

# Trustees Annual Report and Financial Report

Of

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Lavant

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## St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

Pook Lane, East Lavant, PO18 0AH

Registered Charity no. 1131684

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For the year ended 31st December 2024

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	Parish reports
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	Statement of assets and liabilities
	Notes to the accounts
	Report of the Independent Examiner

Website: [www.lavantchurches.net](http://www.lavantchurches.net)

Priest in Charge: The Revd. Laura Darrall  
The Rectory, Pook Lane, East Lavant, PO18 0AH

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## For the year ended 31st December 2024

### Our aims and purposes as a charity

The primary objective of Lavant PCC is our Mission Statement: To lead the people of Lavant and surrounding area into the knowledge and love of God, and bring them into the life and worship of Christ's Church. The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the priest in charge, the Revd. Laura Darrall, in:

- The promotion of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England
- Promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church, pastoral, social, evangelistic and, ecumenical
- To know Jesus better and make Him better known
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the youngest to the eldest, irrespective of level of need or, ability to pay
- Providing financial support to those in need and, to other organisations with similar objectives

### What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our priest in charge and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. For this year we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aims:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community
- Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish
- Considering how services can involve the many groups that live within the parish
- Putting faith into practice, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament
- Offering worship and prayer, learning about the Gospel, in small group situations
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in, Jesus
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish and the wider locality by supporting the food bank and the relief of the homeless
- Giving grants to missionary organisations
- Reaching out to non-churchgoers through outreach activities at St Nicholas Church to create a community hub at the heart of the most populated part of the village. These activities include a monthly Brunch Café, Lunch House, Tea and Chat, a thriving Messy Church, and a Toddler Group
- Maintaining the fabric of the church building as historic centres and focuses of life in the village, treasuring our past heritage whilst looking at new ways to engage people to use our buildings
- Ensuring the financial sustainability of the two churches

## **What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries' lives**

### **Attendance at worship**

The Lavant Churches welcome visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary. Visitors attend by personal choice and, it is our great pleasure to welcome anyone from all walks of life to take part in the life of the church. We contend that voluntary attendance to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, is a major demonstration of the public benefit of our activities. The average worshipping community (monthly) was 151, this includes children and young people (33). These figures include messy Church, which hadn't been included in the 2023 figures for the worshipping community. We look to encourage the deepening of faith for all ages, and alongside our services there is a programme for young people from crèche through to teenagers to join in with. Our youth work is especially varied and open to Year 6+ and meeting on Monday evenings termtime. Christmas and Easter are very special times of celebration where many sections of the community come together to join in the services. Children and adults alike join in and memories are made.

New members, teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers:

During the year there have been 5 baptisms, 7 weddings, (no services of blessing after a civil marriage), 14 church funerals, 4 funerals at the Crematorium, and 6 Interment of ashes/burials only.

A greater number of the church family have been involved in leading various aspects of worship, lending great encouragement to those involved, as well as the whole congregation. We continue to seek to extend the opportunities for the exercise of ministry and gifts within the life of our community.

### **Evangelism and outreach**

Lavant churchgoers are the lifeblood of many regular village events as well as new initiatives. The local Church of England Primary school is also very much at the heart of the church community and is supported in its fundraising activities by members of the church. Lavant Churches offer a number of well attended outreach activities including a monthly Lunch House attended regularly by 25 - 30 villagers and church members; a weekly Tea and Chat, mainly for elderly villagers although all are welcome, and a thriving Toddler Group which meets weekly in term time and welcomes on average 12 pre-school children with their parent or carer. The monthly Saturday Brunch continues to prove very popular and welcomes 25 – 40 villagers and churchgoers alike including parents or grandparents with children who come to enjoy a relaxed brunch while their children are occupied at the craft tables. See Parish reports.

Lavant News is the monthly Parish Magazine prepared by a small editorial team which has the objective of uniting the interests of the Church and the village, promoting community spirit. Publicity in the magazine encourages villagers who may not be churchgoers to join in events organised by the church and local organizations. 11 issues were distributed in 2024 (one magazine for December/January). The publication is now delivered free by a dedicated team of volunteers, to everyone in the parish and to those of our worshipping community outside the parish. Additional copies are available in both churches. Part of our mission is to reach out to everyone and this is one step towards that goal.

Provision of the church building for people to enjoy. We celebrated 5 baptisms, 7 weddings and 14 funerals in our church during the year. Our church continues to be appreciated by our parishioners and many others, as a space where life events are celebrated with joy and thanksgiving. Our vision and plans are to continue to find ways in which the St Nicholas church building can be used for outreach and events in addition to services. Its position at the heart of the most populated part of the village together with its lack of fixed pews and well-equipped kitchen make it an ideal venue for community events. It is important to us that the church is available for private prayer and visits not just to the church family but to the wider visiting community. To this end St Nicholas and St Mary's are open during daylight hours and the many entries in the Visitors' Book (at St Mary's) testify to this. Many remark not only how refreshing it is to find an open church but, also the sense of peacefulness and spirituality the church pervades. Other remarks include the sense of history within; that people of much earlier generations found life and presence there and, comments on the appreciation of the architectural beauty of the building and biblical archaeology.

### **Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish**

The Pastoral Care Team, chaired by Mrs Cynthia Blades, is responsible for visits, befriending and home communions. Regularly they give of their time and energy to caring, listening and helping people in the village.

### **Provision of tangible support to the poor and needy**

Especially encouraging was this year's Harvest festival where the church was joined by Lavant Primary School and the Little Harriers Lavant Montessori in donating food for the Foodbank in Chichester. The school and church members responded to provide many tins of soup, toiletries and other essentials.

