

St Dunstan's Church, Mayfield

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

Sunday, 16th April 2023

Committee Reports

Stewardship and Regular Giving April 2023

Thanks to the generous support of Parishioners past and present we enjoy a rich and unique programme of Anglican Worship here in Mayfield and Five Ashes.

This generosity ensures:

- 1. We enjoy leadership and guidance of our own dedicated ecclesiastical team comprising Father Michael Asquith and Deacon Di Blackden.
- 2. We support their ministry via our Parish Administrator Nicky Higgins (working three mornings per week).
- 3. Our worship is enhanced by the musical work of our Choir under the leadership of our Director of Music Jack Gonzalez Harding.
- 4. We maintain our Grade 1 listed church and Parish Rooms in London House to ensure they remain relevant and dynamic venues to support our worship and community life both now and in the future.

Because we value these things, we work hard to ensure we have the financial resources to pay for them. We all have our part to play in achieving these goals whether it be through the giving of our time or our money.

The COVID Pandemic and the demographic of our congregation saw income levels fall in 2022 whilst our overheads increased as Parish activities returned to normal.

To address the problem, In December 2023 the Church Wardens; supported by the PCC wrote to every person on the Parish Electoral Roll to:

- 1. Brief them as to the Churches financial position
- 2. Seek additional support either by way of:
 - a. Regular Giving (Parish Giving Scheme)
 - b. One off support
 - c. Legacy giving

I am pleased to report this letter engendered material additional one-off support and a 10% uplift in the monthly contributions made via the Parish Giving Scheme.

It is our plan to keep all members of the Electoral Roll fully appraised of our financial position in order we remain well placed to deliver our Mission in Mayfield.

Stephen Blurton
Stewardship Officer – March 2023

Rotherfield Deanery Synod 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

The Rotherfield Deanery Synod met three times during the year: Wednesday 20th July 2022, Wednesday 9th November 2022, and Tuesday 7th March 2023. In addition, an Autumn Deanery Meeting was held on Monday 10th October 2022.

Deanery News

During the year, the Deanery welcomed Pete Winstone (Curate) and Nick Ashton (Associate Vicar) to All Saints Crowborough; Mark Rapley to St Richards; Rev Canon Rob Dillingham (Priest in Charge) to High Hurstwood; Fr Nicholas Henshall to St Thomas, Groombridge.

Deanery Finance

Each year Diocesan Finance Officers (Lesley Lynn and Gabrielle Higgins) together with the Archdeacon (Edward Dowler) request a meeting with Clergy, Churchwardens, Parish Treasurers and Deanery Representatives to explain the Diocesan Budget for the coming year and the Parish Share allocations. A meeting was held, together with Dallington and Uckfield Deaneries, on 10th October at St Mary's, Newick. The Diocese continues to appeal to all Parishes to meet the full Parish Ministry Costs as per their schedule – this allows for any surplus to fund impoverished parishes within the Diocese. St Dunstan's has pledged a 4.4% increased Parish Share for this coming year but the amount pledged represents only 93.3% of what the Diocese would like us to pay.

Speakers

The July Meeting was held here in St Dunstan's with Rev Canon Gary Cregeen, Rural Officer for East Sussex, speaking on 'Renewing Hope in Rural Mission'. The November Meeting was held via zoom with an appeal to all Parishes to consult the recently produced Deanery Mission Action Plan and work together collaboratively in the sharing of resources. The March Meeting took place at St Mary's Hartfield with Archdeacon Edward Dowler speaking on his recent Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Deanery Reps

During the year Mary Pennington stepped down for personal reasons and we thank her for her contribution. This year sees the renewal of the Deanery Representatives Roll and it is very much hoped that our full entitlement of four representatives will be met.

Karen Mack, Denise Packham, Emma Ryder Richardson

Date: **14.03.2023**

Growth Committee 2022/23

The aim is to grow the church family at St Dunstan's both by increasing the number of people involved, the level of engagement and by widening the age range of active worshippers. The growth committee has met during the year continuing to focus on the key areas for growth.

