all moving in the right direction after COVID and the vacancy. He thanked all the many people who had made this possible, including the wardens, PCC officers, PCC members, readers and retired clergy, in what was a very busy parish.

Turning to the accounts, Isobel Simmonds (*Treasurer*) highlighted that 2024 income was a bit higher than in the previous few years, even excluding Legacies, Grants and Extras. Pledged Giving and the number of Planned Giving Donations had, however, continued to reduce, reflecting a national shift in the giving model of congregations away from planned to ad hoc donations. There were slight decreases in other income, e.g., from the Christmas Tree Festival, from hiring the Church building for events, and from wedding & funeral fees.

In 2024 there was a general fund deficit, due to the lower income and higher expenditure in most areas, but this higher expenditure was expected, and includes the significant contribution to the Old School Refurbishment. In 2024 Mission and Charitable Giving from the General Fund showed a decrease, but only because the grant previously made by the PCC to the Holy Trinity Primary School Governors' Fund was reallocated by agreement to the funding of the new Community-Based Youth and Children's Worker. There were a few legacies and one-off donations in 2024, which eased the overall financial position and enabled an increase in reserves in anticipation of another deficit in 2025, and for any urgent actions raised by the recent Quinquennial Inspection.

The General Fund reserves policy is for three months running expenses (£45K) plus a previously approved additional £15K to cover unbudgeted Repairs and Maintenance, but current reserves are a little higher than that. There is a designated Fabric Repair and Improvement Fund of over £300K, and a restricted Roof Fund which includes the donation of £50K from the Kempe Society that can only be spent on the restoration of the roof; and a further donation of £10K from the Kempe Society that can only be spent on a digital displays and interpretation resources.

In questions, Colin Sewell-Rutter asked whether the stewardship campaign at the end of 2024 showed signs of bearing fruit: Isobel Simmonds replied it was too early to be definitive, but Q1 results showed what could be the start of an upturn, despite the reduction in number of stewardship families; what was welcome was the increase in loose change collections. Ben Halsey went on to ask whether this was similar across all churches: Isobel replied across the Deanery churches collectively were paying their total share with most just were holding their own, but there were severe difficulties elsewhere. Ros Longfield queried what the diocesan support element in the accounts was for: clarification was given that this included the 104% of Diocesan Cuckfield had paid in 2024 in order to cover Bolney's shortfall; Bolney were now in a position to pay their full share in 2025, and Cuckfield's 2025 share would revert to 100%.

The Chairman put on record thanks to David Thunder, Isobel Simmonds, Zoë Richings, and to the many contributors, for all their work in assembling the Annual Report & Accounts 2024; to the members of the Finance Committee for their work, including Cally Cronin, Treasurer for The Old School Board, and to The Friends for their continued support.

Sue Mayou asked about the role of Independent Examination and clarification was given that this refers to the legal level of financial audit required by a charity of our size, and which extended to reviewing PCC minutes, the safety and propriety of funding and other decisions, and the PCC's governance arrangements, as required by the Charity Commission and the Church of England statutes.

The Annual Report & Accounts 2024 were duly received on a motion from Carolyn Ponder, seconded Christine Best, passed *nem con*.

Appointment of the Independent Examiner for the Year Ended 31st December 2025

7. Isobel Simmonds proposed, and Mary Pape seconded the reappointment of Amy Beecroft, FCA, for the year 2025, motion carried *nem con*.

Churchwardens' Fabric Report

8. Brian Cutler reported work to part of the guttering to improve the flow off the roof; and to deal with a tree growing out of a drain pipe on the tower, to which further work would be required finally to deal with the root as part of the 2025 Quinquennial Inspection report which had now been received.

Churchwardens' Report on Inventory Changes

9. Inventory additions and changes over the year were limited to acquisition of processional candles with the generous support of the Friends; and a four piece communion set had also been acquired since the year end.

The inventory and logbook were signed by the Chairman, Churchwardens and two members of the PCC.