### **Other charitable giving**

We supported various charities throughout the year. Our local Foodbank, Mary's Meals, the Children's Society, the 4 Streets Project Chichester and the British Legion all benefitted from our donations. Our thanks go to our generous congregation and friends for raising so much for very worthwhile charities.

### **Archivist**

Mrs Barbara Treverton was appointed again to look after our archives. She looks after all our files and documents, is very efficient and knowledgeable especially when we require information. This year she will be stepping down from her post and our huge thanks go to her for her work in looking after our valuable records.

### **Youth worker**

The PCC were fortunate to be able to continue to appoint a Children and Family worker, Mrs Frances Talbot, who is successfully working with the young people and families of the parish.

### **Financial review**

As in previous years members of the congregation have helped to support church running costs and the Parish Share through the Parish Giving Scheme, standing orders and collections throughout the year. Donations have been received from anonymous benefactors including those from weddings and funerals. However, in 2024 we were not able to meet our Parish Share and paid less than 50% with £31,566.00 and the hiring of rooms were quieter than the previous year. We secured the last £5,000 of the Diocesan Grant for our children's work (restricted funds), which will cover the next 18 months/2 years but we need to look to make this post sustainable once the grant is used. Electricity bill issues have been resolved and the amount outstanding paid off in instalments over 6 months is illustrated in the large increase in utility bills from £4077 in 2023 to £17818 in 2024. We will need to begin a journey to look at ensuring our churches can become financially sustainable moving forward.

### **St Nicholas Chancel Trust**

Is held entirely by the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance. Claims may be made for assistance with insurance premiums for St Nicholas.

### **Why we hold some money in reserve**

It is PCC policy to maintain a balance on the general unrestricted funds (excluding property) which equates to approximately two months' worth of unrestricted payments as contingency against unforeseen situations.

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## For the year ended 31st December 2024

### Annual Report

#### Priest in Charge Report

After a three-year tenure Rev Martha left the parish for another appointment in Oxford, she goes with my prayers and best wishes for both her and her family in this new chapter. During the short interregnum the parish had great support from Rev Emma Graeme, Rev Dr Michael Semple, Rev Reji Singh, Rev John Dane and other local priests, our many thanks go to them and all who helped serve during that time. I was delighted to be appointed after interview and joined the parish on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. It was an incredible welcome with a packed church for the licensing, and a home ready to move into, made possible by the hard work and faithfulness of our church wardens and parishioners. Thank you to all who made this happen! In the Christmas season, I was so encouraged to be able to visit all the activities and groups we run in Lavant and to begin to get to know our village. I was able to attend and support Frances in the school services as well as our own carol service, Midnight Mass and a full church on Christmas Day. Jo and I hosted our first 'At Home' in the Rectory with mulled wine, mince pies and over 60 people from the parish coming through the door. God is very much on the move in Lavant, and the Holy Spirit feels palpable in all our worship. I very much look forward to reporting more on 2025 at next year's APCM. But for now, it has been a very positive beginning and both Jo and myself are extremely grateful for the welcome, support and prayers of the parish as we continue to serve God and his people in this beautiful place.

Rev Laura Darrall

#### Churchwarden's Report

##### St Mary's

During the early months of the year storm force winds dislodged a number of tiles on the vestry roof. The resultant ingress of rainwater caused a small section of the lath and plaster ceiling to collapse. Contractors were engaged to effect repair of the roof, which is now weatherproof, with patch repair of the ceiling to be addressed in 2025. We are pleased to advise that we secured a grant of 60% towards the net cost of the works and full recovery of the VAT via the Listed Places of Worship scheme.

In September the Lavant History Group started a survey of the churchyard. The group's aim is to record the names and location of the graves. The findings will be made available by way of a digital survey both for the benefit of the church but also to help understand Lavant's history through the lives of those buried at St Mary's.

A new stela has been erected in the garden of remembrance for the names of those whose ashes are interred in this space.

We received a generous donation to be used for the improvement of the sound system and to this end a new lapel microphone and transmitter was purchased.

The handrail project is progressing with local authority planning permission having been obtained and the owners of the adjacent land have not raised any objections. We hope to undertake the works in summer 2025.

Unfortunately, in late 2024, during a period of high winds, the weathervane on top of the spire that surmounts the tower collapsed onto the roof damaging a number of tiles and puncturing the roofing felt. An inspection has revealed severe rot to several of the roof timbers and in particular the king post upon which the weathervane was fixed. We have effected a temporary repair of the roof pending an inspection by engineers in early 2025.

## St Nicholas

The defects liability period for the 2023 refurbishment works ended in July. The appointed architect completed an inspection and a final certificate for release of the retention monies was issued.

During the year it was reported that the hearing loop system was not working, specialist engineers advised that the amplifier could not be fixed therefore a replacement has been installed.

A faculty for the construction of cupboards across the west elevation has been granted. The joinery shop at Lavant House has provided a competitive quote and the works are programmed to start in January 2025. The project is to be funded by a generous legacy left to St Nicholas by the estate of Edward Farrow.

## Rectory

At the start of the interregnum the water services were isolated and council tax was suspended whilst the property remained unoccupied. The churchwardens are most grateful for the work done by Grave Concern in mowing the lawns and later in the year, to all who helped redecorate the property for the eagerly awaited arrival of our new priest-in-charge.

## Financial Report

It is my privilege to present the financial results for 2024 and update you to our current situation.