This year the work has been led by two significant initiatives:

- 1. God' Church; Our Future Expanding our Horizons this report was produced to summarise the findings of the open parish meeting held in June 2022 and wider consultation with the growth committee and the PCC. It highlights the key action areas required for growth as: Worship, Children, Becoming Spiritually Richer, Outreach, Buildings, Communication and Personnel. This gives us clear aims to work towards with associated actions, time frames and ownership. Good progress is being made against many of these areas as you will have seen highlighted in the Trustees' report.
- 2. Great is Thy Faithfulness our parish had been chosen to take part in a six-month Diocesan training programme focusing on growth. Paired with the parish of Dallington, Bodle Street and Warbleton. This is providing a wealth of new ideas and is a great sounding board for initiatives to help growth. The course is split into 6 areas as follows: Collaborative Ministry, Church culture, Worship, Teaching, Mission, Growing the church younger. We are using this to test current actions and explore new ideas.

If you have ideas and thoughts on any areas that will **increase our growth** as a church family then please do let us know. If you would like to **offer to help** with any activities that support these initiatives, then that would be much appreciated. All the initiatives require thought, time and leg work from welcome teams to coffee making, from communication writing to bible reading. Please do let us know if you can help in anyway, whatever time, talent or ideas you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

You can view "God's church, our future: Expanding our Horizons" on the boards at the back of church including our plans for the future.

Please email me directly <u>karen@mackcapital.co.uk</u> or via the PCC, Churchwardens or our vicar Michael Asquith.

Karen Mack

March 2023

karen@mackcapital.co.uk

St Dunstan's Holy Dusters April 2022/23

We are 12 in number (always looking for more and men too!) who meet about every six weeks to give the church as deep a clean as we can, given we can't work higher than about 10 ft. (with an extended brush). We are rarely our full team complement but seem to get a huge amount done in never more than 2 ½ hours (which usually includes time for a cup of coffee and a quick chat) and really enjoy our Cleaning Thursdays.

Our equipment is domestic rather than commercial but we mostly manage with that. One of our number pays particular attention to the woodwork, particularly in the Chancel and its appearance has improved enormously in the last year. Similarly the cover to the Font and a small gateleg oak table that is frequently used at the back of the church have been refurbished and look all the better for greater attention.

New and beautiful storage cupboards in the Lady Chapel and the removal of the piano have made it much easier to keep it tidy and makes for much more spiritual surroundings in the Chapel which is used for small gatherings, contemplation and private prayer.

We have a new prayer board by the votive stand and the remembrance cards are changed monthly. Many people use this way of praying for and remembering people in times of trouble and celebration and we recognise the importance of making this available.

As our current supplies run out, we are looking to replace them with eco aware products and equipment.

Our work is much appreciated and contributes to the welcoming atmosphere for all who visit. Do get in touch if you would like to join the team.

Emma Ryder Richardson

March 2023

Music 2022/2023

After nearly two years of covid disruption, Easter was particularly celebratory this year as there were no longer any restrictions to prevent us from providing the quality of music to accompany the services for which St. Dunstan's is well known. A return to singing Evensong every month was also very welcome, offering a rare opportunity to socialise for a short time over tea in London House.

2022 being a Mayfield Festival year, the choir led the traditional Festival Eucharist. Many choir members also sang in the closing concert, which featured the world premiere of the newly-composed Mass of St. Dunstan, to which Andrew Benians had contributed a setting of the canticles.

The choir also marked the Platinum Jubilee weekend in June with a special communion service including the William Byrd anthem, O Lord make Elizabeth our Queen to rejoice in Thy strength.

In July we bade an emotional farewell to Andrew Benians after 18 years of benefitting from his inspirational and professional musicianship. During this time he developed both adult and junior choirs and, together with his wife Dee, and family Annenora and Daniel, made a fine contribution to the musical life of Mayfield and beyond.

Traditionally August has been a month of recess for the summer break, but this year the choir felt it was important for continuity to keep the singing going until a new Director of Music was appointed. Jenny Whittall organised a "skeleton force" and Chris Harris supported with organ accompaniment. Jenny and Hazel Davie also took the opportunity of a quiet month to catalogue the enormous quantity of choral music stored in the Parvis Tower, so that the new Director of Music would have a clear picture of St. Dunstan's Music Library.