Report of the Electoral Roll Officer

10. David Thunder, Electoral Roll Officer, reported a net figure of 163 following the six year renewal. While, as often happens on a full renewal, this was a drop of 101 compared to the previous year's total of 264, there were some 50 names, active and in attendance at worship, who appeared not to have got round to registering, with a further 10 or so prevented from doing so by infirmity. It was encouraging, however, that 15 new names had joined the Roll. Despite the size of the PCC being governed by the size of the Roll, even with all current vacancies filled, the PCC would not exceed the cap of 12 elected lay members allowed by the revised number on the Roll.

Report on Safeguarding

11. David Thunder, reporting on behalf of Rod Montague, said the PCC had complied with its duty under *Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016* (to have regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults). The Safeguarding Coordinator reports to every PCC meeting. The parish Safeguarding Policy (reviewed and approved annually) is on view in the Church Porch, can also be seen on the Church website, and a copy is lodged with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

As usual following last year's APCM, the PCC considered and approved afresh the Safeguarding Policy for the care, nurture and inclusion of all Church Members particularly children, young people and vulnerable adults. There are 68 volunteers and employees holding DBS Certificates recorded in the Annual Report, which is encouraging and remains fairly consistent year to year; the people concerned undergo various levels of Diocesan training from time to time, to which has been added a further course, 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse'.

The Simple Quality Protects programme that we have been observing since our completion in 2018 is being replaced by the Diocesan 'Parish Dashboard', an online tool for PCCs to assist with Safeguarding compliance, being launched this month.

David added that he was delighted that Rod and his Deputy, Robyn Brotherton, had both indicated their willingness to serve another year. The Chair added thanks to both, saying Rod was the best safeguarding officer he had worked with, and safeguarding in the parish was in safe and effective hands.

Report on the Cuckfield Deanery Synod

12. Isobel Simmonds noted the Rural Dean was Revd Christopher Powell, Vicar of St Peter & St John the Baptist, Wivelsfield. The legal requirement for synod meetings is two per year but over 2024, Cuckfield Deanery Synod held five meetings:
- (a) 10 February 2024, Deanery Day, Year of the New Testament, Speaker: Revd Earl Collins, Continuing Ministerial Development Officer, and Priest in Charge of St John the Baptist's Church, Hove, and an earlier theology lecturer and Acting Vice Principal at Westcott House Cambridge theological college.
 - (b) 20 February 2024, Inspiring Angels, Speaker: Revd Rachel Revely, Priest-in-Charge of St. Thomas the Apostle and Martyr, Ipswich, and Assistant Area Dean in the Ipswich Deanery.
 - (c) 22 May 2024, Youth & Children's Work, Speaker: Sarah Steel (youth & children's worker from Hurstpierpoint and one of the Conveners of the hub serving Cuckfield, Hurst and East Grinstead Deaneries).
 - (d) 19 September 2024, in lieu of the advertised topic on Apostolic Life, the meeting split into 4 groups to discuss two questions: how did Christian faith come alive for you? And what helps people into Christian faith?
 - (e) 12 November 2024, "Carbon Confidence", Speaker: Revd Buff Forbes Stone, Diocesan Environment Officer.

Deanery Synod meetings are open to anyone; please ask Isobel for timing and venue details.

The Holy Trinity Deanery Synod representatives (until 2026) are Rod Montague, Mary Pape, and Isobel Simmonds. Jill Brotherton has been a Deanery Synod representative for several years, but has decided to retire before her current term finishes in 2026. Jill is thanked for her service, and will be missed. Isobel Simmonds has been a member of the Deanery Synod Standing Committee for over ten years and, since June 2021, the Deanery Treasurer.

Election of Lay Members to the Parochial Church Council

13. The Lay Vice Chair thanked retirees by rotation from the PCC: Jacqui Allcock, Terry Bevan, Janice Brinley Codd, and Margaret Somers for their service. Additionally, three members announcing their early retirement on health grounds were thanked with understanding: Kate Berry, Jill Brotherton, Roger Edmonston.