A copy of our audited results for 2024 can be found at the back of either St Mary's or St Nicholas church's plus on our web site. This is the first year after a series when the results have not been inflated with the grants we received for restoring St Nicholas. I shall be happy to answer any questions you have but I would draw your attention to the closing balances for our principal activities. For children's work £11,000, Ministry and Services £45,000, Building fund £0 and a small fund to cover projects like the cupboards in St Nicholas or handrail for St Marys.

Looking ahead to our current year our funds are in varying states of health for the work we wish to do. The strongest fund is our children's work which has been adequately funded through grants and there are enough funds for the next 18-24 months. The group of volunteers under Francis Talbot raise money for May Camp at appropriate times of the year.

Our Mission and Service fund supports our Vicar and running the church services. The budget for this work if met in full would be £112,000. However, we currently raise about £78,000 pa and in 2025 we will be pledging a reduced amount of £50,000 (60%) to the diocese. This is a reduction of £32,000 against our Parish share. The subject of parish share, our pledge, Parish giving scheme and weekly giving is a subject which I shall come back to as an individual topic on another occasion.

However, our desire is to achieve a balance mission fund within the next 3 years. It is appropriate at this stage to mention the part our church wardens played in securing a full-time vicar for our parish after Rev Martha. The parish is currently under suspension and is being reviewed by the bishop. The risk we take not paying a full parish share is obvious. Our church wardens presented our parish as a worthy candidate for a priest and developed a strong relationship with Bishop Ruth which resulted in the appointment of Laura. To my mind our village without a full-time vicar would be dramatically different and it is a sad statistic that any parish which shares a vicar rarely regains a full-time post.

I have mentioned that the building fund is £0. We have a major problem with the roof and weathervane on St Mary's. We shall have to repair the damage and the faculty granted by the church stipulates that the weathervane must be repaired as well as the roof. Today we do not have a budget for this work but it could easily be in the region

of £25k. We have enjoyed the ability to reclaim VAT on restoration work but this tax refund is being reviewed by HMRC and may change in the future.

We shall seek grants for this work which we hope will cover 50% of costs but this still leaves a significant challenge for our community. I think it is fair to say that our congregation rises to the challenge of fund raising for projects and we have started this process. We shall achieve our goal adopting the approach with many small fund raising events. It reminds me of the song in Les Misérables Master of the House. A little bit here and a little bit there and it is surprising how it all adds up.

Our fundraising events for 2025 will be advertised during the year and I draw your attention to the Lavant duck race and the monthly produce stall. Mike Kingsford and his team raised over £100 on his launch event so it is realistic that over a year the stall could raise in excess £500. Link this to the duck race and brunch you are well on the way to £2k. You can have a bit of fun when raising money.

I shall be introducing the congregation to a scheme call "Easyfundraising" which is an online charity donation scheme which we set up for the benefit of Lavant Churches. It currently stands at £78, but with only 3 generous contributors. We are mindful that our local school has set this initiative up for itself and we do not wish to compete with them. However, I believe that there are members of our congregation who have no involvement with the school so there would be no conflict of interest. This scheme operates with many online purchases and is a freeby! Why should we not benefit!

Another project on our wish list is a handrail up the side of approach road leading to the Lytch gate at St Marys. This is a smaller project but contributing may appeal more to some of you. Please feel free to contribute. I would estimate the budget for this work is £3k. If there is a surplus from any of our fund raising the money will be held in the building fund to meet tomorrow's challenges.

In summary our goals and challenges are achievable providing we are active, diligent and respectful of our community. In fact, being Christian.

James Pickford - Hon Treasurer LPCC

## **Electoral Roll**

The electoral roll of a parish must be revised annually, except in a new year in which a new role is prepared (this is happening in 2025). Information pertaining to the Electoral roll may be found at the back of both churches, and will be presented by John Wiles our electoral roll officer at the APCM.

## **Pastoral Care Team**

Although this continues to be advertised within our Lavant News magazine and on the E-news there is little call on the service. During the interregnum telephone calls for the service have been redirected through the churchwardens. In the past six months it was possible to assist one person who required help.

Gina Bill

## **Church Cleaning Report**

Church cleaning at St Mary's takes place on the third Monday of the month. The small team of dedicated church members hoover and polish both the church and the Lavant room. This ensures the church remains clean and tidy for services and occasional offices. As yet St Nicholas does not have a rota of specific cleaning days. Generally spring cleaning takes place once a year in both churches.

Gina Bill

## **Brass Cleaning Report**

During the year six friends, under a rota lead by Sue Jackson, went monthly to the Rector's vestry. There, after removal of wax, moveable candlesticks and those by the altar, were buffed or polished. The processional cross was polished less regularly together with any other small pieces of brass.

Sue Jackson

## **Lunch House**

Lunch House has had another busy year with the high spot being all the lovely All Bells Christmas Lunch which again we were able to supply free to all our patrons; with thanks and the generosity of the Village Fete. It was also lovely to welcome Revd. Laura to this event, one of her first since joining our community. Revd. Laura quickly joined in and was a huge help delivering meals and raffle prizes, and was also a huge hit with the volunteers and those enjoying the meal and continues to support us whenever she is free.

Just as a reminder, Lunch House is open to everyone, no invitation needed, and all ages welcome. For a very modest sum you can choose from soup, a varied mains menu including a vegetarian option and delicious puddings. Bring your friends! You don't have to live in Lavant, or be a regular church attender. We meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 12.00 – 1.30pm in St Nicholas Church. We look forward to seeing you.

