

# THE PARISH OF WINCHELSEA

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"We are an open welcoming church, which exists for the community as a whole and where everyone is valued and respected. We are called to serve Christ in the world, sharing the joy of God's unconditional love in faith and action. We commit ourselves to praying and working for a world where love, reconciliation, equality and peace can prevail."

### INTRODUCTION

1. Within the Diocese of Chichester, the Parish of Winchelsea is now served by the church of St Thomas of Canterbury in the Town of Winchelsea. The Church of St Richard of Chichester at Winchelsea Beach has been effectively closed since the pandemic. Together with the Parish of Icklesham (the Church of St Nicholas with All Saints) the churches comprise a Joint Benefice. Icklesham has its own Parochial Church Council. The Rector became Priest in charge of Pett in March 2022. After extensive consultation with the Bishops, Archdeacon, PCC and local community it was decided with reluctance that it would be necessary to offer the church of Saint Richard's for sale. Unfortunately a sum in the region of £50-£80,000 was needed for remedial work and the congregation stood at around 5 to 6 people. As St Richards was the 2<sup>nd</sup> church in our parish it was felt unrealistic to be raising funds to support it. The sale was finally approved in July 2023.

### P.C.C. WINCHELSEA – MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

2. Members of the PCC are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Churchwardens are elected at the annual Vestry meeting, which precedes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, for a one year term. Deanery Synod representatives are elected for a three-year term.

3. The following served on the PCC during 2023:

*Incumbent and Chairman*      The Reverend Jonathan Meyer

#### *Churchwardens*

Mrs Charlotte Beecroft

Mrs Celia King

#### *Deanery Synod*

Mrs Angela Hill

#### *Representatives*

Mrs Marion Lovell

Mrs Deborah Rodley

#### *Elected Office Holders*

Mrs Angela Hill (Hon. Secretary) resigned April 2023

Mrs Mary Parker (Hon. Secretary) elected April 2023

Eric Rowe (Hon. Treasurer) resigned February 2023

David Harris M BAFCIS (Hon. Treasurer) Elected April 2023

*Elected Members*

Mrs Alice Bolton

Mr David Jefferies

Mrs Pamela Jefferies

Mr Jeremy Naylor

Mr Nigel Ashton

**CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES and the PUBLIC BENEFIT**

**Registered charity number:** 1132555 The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Thomas Winchelsea

**Principle address:** St Thomas' Church  
Winchelsea  
East Sussex  
T N 36EB

**Website:** [www.winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk](http://www.winchelsea-icklesham-churches.org.uk)

4. The PCC Members are all Trustees of the above charity and have complied with their duty in Part 9 of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission. They have also been guided by the following charitable aims this year:

- To maintain a building appropriate for collective or private worship, prayer and reflection.
- To support selected local and national charities throughout the year, including making regular monthly cash and food collections.
- To ensure that church buildings are open daily and are available for use by the community as a whole.

5. In seeking to meet these objects, the PCC has had due regard to carrying out its purpose for the public benefit. There is a regular Parish Eucharist at 11:00am each Sunday and a BCP service of Holy Communion at 8:00am on the first Sunday of each month.



We have held a Church Market on each first Saturday of the month apart from August and January. Fellowship Lunches have taken place regularly again at Winchelsea Beach.

The PCC has sought to maintain the Churchyard, with community support, as a de facto 'village green'. The PCC runs a Churchyard Sub-Committee to reflect and advise on matters relating to the churchyard and following a generous donation we have continued to establish three wildflower areas, which produced a good variety of native flowering plants and colour during the summer. This work has been built on during 2023 and a native orchid was noted in one of the circles. The range of flowers has increased and support has been enthusiastic from visitors as well as residents. We organised another Churchyard Working Party in August, which was well attended and refreshments were enjoyed afterwards.

Prior to the coronation of King Charles III a service of evening prayer took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May to pray for King and his reign and to give thanks for his accession.

In the middle of May we organised a flower festival, which was intended to raise the profile of our biodiversity project in the churchyard. We commenced with a service of Choral Evensong for Ascension day which was led by the Rt Rev'd Will Hazlewood Bishop of Lewes, who also preached. It was followed by drinks and refreshments. On the following day the Rev'd Dr Mark Betson spoke on "Life in all its Fullness", which was discussed the potential of using the green space of churchyards to celebrate creation and connect with the local community. On the same day Cliff Dean of Rye Nature Reserve lead a short walk around the churchyard to talk about our visiting population of swifts and the school visited the flower circles biodiversity project. On Saturday evening that was a concert by the Hastings Philharmonic on the theme of creation, which included Beethoven's pastoral Symphony. It was organised by Winchelsea Arts and very well attended. The festival ended with a pet service on Sunday afternoon, in the open air; it attracted around 40 pets and their owners, the majority being dogs but there was also a McCaw in attendance. The animals received a blessing and tea followed the event.