Two nominations had been received for the four PCC places to 2028 from Jacqui Allcock and Brian Cutler, and there being no other candidates put forward, they were declared elected unopposed; the two remaining vacancies were thereby transferred to the PCC to fill.

Nominations had not been received in advance or from the floor in respect of the other continuing vacancies (*viz.*, two Deanery Synod places to 2026, one PCC place to 2026, and one to 2027) and these also transferred back to the PCC as casual vacancies.

Results of Elections

14. The full results in **bold** [*with Lay Members' year of retirement shown in brackets*] are in the table below:

Role	Name	Retiring	PCC post
Vicar	Revd Daniel Valentine		Chairman
Churchwardens	Jane Coan		
	<i>Vacancy</i>		
Reader	Clive Simmonds		
Deanery Synod Representatives	Rod Montague	2026	Safeguarding Co-ord
	Mary Pape	2026	
	Isobel Simmonds	2026	Hon Treasurer
	<i>Vacancy</i>	2026	
	<i>Vacancy</i>	2026	
Lay PCC members	Carolyn Ponder	2026	
	Dick Whidborne	2026	
	Vacancy	2026	
	Vacancy	2026	
	Jonathan Berry	2027	
	David Thunder	2027	PCC Secretary/Elect
	Hilary Turner-King	2027	
	Vacancy	2027	
	Jacqui Allcock	2028	
	Brian Cutler	2028	
	Vacancy	2028	
	Vacancy	2028	
Co-opted	Fr Stephen Caple		

Any Other Business

15. A number of topics were raised, were noted, discussed or clarified as follows:

Churchwardens: in answer to Colin Sewell-Rutter and a concern about Jane Coan left on her own as the sole churchwarden, the Chairman clarified the search for a replacement for Brian remained ongoing, and to better support Jane in the interim, parts of her role will be underwritten with support: Brian will keep a watching brief on the fabric items; David Thunder was taking on the Enable workstream; Standing Committee was being strengthened by the addition of Rod Montague; while employment of a Verger helped take some of the strain of in-church activities.

The Choir: Roger Floyd asked whether there was a report from the Director of Music, and it was clarified the Annual Report on pages 7 and 8 throughout included references to the choir, the quality of the musical contribution, and thanks for that, individual reports being consolidated into one review of the year as required by the reporting regulations, rather than a series of individual contributions.

APCM: Ben Halsey asked for clarification of the notice given for the APCM and its attendant documents: clarification was given that the Annual Report & Accounts, Minutes of the previous APCM, and the Agenda for this meeting had all been made available in advance on the notice board in the porch, on the website, and via the parish e-mail, with 60 hard copies available at the meeting, going well beyond the statutory notice required.

PCC Work Streams: in response to Joyce Sewell-Rutter, the Chair clarified that the work streams recently established as part of implementing the mission action plan would be publicised, with their membership, to help members of the congregation interact appropriately with their questions; indeed a suggestion box was being proposed for the purpose, and to enable members of the church to volunteer help for the individual streams, whose memberships were quite deliberately being encouraged from beyond that of members of the elected PCC.

Fabric: in answer to a question from Joyce Sewell-Rutter about renovation of the Victorian altar frontal, Isobel Simmonds replied that the Royal College of Needlework were being commissioned at a cost of £250 to review what might need to be done. Account would be taken of the alternative and often cheaper places to get the work done, and it was likely funding would come from fabric-oriented legacies and a wider appeal to the congregation. The Chairman underlined the fact that as inheritors of historic fabric there was a requirement on the PCC and wardens to maintain that fabric appropriately.

Regarding fabric, more contemporarily, he mentioned that the original workers of the tapestry in the Old School had taken that in hand for conservation, and would next look at the Tree of Life tapestry in church.

Date of the 2026 Annual Meetings

16. The next APCM will be held at **11.30 a.m. on Sunday 17th May 2026.**

The meeting closed with the Grace.