Cynthia Blades

## **Tea and Chat**

Tea and chat has had another year of yummy savouries, scones and cakes; copious cups of tea and lot and lots of chat. We meet in St Nicholas's on the third and fourth Wednesday of the month and the fifth Wednesday too when there is one! Tea and chat starts at 2.00pm for an hour and a half – or longer depending on the chat. Entry is free but you can make a small donation if you are able to. We tend to be ladies who attend but would love to see gentlemen too, so why not ask any chaps to join us. At present we usually have between 12-14 guests, but we can always put up a bigger table!

Cynthia Blades

## **Grave Concern**

The report is very similar to previous years and like last year at no time did we have a full turnout. The group consists of some 8 active members and although this sounds a lot, we all have other essential commitments as well. The group is a dedicated and effective team with everyone involved working very well together. As now and reported last year we could do with more volunteers to spread the workload a little, so before the start of the mowing season I have prepared a short appeal notice for insertion into the Lavant News and the Pew Sheet but at the time of writing, no new recruits have come forward.

The new battery-operated mower bought last year, financed partly by the PCC and a donation from Lavant fete committee has proved to be a great asset as it is light and used to mow the more difficult areas of the churchyard. More battery-operated equipment would be beneficial as and when funds allow for them to be purchased. All the garden machinery will have to be serviced ready for the season starting in April 2025.

Richard Boyce



## **Summersdale Study Group**

The group continued to meet in 2024, on the first and third Thursdays of each month. We have watched and discussed the first season of The Chosen, the Netflix dramatisation of the life and ministry of Christ, and have now begun Season 2. It has been enjoyable to watch, as well as being challenging, informative and inspiring.

We have had good times meeting together and getting to know each other better. Anyone wishing to join us would be very welcome.

Sue Tostevin

## **Deanery Synod**

The Deanery Synod consists of members of the clergy together with laity team members from parishes within the Deanery. There was a meeting of the Deanery Synod on the 22nd of February 2024, an away day on the 29th of June 2024 and a finance meeting on 8th October 2024.

The meeting in February included a presentation of family support work by Mr Martin Auton-Lloyd. Beginning in the 1890's this society mainly worked with unmarried women but developed in the 1940's and 50's to become part of the social work throughout all Dioceses, but now it's only operative in Chichester, Oxford and Southwick. The Diocese has 18 workers and Mr Auton-Lloyd outlined the type and processes of the work carried out and how the teams are funded at present. This excludes the Chichester and Westbourne Deaneries due to historical reasons. The report tabled from the Diocesan Synod included the progression of the Living in Love and Faith motion and the involvement of the Diocese in the national church net zero programme. The Central Church is providing funding for 3 posts to progress this work within the Diocese.

The Deanery Synod away day on the 29th of June was focused on enabling and equipping parish ministry. There were presentations on two themes; firstly, integrating children and families into our churches, and secondly integrating the care of the environment into church life.

The autumn finance meeting addressed the monetary concerns of the Deanery; 2024 is still forecast as a deficit budget as is the proposed budget for 2025. Currently this is being funded from reserves, but it is not sustainable. Costs at Church House have been reduced, and clergy deployment is under review, as parish share income reduces.

Sue Tostevin

## **Organist and Choirmaster Report – 2024-2025**

There has been a lot of change this year, much of it very exciting. Music in the parish continues to thrive, and the congregation, Choir, and Revd. Laura support the music making during services splendidly.

### **Organs:**

As the organ at St Nicholas is no longer functional, the digital keyboard available has been used and accordingly with hymn selections. I would like to look at potential options at some point in the next year regarding the possibilities available to us for proper replacement and will discuss this with the church wardens and Revd. Laura this coming year.

The organ at St Mary's continues to be a wonderful instrument for enhancing service, with no issues to report.

### **Choir:**

I am pleased to report an average attendance of 8-10 choristers at full attendance.

We have continued to provide anthems for major feast services, as well as psalms when relevant.

The choir will be helping me with my annual fundraising concert in May – singing several anthems we are familiar with and have heard in the past few years alongside a new backing of the strings and harpsichord.

The choir continues to grow from strength to strength, although our numbers are down from last year. I will be looking at potential recruitment options after Easter, once things have calmed down a little.

I would like to thank everyone as usual for their assistance in making things run smoothly at Lavant Churches from my musical perspective.

Luke Hayden

## **Children and Young People's Report**

### **Lavant Youth and Schools Worker**

The principal tasks of my role are to nurture children and young people within our community through Messy Church and to support our local school, Lavant C.E. Primary School, mostly by leading the 'church-led' weekly assemblies. My role also covers marketing events and activities undertaken at Lavant Churches, informing the congregation of the opportunities for children at Lavant Churches, building relationships with the children and providing them with pastoral care. I also encourage and support volunteers working with young people and children and ensure that all the safeguarding and health and safety requirements for the activities and programmes are met.

My paid role as Lavant Youth and School's Worker covers the school and Messy Church activities described below. It also covers giving talks at special services, such as the Church Christingle service. Leading Junior Church and Youth Group are some of my voluntary roles.

Frances Talbot

### **Messy Church**

Messy Church usually meets on the second Thursday of the month in term time after school. We have an established, competent and enthusiastic team of helpers, which means the sessions run smoothly and efficiently. We always welcome additional help; it is not necessary to attend for the whole session.

Messy Church is church in a relaxed environment. Each Messy Church session has a Bible-based theme and is divided into three parts, creativity, celebration and hospitality. We therefore have lots of fun with craft activities, painting and often making something to eat. This is followed by a short period of worship, concentrating on the theme and Bible passage. We finish with a shared meal.

In 2024 we have had an average of 21 children attending each session, all accompanied by a responsible adult, this has led to over 40 people sharing the meal on some occasions.