In July we held a final Eucharist at Saint Richard's before the sale was completed. We celebrated around the uncovered concrete altar, which had been made for the garage church in Smeaton's Harbour in the 1930s. It was a moving service attended by about 30 people.

The Patronal Festival was celebrated on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Pegasus choir sang the Mass for Five Voices by William Byrd. Harvest festival took place in September and our annual service of Thanksgiving for the departed took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October. Remembrance services took place as usual in November with wreath laying at the cross. On Monday, the 13<sup>th</sup> of November we were privileged to host the deanery confirmation service led by the Rt Rev'd Ruth Busyager, Bishop of Horsham. There were 11 candidates including two from our own group of churches and over 100 people attended the service. It was noted that Bishop Ruth is certainly the first female bishop to enter our church. The Lights of Love service which supports St Michael's Hospice in Saint Leonards took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December.

Christmas services followed the usual pattern including a Carol service and a Crib service with donkeys in attendance.

During the year there were 3 baptisms, 5 Weddings, 6 Funerals, 9 burials of ashes and 57 reburials of ashes from St Richard's.

6. The closure and final service at Saint Richard's Church Winchelsea Beach has already been noted but it should also be recorded that we obtained permission from the Chancellor to exhume and reinter cremated remains from St Richard's. As there are no formal records and no fees were charged it is assumed that the interment of remains at Saint Richard's was informal but we did have notes regarding most of the remains. After extensive publicity and advertising in the press we contacted as many of those



next of kin whom could still be traced to obtain permission, which was given by all those whom we identified. Remains which were marked with a memorial plaque were reinterred in separate marked plots in St Thomas's Churchyard in March. Those for whom we could not trace relatives or memorials were separately reinterred in the area opposite our existing garden of remembrance. The place of interment and each name has been recorded in the burial register. All the remains were handled with dignity and prayers were said when they were re-interred.

7. We have continued to support charities as usual through a special monthly collection. The charities supported by the Parish were Rye Street Pastors, Demelza House Children's Hospice, Family Support Work, Rye, Winchelsea and District Memorial Hospital, Snowflake, Pett Level Rescue Boat, Rye Food Bank, You Raise me Up, Dom's Food Mission, Hastings and the Royal British Legion. A special collection was also made for the Fellowship of St Nicholas following our Crib Service. We also provided a box for the Rye Food Bank and donated Harvest offerings to the Food Bank.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT and SAFEGUARDING**

8. During the year, the PCC has continued to monitor the various risks applicable to the Church and has reviewed its published Health and Safety policy. A new health and safety officer has been appointed. No accidents were reported this year.

9. The PCC has also reviewed and reissued its Safeguarding policy. The PCC is a member of the Church's Child Protection Advisory Service. Appropriate clearances are held and updated and cleared people are present in a supervisory capacity whenever children attend Church.

### **DELIVERING THE PUBLIC BENEFIT**

10. The Church of St Thomas is open during normal daylight hours with some very minor exceptions relating to meetings or at the request of contractors. Under the circumstances this has been appreciated and it is clear that people need the Church for many different reasons and the fact that it is available for their use, for public and private worship and for meditation is regularly reflected in the visitors' book.

11. The Rector visits St Thomas the Martyr Primary School each week for a school service and the whole school attended services in Church for Easter, Harvest Festival and Christingle as well as having a leavers service in the summer.

12. Music. Winchelsea Arts have held six concerts in church and there was a concert in September as part of the Rye Festival.



12. Finance – David Harris took over as Treasurer at the APCM in April 2023. This is the first full year that financial transactions have been processed using accounting software and we are grateful to Jeremy Naylor for his initial work. David and Pamela Jefferies have continued to bank receipts and prepare Gift Aid claims. Charlotte Beecroft has taken responsibility for paying purchase invoices via BACS transfer and making cheque payments as required. Many members of the congregation make regular Planned Giving Donations direct to the PCC's bank account by standing order and it is hoped that more will do so.

Following the sale of St Richards in July, a designated fund was created to monitor the use of the proceeds which have been placed in a high interest earning account with the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities Investment Bank. At the end of the year, the balance of this fund is £327,800, which comprises the sale proceeds, the balance in the St Richard's Natwest bank account and also income from the sale of artefacts from which the fees of the estate agent and Diocesan solicitor were deducted. A summary is shown in the Statement of Funds below.

The major building project in 2023 was the repair of the transepts; the Diocesan architect, John Bailey, in his Quinquennial Report provided in February 2023, advised that the repair was urgent. Including preparing specifications, inviting tenders and supervising the work, the total cost is £84,895, which has been funded by a £20,000 grant from the Friends, a grant of £6,000 from the Sussex Historic Churches Trust and £32,713 from the sale of shares in the T W Longley Legacy. A grant of £11,319 is expected from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport equal to the VAT on the builder's and architect's invoices and the balance has been financed from general unrestricted funds.

The Friends have also provided the sum of £7,400 which has been used as a contribution to the maintenance of the fabric of the building. This support comprised a monthly grant which was terminated in July.