We were very pleased indeed to be able to appoint our new Director of Music, Jack Gonzalez Harding who took up the position on 18^{th} September. We wish him very well in his time at St. Dunstan's and look forward to working with him.

Kate Dawson, Julia Padbury

Music 2022/2023 (Continued)

Report from the Director of Music:

Well known for its long tradition of music making, I was pleased to be appointed as Director of Music in August 2022. Since starting in September, I've enjoyed getting to know members of both choir and congregation.

My thought from day one has been that St. Dunstan's is extraordinarily lucky to have talented singers, dedicated to the cause of fine liturgical music. As our first term together progressed, the choir and I began to understand each other's desires more and more. The results of which, for me, culminated in a memorable Advent Procession, accompanied by Christopher Harris at the organ.

By the New Year, I was delighted to welcome new juniors to the choir, who joined simply because they heard what fun their friends were having at choir rehearsals – for the first time in some time, we now have a junior choir rehearsal, before the full Wednesday evening rehearsal.

Whilst being 'high priests' is fun, I believe that we must also evangelise. We have to go out of the building and share, if we want more to come in. The choir and I thus provided the music for liturgies at Southwark Cathedral on 12^{th} February. Whilst it was a lovely social occasion for the choir, more importantly, several hundreds of strangers from all over the world gained that day an insight into St. Dunstan's Church Choir's generous spirit, through the spectacular musical offerings. One never knows how sharing in this way will affect someone we will likely never meet, thus it is for those reasons that I'm particularly glad that the church choir will sing at Chichester Cathedral and Westminster Abbey in the coming months. At this juncture, I wish to thank the many members of the St. Dunstan's community who came up to Choral Evensong at Southwark, after attending St. Dunstan's earlier on in the day.

As I look forward to my first Easter at St. Dunstan's, I hope that we will provide Mayfield with sensitive musical offerings, which help bring people closer to the events of Holy Week and Easter.

Beyond Easter, I would like to have a movement to get more congregation to Choral Evensong. There are very few churches in East Sussex who can offer the quality of Choral Evensong that St. Dunstan's does, thus I feel that we should really get people from all over into our church and offer them something special, through these services.

Finally, with much gratitude I wish to thank Christopher Harris, our junior choir parents, all of our committed choir members who give so much, our music librarian Jenny Whittall and my personal assistant, Marion Pilbeam, for enabling all that is happening musically within liturgies at St. Dunstan's. Outside of St. Dunstan's, I thank Andrew Benians for stepping in at the last moment to play for the choir's trip to Southwark Cathedral. I hope that St. Dunstan's will continue to be grateful and nurture the relationship with my predecessor, who left me with an attractive job.

Jack Gonzalez-Harding

Flower Guild

One member of the Flower Guild left owing to family commitments. However, we have gained another two members and they are Madelyn Meredith and Janet Neilson. We hope they will be very happy working with us. To date therefore we have 14 official members.

Ali Robson is Treasurer – having taken over from Judy Emrich who moved away – and has done a splendid job keeping us and the money in order. Ann as Deputy Chairman has been a tremendous help this year.

Alongside the Sanctuary Vase arrangements, church weddings and funerals, the highlights of our year have been; Mothering Sunday, Easter, HM the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Christmas.

Linda and Renee were in charge for the **Platinum Jubilee** and everyone helped decorate the Church with red, blue and white floral arrangements, golden crowns and Union Jack flags. A replica Coronation Crown filled with a cushion of flowers was on the font, an orb with St. Dunstan and the sceptre under Our Lady. We look forward to an equally regal event on May 6^{th} .

Harvest Festival: Andrew Firrell again kindly provided us with maize; Sheila Rait and Mary Pennington let us have some of their vines and Ali and her friend Margot created a wonderful arch full of autumnal colour.

Remembrance: Under Ann's direction an innovative use of artificial poppies in amongst the wrought iron of the arch captured the atmosphere of remembrance. We are able to re-use these of course each year.

Christmas: The gold and silver theme had a Swedish twist with thanks to Renee for creating the stylised birch tree window displays and to everyone for providing the greenery. Despite the village's water shortage, we still managed to have our coffee and brandy mince pies!