In 2024 we held a Messy Church session on Good Friday with bacon rolls and hot cross buns, which was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Frances Talbot

### **School activities**

Throughout 2024 I have led most of the school collective worship sessions on a Thursday, I also run a session at play time on a Thursday morning after assembly when the children can come and sit with me and write prayers or talk about any concerns. This is immediately after collective worship and is very popular with KS1 children.

I gave the talk at the school Easter Service in St Nicholas' Church, the harvest service and also at the KS2 Christmas service held in St Mary's Church. The children and staff make me feel very welcome in the school.

Revd. Martha and I held termly meetings with the head teacher Adrian King and the church school governor Rev. Michael Semple. The Growing Partnerships covenant between parish and school was signed in January 2024 by Rev. Martha and Adrian King.

Frances Talbot

## **Junior Church**

Junior Church continues to meet in term-time during the 10 am service, this is supported by an enthusiastic and competent team of parental help. We have had an average attendance of 9 children per week, slightly higher than in 2023.

Frances Talbot

## **Youth Group**

The youth group has met on Mondays during term time.

We have had a varied programme with many different activities.

Following on from our successful visit to Maycamp in 2023, Lavant Churches sent a group in 2024 to Maycamp at Plumpton Race Course. We joined with the youth group from St John's Southbourne. We hired a marquee, which was greatly appreciated as there was some wet and windy weather. The event was greatly enjoyed by the young people and leaders attending. The hire of the marquee, purchase of a tent for the girls and the cost of food for the young people was covered by a donation from the village fete (at which we ran an activity stall), money raised at the 2023 Christmas Fair, sales of cakes and donations from the congregation.

We are pleased that Ben Smith has now joined our leadership team.

We have had an average weekly attendance of 3 over the year.

Frances Talbot

## **Services**

Children from Junior Church help at the monthly Let's Celebrate services, with reading intercessions and helping with sidesmen duties.

In May Rev Martha asked me if I would give the talk at the Let's Celebrate services, which I agreed to, I was then asked to lead the service, which I did up to the end of 2024, with the exception of August.

I also led and gave the talk at the church Christingle service in December 2024, which was well attended.

None of these activities would be possible without the help of many volunteers, some of whom help at more than one activity. Their contributions are gratefully acknowledged with sincere thanks.

All the activities are reported in Lavant News and to the PCC meetings.

Revd. Laura Darrall became our priest-in-charge just after the Christingle service in December 2024 and has enthusiastically inspired all our activities. Her encouragement at all, and attendance at many, of our activities has been welcomed with grateful thanks. We look forward to an exciting 2025 and beyond.

Frances Talbot

## **Lavant Churches Safeguarding report for 2024**

For most of 2024 I assisted Elizabeth Woodford with the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) role, in addition to being a recruiter for DBS checks with Thirtyoneeight.

In November 2024 I was appointed Parish Safeguarding Officer, I was already recorded in the diocese as Elizabeth's deputy. I also became the lead recruiter for DBS checks.

The PCC thanked Elizabeth for her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer over many years.

I reported a message from the bishop too the church congregation on Safeguarding Sunday.

The Parish Safeguarding Policy was approved by the PCC in February 2024.

Four leaders (three for Youth Group and one for Junior Church) applied for and have received their DBS certificates in 2024.

No safeguarding training was completed in 2024.

Regular online training and information sessions for parish safeguarding officers are held which are very helpful and there are a number of new initiatives planned for 2025. These include in-person training; I have been appointed a trainer for the parish. The SQP, which was a one-time review of the safeguarding in the parish is being replaced by a new dashboard, which will be live and up-to-date. This is being launched in May 2025.

Frances Talbot

### **Toddler Report**

St Nic's Toddlers is still going strong. At the end of the Summer Term, we had 25 children on the Register. Some children come every week others once or twice a month but we have averaged 12 -13 most weeks. Most children come from Lavant or North Chichester.

We have a great team of 6 helpers. The Craft Table operates weekly and is very popular. We also have board games and occasional cooking sessions. There are plenty of ride on toys. We have purchased replacement dolls pram and 2 pushchairs. As well as Crafts, we have playdough, a large selection of books and puzzles and giant Lego. Plenty of toys are available on the central mats to suit all the ages who come. We always finish with a sing-song with movement and actions.

Thanks to the generosity of the Lavant Fete Committee we were able to buy the replacement pram and pushchairs and also a "go-pak" nursery size table.

It is a really lovely group and great to see the parents/carers having time to relax and socialise. We still only charge £1 per family group and provide refreshments mid- session.

Barbara Treverton

### **Archive Report**

With regard to the Archives. I was asked by David Jarratt in 2018 if I would sort out the cupboard in the Choir Vestry at St Mary's which housed various archives amongst other things. I spent some time making sure that the only items in that cupboard pertained to archives. During the following few months, I was able to get things up-to-date and also the Record Office in Chichester was very helpful when it came to the faculties.

I hope it has been helpful over the years when details needed about various Faculties and about information about both churches in past eras. I will be standing down as Archivist and it will be good to have someone else take on this role.

Barbara Treverton

### **St Nic's Brunch Café Report**

Brunch Café at St Nicholas Church on the first Saturday of the month, 9.30am to 11.30am is one of the highlights of the month for the Brunch Team. We love to welcome regulars and newcomers from the parish and the wider community - offering them good quality food and drink, as well as the opportunity to catch up with friends, or simply some quiet time with the Saturday newspapers. We regularly serve around 40 brunches, all on a donation basis to cover the cost of shopping and any surplus donated to church funds. If you haven't yet joined us, our 'full Monty' breakfast baps are packed with freshly cooked eggs, bacon, sausage and mushrooms, or any combination to your taste; and our fresh coffee and juices are offered plentifully along with croissants, bagels and toast. Come and relax in good company and with good food - well behaved dogs on leads welcome too!

Lindsay Campbell

## St Nic's Flower Power Team

We are a small but keen bunch of flower arrangers with a range of experience (from none to quite little bit!) We enjoy working on a rota basis to make St Nicholas church look welcoming for all the services and outreach events that take place there. Invariably using greenery and flowers from our own gardens for informal arrangements, these work well within the simplicity of this lovely country church. It is a privilege to spend some quiet, creative and reflective time in St Nicholas preparing flowers to be enjoyed by the congregation and visiting parishioners. We also enjoy coming together as a team to create more impactful displays at the various festivals throughout the year. If you feel you'd like to give it a go please speak to a member of the team. Amanda Smith, Clare Evison, Karen Bartholomew, Lindsay Campbell, Jean Sherrington and Sarah Newman.

Lindsay Campbell

## Lavant News Report

A local magazine for the Lavant community. 1,200 copies printed monthly and distributed by volunteers throughout the village (at a cost of £540.00)

### Advertising

Mainly done by Gina but sadly due to Richard Ryder's sudden death, neither Gina nor I was fully up-to-date with the advertising side of things. This last year has been a deep learning curve for both! Gina and I have discussed approaching some business from the Valley News. If we/someone can action this, then maybe they should also look at The Village Magazine (covers Fishbourne to Emsworth)

This last year we've seen a few advertisers depart and not many take ups. I have introduced a new section, 'Spotlight on' in the hope that this may encourage some new advertisers. Gina Bill advised that the advertising fees need to be looked into as these haven't increased for some time. It's the advertising that pays for the magazine, which in turn allows for it to be free to every household in Lavant & Summersdale.

### Editors

Nicola Ellis stepped down last July because of work commitments. Thank you to Nicola for her assistance.

In August Caroline Reynolds approached me and agreed to take on the shared editorial role. Since then, Caroline has been away, ill, and a sudden death in the family, so she has not yet fulfilled the role as shared editor. Training has been given by myself, and Richard Whincop. Caroline is due to undertake the June edition which has an additional 4 pages to allow for the Village Fete.

As the magazine has been the same format for quite a few years. I have/am looking for new pieces either from local groups etc. One new section 'Snap Happy' seems to be proving popular, which encourages reader input of photos of the local area wildlife, views etc. This also builds up a bank of photos we can use for the front covers.

Feedback for the magazine is always very good. It's proof-read by two people (Ben Smith & Lindsay Campbell) after I have finished it (3 if you include me) before it's sent to print. We are only human though so you might find the odd one that has escaped our notice! I still thoroughly enjoy doing it so have no plans to step down.

Amanda Smith - Editor

## Monthly Prayer Meeting Report

Prayer continues for Lavant Churches, its witness and work, for local issues, those who have requested prayer and those known to be in need of prayer.

The arrival of Revd. Laura and Jo has given a boost to the monthly evening prayer meetings.

Adjusting the start time to 8.30pm has enabled those who work to join in too.

Moving forward, in the summer months we will meet in person at St Mary's in May, June and July and then return to holding a Zoom meeting in August when people are away and the evenings are closing in. Last year we demonstrated the advantages of a Zoom meeting when we hosted the July monthly meeting from our holiday destination in Cornwall!

The prayer trees in both churches continue to be well used and the requests are included in the monthly prayer meetings.

A reminder that Prayer Trust leaflets and bookmarks remain available in both St Mary's and St Nicholas.

The monthly evening prayer meetings remain open to all and new members are always welcome.

Please see Rev Laura or me for details.

Karen Crossley

## Church Bookings Report

In terms of bookings, the past year has been somewhat quieter than the previous year.

The following bookings have been made:

26/4/24. Funeral wake at the Lavant Room. No fee

4/7/24. General Election at St Nic's. £130.00

31/8/24 (and several days for rehearsals) 'La Folie' concert by Luke Haydn at St Nic's, in aid of church funds

9/11/24. Children's party at the Lavant Room, £30.00

7/12/24. Charity Wreath-making event at St Nic's, for a discretionary donation

11/1/25. 60th birthday party at St Nic's, £42.00

26/11/24. Meeting of 'Lavant Allotment Association', at the Lavant Room, £22.00

There are regular monthly meetings of the 'Lavant Environment Team'. They are generally not charged, as they are held outdoors, with minimal use of the facilities.

The 'Lavant History Project' has booked St Marys for several meetings, most of which haven't been charged, as they don't use much in the way of facilities, and they are working on a booklet about Lavant Churches. There was one meeting in the Lavant Room on 31/3/25 with a guest speaker, which was charged at £25.00.

There have been a small number of provisionally booked events which were later cancelled, including a proposed weekly Baby Class. Unfortunately, there wasn't sufficient demand.

There are, of course, the usual repeating services and events which I don't book; and special events such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, which are booked by the rector.

Hire charges haven't changed since 2018, and are below (as are the Terms, Conditions and Guidance Notes for hirers).

I had a query from the Parklands Surgery, to ask if they could promote our regular events at St Nic's, such as the Lunch House, to their lonely elderly patients living in Lavant. This is part of their 'Social Prescribing', which I agreed to.