We have had more **funerals** than **weddings** this year and thanks to Ann for organising all the funeral flowers.

Our Flower Guild stalls at the Church's annual **Summer Fair** and **Christmas Market** were very successful - despite the wind at the summer event! The Flower Guild made over £100 at the Christmas market.

On the PR front, Father Michael introduced a wedding booklet for prospective brides which included Flower Guild details of what we can provide and we hope this provides us with more commissions in 2023.

Nina Sanderson

Sidesmen

Sidesmen for Election by PCC:

Stephen Blurton Miles Smith Sue Smith Monika Aitken Stephen Lawrence Julia Lawrence Liz Kittermaster **David Whittall** Tim Reid Robin Holliday Maggie Holliday Emma Ryder Richardson **Chris Starling** Jeremy Smither Gilly Smither Philip James Ian Barbour Caroline Barbour

Sidesmen contribute much to the welcome and smooth running of services. We are very fortunate to have 18 people willing to take on this job which gives us a strong team of 3 people each week whilst only having to do their duty once every six weeks. Special non-Sunday services and Choral Evensong services are additionally filled by volunteers from the rota. I am grateful for the really good job our sidesmen do – welcoming, friendly and effective with all the books and bits of paper. Occasionally we forget to give Margaret Neve the nudge that it's time for the children to return but otherwise it's pretty flawless.

It is almost a completely new team since Covid and recently we have said farewell to Jan Meryon and Lorraine Chapman as they have stood down and also, temporarily we hope, Sheila Rait whilst recovering from her hip operation. We thank each of them for sterling service over many years. We also say hello to Ian and Caroline Barbour and thank Monika Aitken for joining the main rota adding to her Choral Evensong duty.

A meeting is planned for Sidesmen to meet up to discuss any issues that have arisen and also to remind the group of action required in case of fire and any other health and safety issues.

Philip James

Report of the Safeguarding Officer March 2023

Safeguarding remains at the heart of all we do as a parish. We aim to protect people from harm in all our activities, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults. Above all, Safeguarding should be embedded in our culture.

We have had no incidents or reports which have had to be investigated or referred on within the last year.

Compliance

We are in compliance with all relevant guidance outlined by the Diocese. We have now adopted the Safeguarding policy for the Diocese as opposed to the Church of England.

Safer Recruitment

We continue to use the independent safeguarding charity **thirtyone:eight** (formally known as CCPAS) for Disclosure Barring Service checks (DBS). Any person requiring a DBS check or update should contact the Safeguarding Officer.

All DBS checks can now be made portable through their update service, meaning you no longer require different DBS checks for different institutions. Applicants must register their new DBS with the update service and then they do not need to be renewed. DBS' not registered with the update service will need to be renewed every three years.

Training

We ensure that all leaders and helpers are trained to the appropriate level. All training courses are online only.

Basic Awareness (formerly C0)

This is required training for anyone involved in working or volunteering with children and/or vulnerable adults in a church context. and is recommended for anyone else who wants a basic level of safeguarding awareness. It is an essential pre-requisite for the other core training modules.

Foundation (formerly C1)

This is required for anyone who has safeguarding responsibilities or has contact in their church role with children and/or vulnerable adults. It is a pre-requisite for Leadership training.

Leadership (formerly C2)

This is required for anyone who has safeguarding leadership responsibilities or responsibility for leading activities with children and/or vulnerable adults. This course consists of some pre-course work, two online training sessions and reflective work to complete the course. A thorough and thought provoking course.

Everyone is required to refresh their training every three years in order to keep up to date with all the latest safeguarding practices. People are reminded and advised on how to book onto their relative training courses

in good time and should complete their courses as soon as able to do so.

Report of the Safeguarding Officer (Continued)

Activities and Practices - Simple Quality Protects (SQP)

We currently hold Level One of the SQP Assessment.

Simple Quality Protects is the Safeguarding programme launched across the Diocese. It is designed to improve Safeguarding at Parish level and make the achieving of high standards as straight forward as possible. We have assurance from this audit that we are following good practice and we continue to update and introduce new practices and procedures where necessary.