Clare Morrison

# St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

Pook Lane, East Lavant, PO18 0AH

Registered Charity no. 1131684

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For the year ended 31st December 2024

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# St Mary with St Nicholas Church, Lavant

registered charity number 1131684

## Summary of Financial Receipts and Payments

The financial effect of our activities during the year can be summarised as follows

	<i>Unrestricted</i>		<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Endowed</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	<i>General</i>	<i>Designated</i>			<i>All Funds</i>	<i>All Funds</i>	
	<u>Fund</u>	<u>Funds</u>	<u>Fund/s</u>	<u>Fund/s</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>							
Donations, grants and legacies	78,106	1,150	9,657	-	88,913	110,455	
Charitable activities	7,003	-	160	-	7,163	7,816	
Other trading activities	8,273	-	-	-	8,273	9,869	
Investments	271	-	-	-	271	267	
<b>Total received</b>	<b>93,653</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>9,817</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>104,620</b>	<b>128,407</b>	3
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Fund-raising	625	-	-	-	625	241	
Charitable costs	68,012	11,150	15,881	-	95,043	139,216	
Trading costs	5,692	-	-	-	5,692	5,969	
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	17,031	
<b>Total paid</b>	<b>74,329</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>15,881</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>101,360</b>	<b>162,457</b>	5



Trustees Annual Report for 2024

<b>Net income or (net expenditure)</b>	19,324	(10,000)	(6,064)	-	<b>3,260</b>	<i>(34,050)</i>	
Transfers between funds	(1,523)	-	1,523	-	-	-	
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Bank accounts at 1 January	27,694	10,000	23,893	-	<b>61,587</b>	<i>95,637</i>	
<b>Bank accounts at 31 December</b>	<b>45,495</b>	-	<b>19,352</b>	-	<b>64,847</b>	<i>61,587</i>	A&L

## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

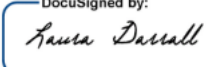
Our financial position at the year-end was

	<i>Unrestricted</i>		<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Endowed</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Notes</i>
	<i>General</i>	<i>Designated</i>			<i>All Funds</i>	<i>All Funds</i>	
	<u>Fund</u>	<u>Funds</u>	<u>Fund/s</u>	<u>Fund/s</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
<b>Assets:</b>							
Bank current account	45,495	-	19,352	-	<b>64,847</b>	61,587	
Cash	-	-	-	-	-	-	
							R&P
<b>Total bank, cash and deposit accounts</b>	<b>45,495</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19,352</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,847</b>	<b>61,587</b>	
Debtors & Prepayments	1,203	-	-	-	<b>1,203</b>	-	
Gift Aid recoverable	1,930	-	-	-	<b>1,930</b>	2,750	
<b>Debtors</b>	<b>3,133</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,133</b>	<b>2,750</b>	
Chancel Trust Income held by DBF	3,788	-	-	-	3,788	3,598	
<b>Investment Assets</b>	<b>3,788</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,788</b>	<b>3,598</b>	
Asset Purchases	-	-	-	-	-	17,031	
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,031</b>	
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>52,416</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19,352</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>71,768</b>	<b>84,966</b>	
<b>Liabilities:</b>							
Magazines adverts received in advance	2,251	-	-	-	2,251	2,724	
Parish Share	-	-	-	-	-	6,566	
Utilities and other creditors	2,687	-	-	-	2,687	16,500	
						-	
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>4,938</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,938</b>	<b>25,790</b>	

Trustees Annual Report for 2024

This Financial Report for the year ended 31st December 2024, including the notes following, was approved by the PCC and signed on its behalf by The Revd. Laura Darrall, PCC Chairman on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

...8th April... 2025

DocuSigned by:  
  
8978E89498984B4...  
Reverend Laura Darrall

## Notes to the Financial Report

**1** The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and current Church Accounting Regulations, using the Receipts and Payments basis.

**2** The following assets are recognised but not valued in the Statement of Assets and Liabilities: Movable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC, which require a faculty for disposal.

**3** Analysis of total received

	Unrestricted		Restricted	Endowed	Total	Total	Notes
	General	Designated			All Funds	All Funds	
	Fund	Funds	Fund/s	Fund/s	2024	2023	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Planned giving (excl. tax refunds)	47,596	-	-	-	47,596	46,244	
Loose cash collections/GoodBox	9,485	-	232	-	9,717	8,982	
Donations and Special appeals	3,546	1,000	2,140	-	6,686	10,550	
Gift Aid recovered	13,766	-	-	-	13,766	14,247	
Legacies	-	150	-	-	150	6,633	4
Fund raising	1,327	-	750	-	2,077	400	
Grant income	2,386	-	5,000	-	7,386	23,399	
Stelae inscriptions	-	-	1,535	-	1,535	-	
<b>Donations, grants and legacies</b>	<b>78,106</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>9,657</b>	-	<b>88,913</b>	<b>110,455</b>	
Fees for weddings & funerals	7,003	-	160	-	7,163	7,816	
<b>Charitable activities</b>	<b>7,003</b>	-	160	-	<b>7,163</b>	<b>7,816</b>	
Magazine sales	-	-	-	-	-	95	
Magazine advertising	7,760	-	-	-	7,760	8,767	
Hall lettings	513	-	-	-	513	1,102	
Insurance claim	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Other trading activities</b>	<b>8,273</b>	-	-	-	<b>8,273</b>	<b>9,869</b>	

Trustees Annual Report for 2024

Bank & CBF deposit interest	271	-	-	-	<b>271</b>	267
<b>Total received on all funds</b>	<b>93,653</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>9,817</b>	-	<b>104,620</b>	128,407

<sup>4</sup> £4,669 remains of the legacy of £6,633 received from the Estate of the late Edward Farrow for the benefit of St Nicholas's Church which is held in Restricted Funds (see note 10).

## Notes to the Financial Report – Cont.

### 5 Analysis of total paid

	Unrestricted		Restricted	Endowed	Total	Total	Notes
	General	Designated			All Funds	All Funds	
	Fund	Funds	Fund/s	Fund/s	2024	2023	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Stewardship costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Fund raising expenses	625	-	-	-	625	241	
<b>Cost of raising funds</b>	<b>625</b>	-	-	-	<b>625</b>	<b>241</b>	
Charitable grants and donations:	1,716	-	-	-	<b>1,716</b>	2,584	
Parish share to Chichester Diocese	31,566	-	-	-	<b>31,566</b>	72,229	
Salaries and honoraria incl NI	2,443	-	6,677	-	<b>9,120</b>	8,730	
Training conferences etc	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Other clergy costs	5,291	-	65	-	<b>5,356</b>	6,486	
Insurance	3,849	-	-	-	<b>3,849</b>	3,789	
Water, Gas, Electricity, and Oil	6,668	11,150	-	-	<b>17,818</b>	4,077	
Upkeep of services (inc choir)	3,164	-	-	-	<b>3,164</b>	3,452	
Major church maintenance	2,280	-	3,319	-	<b>5,599</b>	22,212	
Upkeep of churchyard (inc Stelae)	1,120	-	-	-	<b>1,120</b>	2,541	
Other church maintenance	5,598	-	-	-	<b>5,598</b>	3,338	
Heritage Festival	-	-	-	-	-	3,697	
Children/youth work	299	-	2,127	-	<b>2,426</b>	2,168	
Stelae inscriptions	-	-	3,366	-	<b>3,366</b>	-	
Administration and other	-	-	-	-	<b>3,556</b>	3,913	
Other church running costs	3,556	-	327	-	<b>789</b>	-	
	462	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Charitable costs</b>	<b>68,012</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>15,881</b>	-	<b>95,043</b>	<b>139,216</b>	
Magazine printing	5,692	-	-	-	<b>5,692</b>	5,969	
Bookstall costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Trading costs</b>	<b>5,692</b>	-	-	-	<b>5,692</b>	<b>5,969</b>	
Other payments	-	-	-	-	-	<b>17,031</b>	
<b>Total paid on all funds</b>	<b>74,329</b>	<b>11,150</b>	<b>15,881</b>	-	<b>101,360</b>	<b>162,457</b>	

## Notes to the Financial Report – Cont.

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- 6 The Parish share to the Chichester Diocese is for the payment of Clergy and other central costs. The total amount paid for parish ministry in 2024 was £31,566, of which £25,000 related to 2024 and £6,566 to 2023. The parish was unable to meet the full amount of the parish share requested by the Diocese but there is understood to be no further liability due for 2024. Other clergy costs in 2024 amounted to £5,356.
- 7 Gift Aid on all donations collected under the Diocese’s Parish Giving Scheme has been received. Gift Aid on other qualifying donations received since 30<sup>th</sup> June is outstanding.
- 8 Payments to PCC employees:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salary costs	9,120	8,930
	9,120	8,930

- 9 Payments to PCC members: No payments were made to PCC members during the year other than for reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the PCC.

## Notes to the Financial Report – Cont.

### 10 Statement of Funds

	Balances b/fwd 1 Jan 2024	Income	Expenditure	Transfers, other gains and losses	Balances c/fwd 31 Dec 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Restricted Funds</b>					
Building Fund	-	50	-	(50)	-
St Nicholas' Fund	6,633	-	1,964	-	4,669
Mission Fund	3,720	-	742	(2,978)	-
Youth/Children's Mission	11,507	5,572	8,126	2,978	11,930
St Mary's Garden of Remembrance	669	1,535	3,366	1,302	140
Choir Fund	1,635	160	-		1,795
Outreach	(271)	-		271	-
Handrail	-	2,500	1,683		817
<b>Total of all restricted funds</b>	<b>23,893</b>	<b>9,817</b>	<b>15,881</b>	<b>1,523</b>	<b>19,352</b>
General fund	27,694	93,653	74,329	(1,523)	45,495
Designated Funds	10,000	1,150	11,150	-	-
<b>Total of all unrestricted funds</b>	<b>37,694</b>	<b>94,803</b>	<b>85,479</b>	<b>(1,523)</b>	<b>45,495</b>
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>61,587</b>	<b>104,620</b>	<b>101,360</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>64,847</b>



## Notes to the Financial Report – Cont.

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**Restricted funds are not invested permanently but are to be spent within reasonable timescales.**

### **Mission Fund**

A further instalment of the Diocesan Board of Finance grant for Youth and Children's work amounting to £5,000 was received in the year.

**Unrestricted funds are not subject to any donor restrictions and can be spent as the PCC decides**

The Income of the Designated Funds amounting to £2,386 represented grants received under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme as compensation for irrecoverable VAT on building work and was applied to major repair work undertaken in 2024.

## Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St Mary's with St Nicholas Church , Lavant for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

This is my report to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish (PCC) of St Mary with St Nicholas, Lavant, on the annual report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 set out on pages 15 to 25 .

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner** The PCC members are responsible for the preparation of the annual reports. The PCC members consider that an audit is not required for the year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

1. examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
2. follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
3. to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent**

**examiner's statement** In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have come across no matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Examiner's signature**



**Examiner's name**

Philip James TOSTEVIN

**Date**

20th April 2025

**Relevant professional qualification or body**

CTA.

**Examiner's address**

48 Maydehurst Road

Chichester, West Sussex