If you have any concerns concerning Safeguarding, please contact the Safeguarding Office directly.

Or alternatively contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@chichester.anglican.org

Or directly to our Diocesan Adviser, Colin Perkins on 01273 425030 / 07500 771210

Further policies and advice are available to download from: https://safeguarding.chichester.anglican.org/policies/

Karen Dines Safeguarding Officer March 2023

07799 417972 / safeguardingofficer.stdunstans@gmail.com

Fabric Committee Information covers the period up to mid-March 2023

The members of the Fabric Committee are:

- Stephen Blurton (Churchwarden & Chairman)
- Tony Woodliffe (Secretary)
- Jenny Begeman
- Sem Kyegombe
- Sue Smith
- Denise Packham (holding the London House brief)

Our Architect is John Bailey of Thomas Ford and Partners.

London House

We consider the building to be in a good state of repair.

For much of 2022 the facility was underutilised. With effect from February 2023 MAYFACS will be renting the ground floor rooms for their offices whilst the new Village Hall is developed. The arrangement is working well and it is good to see the facility busy once more.

No structural works have been undertaken during the year.

St Dunstan's Church

The last Quinquennial report was completed in June 2020. This reported the building to be in good order. We are pleased to report this remains the case.

During the year remedial works were undertaken on the South Aisle roof to address shoddy workmanship when the roof was originally replaced. This work involved:

- 1. The Replacement of defective flashing on the South Aisle roof using the correct grade of lead.
- 2. The re-setting of the lead flashing to the correct depth within the masonry.
- 3. Repairs to the stone windowsills on the raised south aisle windows where movement was identified.
- 4. Repointing of masonry

Parkers were engaged to undertake the work which concluded in February 2022.

Funding for the work £6859 was covered by way of generous support from the Friends of St Dunstan's.

Fabric Committee (Continued)

We were unable to recover any compensation from Clague Architects who were responsible monitoring the original South Aisle roof replacement project.

Additionally, the West End doors were stripped and re-painted "Waxed Khaki" in March 2022 at a cost of £2466. The cost was also covered by way of support from the Friends of St Dunstan's.

In 2021 the lighting system suffered surge damage following a possible lightning strike. This damage was repaired with the £4000 cost covered by the insurers.

To protect the building and its sophisticated electrical installations in the future; surge arresting devices were fitted to the mains power input during the year.

Heavy rain in Autumn 2022 saw further water ingress around the Glubb window at the Western end of the South Aisle.

A leak was also detected in the North Aisle roof. A review by our Architect and Parkers identified the need for pointing repairs to the stonework at the West End of the church. A programme of works has been identified for consideration by the Fabric Committee and PCC during 2023

A new Sound system was commissioned installed at the Church in 2022 with the final work and testing concluding in Spring 2023. The cost of this project was funded with support from the Nicholson Trust.

The sound system is housed in a new handmade, oak cupboard fronted with decorative panels from the old choir stalls. The cupboard is installed in the Lady Chapel and is also used for the storage of Choir music.

Stephen Blurton March 2023

Social Committee 2022/2023

It has been a good year for social events, progressively getting back to normal after covid restrictions. We battled with the elements at the summer fair, the wind finally got the better of some of the stall holders, who retreated inside the church. The entire bottle tombola blew over twice, but we still attracted a good crowd, and had a pleasant day.

The Harvest Lunch was a great success. We used Sue Wright for the catering, she produced a delicious main course at a cost well within our budget. There was a really good atmosphere in church, and it was a lovely celebration of Harvest Festival.

We provided refreshments when the church tower was open at the Village Christmas shopping evening. As in past years, it was very busy and good to welcome many non church goers into St. Dunstan's.

The Christmas Market was also a great success, we hardly had room in the church for all our stall holders, and again there was a pleasing turn out, and many non church goers supported us.

Last Lent the social committee provided three of the five Lenten lunches, but this year we have asked each charity to be responsible for their own lunch. So far all has gone well.

Now that all the Covid restrictions are behind us, we hope to have more social events in the coming year.

We are extremely grateful to Nicky, whilst she is not part of the social committee, she is always there with us and we couldn't function without her help.

Maggie Holliday and Renee Bryant

Sunday Club 2023

We have a group of 8 regular members. We are in London House every Sunday for children (we ask a parent to stay for ages 3 and under) where they can learn about the Christian faith, have Bible readings explained etc.

Some weeks we get up to 7 attending and other weeks a faithful few. This is mainly due to things like sport and homework on a Sunday morning but the children are always welcome whenever they are able to attend. It is fun both preparing the activities and getting the message over on the Sunday morning.

Activities for each week are also posted on the church website. A variety of books and websites are used including Roots, Sermons4kids and various books to help make the lessons interesting, informative, fun and understood. Godly Play figures, crafts, puzzles and plenty of discussion are also used – in fact anything that helps to get the message across. The readings are always the same as in church. We join the rest of the congregation at the Peace to join in the rest of the service and to receive a Blessing or Holy Communion.

Each Sunday Fr Michael invites the children to tell the congregation what we have been doing in Sunday Club. Some children are not yet confident enough to help George out but hopefully the confidence will grow. Lizzie and Arwen have progressed in their journey of faith from Sunday Club and joined the choir. When there is no choir the youngsters return to us which we all enjoy. We have a small group again who will receive their First Communion later this year.

Thank you to Alison, Karen and Geoff for your help and support and also to the sides people who let us know when it is time for us to go into church.

Margaret Neve

Mayfield St Dunstan's Bell Ringers Report

This year the bellringers were able to ring for all but one Sunday service, evensong & most additional events. Unfortunately, sickness overtook our band on a few occasions but there was a lot of activity involving the bells and bell tower this year. We are fortunate to have a larger band now, frequently having more ringers than bells on practice night. We are still a novice band, but having Father Michael & Jo Asquith join us has helped our progress as they are experienced ringers.

The tower keys have had to be removed from the key box at the tower entrance, after the tower was found unlocked with the bells up & no signage in place the day after we had rung for the opening night of the Mayfield festival. A set of keys has been given to the steeple keeper Alfie Polland.

During 2022, we rang for one memorial service, two funerals, six weddings, the Queen's 70th Jubilee on the 3rd June and the church fete on 2nd July. During this event we had the temporary exhibition space in the clock chamber full of photo albums, memorabilia, bell paraphernalia and the chimes made for us to practice on at home during lockdown. We also had two visiting bands this year, and the occasional ringer who was in the area.

On 4th September Chris Bateman became a Sunday ringer.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II was announced at 18.30 on the 8th September and operation London Bridge was initiated. On Friday the 9th at 12.00 we rang fully muffled with the 8 half muffled for 1 hour, tolling the bell at the end 96 times, then lowered the bells, removed the muffles to ring on Saturday 10th at 11.00 for the proclamation of King Charles III. The muffles were put on again for further ringing during the time of mourning. There was no ringing practice during that week. On Sunday the 18th we rang fully muffled for both the morning service and an evening service for Queen Elizabeth II. On Monday 19th we rang prior to her funeral.

Bells are only rung fully muffled on the death of the Monarch (so this hadn't been done since 1952):



Mayfield St Dunstan's Bell Ringers Report (Continued)

Unfortunately, ringing for the Royal British legion had to be cancelled as there were not enough experienced ringers to form a safe band.

On Saturday, 1st October we had visitors from Mayfield School. Year 9 &10 students came in two groups and we gave them a short history on bells and bellringing and then they enjoyed making the bells chime themselves.

On Tuesday, 8th November Sophie Hollamby and Craig Paling joined us as they were very interested in learning to ring. Richard Barraclough, our ringing master, had each of them handling a rope that evening and I'm pleased to report that they have both carried on learning.

On Friday, 25th November we opened the Tower from 6-8pm to coincide with the High street late night shopping evening & switching on of the Christmas lights. We had a steady flow of visitors, including many Ukrainian children who particularly enjoyed the spiral staircase.

The bells have been checked many times this year while putting muffles on or taking them off and they remain in a safe condition, as do the supporting metal & wood structures.

The Bellringers Account Balance is £1,747.60

Vanessa Kolberg

St. Dunstan's, Mayfield Tower Captain.