In addition to financing part of the cost of the repair of the transepts, the PCC agreed to provide, through our Parish Share, support to other less fortunate parishes in the Diocese who are struggling to cover expenditure on the cost of ministry: clergy housing, stipends, pensions and training. There will be an additional payment of £10,000 in each of the next three years.

On the advice of the Diocese, the invested funds comprising the Blanesburgh Bequest are now included in our financial statements. In 1947 Lord Blanesburgh, left the sum of £2,000 in his will to support the organist and the music of the church. It is held in the name of the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance and in 2018 approximately half the shares were sold and used for organ repairs. The remaining holding is represented by 1022.73 shares in the Central Board Investment Fund of the Church of England. Funds from the investment can only be used with the permission of the Diocese who act as Custodian Trustee. The value as at 31 December 2023 is shown as a gain in the Statement of Funds schedule.

The contracts for the supply of electricity and gas to St Thomas became due for renewal at the end of October 2023. The best prices that were obtainable are 35% more for electricity and 100% more for gas. These increases will have a material impact on our operational costs in the current year and has meant that the church letting rates will need to be raised.

In January this year, the PCC approved a budget for 2024 which comprises a shortfall of £33,511 of payments over receipts. This difference is generated by: expenditure in early 2024 relating to goods and services supplied in the previous year (£2,282), a transfer from the St Richards proceeds for both the additional Parish Share and a contribution to the cost of building work (£35,188) and also a reduction in the Churchyard Fund (£965). After applying these sums, there is a surplus of £4,924 of receipts over payments.

For the 2024 calendar year, the PCC have agreed that proceeds from the St Richards Designated fund will be used to match moneys raised from grants and donations for building work. The 2024 budget includes a provision of £50,376 for further repair and conservation work as advised in the Quinquennial Report. Expenditure includes a transfer of £25,188, i.e. half, from the Designated Fund.

13. The PCC's Reserves Policy is to invest all unrestricted funds in a deposit account managed by the CCLA. Reserves are maintained at a sum greater than 50% of budgeted annual expenditure. In 2024 this sum is £83,799. The total of projected unrestricted cash funds at the end of 2024 is £277,381 which is materially in excess of the policy requirement. The difference (£193,582) is held to contribute to future expenditure on the fabric of St Thomas, improving the inadequate lighting and sound systems, support for parishioners in Winchelsea Beach and increased giving to local, national and international charities.



**Summary of Receipts & Payments**  
**For the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023**

	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total	Prior year
	funds	funds	funds	funds	total funds
<b>Receipts</b>					
Voluntary Income	£124,001	£3,817	£1,495	£125,496	£83,752
Activities for Generating funds	£5,953		£400	£6,353	£5,670
Charitable Activities	£8,495	£386		£8,881	£4,466
Interest, Dividends and Rent	£5,182		£339	£5,521	£2,037
Other Income	£831	£3,817		£4,648	£2,740
Sale of Fixed Asset		£350,700		£350,700	
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£144,461</b>	<b>£354,903</b>	<b>£2,234</b>	<b>£501,598</b>	<b>£98,665</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Cost of Charitable Activities	£85,991	£10,000	£2,400	£98,391	£81,619
Church repairs and maintenance	£90,219		£2,100	£92,319	£18,205
Governance Costs	£1,828			£1,828	£1,993
Other costs	£324	£17,103		£17,427	£498
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£178,363</b>	<b>£27,103</b>	<b>£4,500</b>	<b>£209,966</b>	<b>£102,315</b>
<b>Excess of receipts over payments before transfer</b>	<b>-£33,902</b>	<b>£327,800</b>	<b>-£2,266</b>	<b>£291,632</b>	<b>-£3,650</b>
<b>Transfers:</b>					
Gross transfers between funds – in			£4,139	£4,139	
Gross transfers between funds – out	-£4,139			-£4,139	
Excess of receipts over payments before other gains					
Excess of receipts over payments before other gains	-£38,041	£327,800	£1,873	£291,632	
Net movement in funds	-£38,041	£327,800	£24,992	£314,751	
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Excess of receipts over payment at the beginning of the year	43,371	-	22,578	65,950	
Excess of receipts over payments for the year	5,331	327,800	47,570	380,701	

# Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December 2023

	General	Designated	Restricted	At 31/12/2023	At 31/12/2022
<b>Current assets</b>					
Investments			£34,038	£34,038	£32,004
Cash At Bank And In Hand	£5,331	£327,800	£14,067	£347,198	£33,945
	£5,331	£327,800	£48,105	£381,236	£65,950
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Due to Diocese			£536	£536	-
<b>Net current assets less current liabilities</b>	£5,331	£327,800	£47,569	£380,700	£65,950
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	£5,331	£327,800	£47,569	£380,700	£65,950
<b>Represented by</b>					
Unrestricted - General Fund	£5,331			£5,331	£43,371
Designated - St Richards Proceeds		£327,800		£327,800	
Restricted - The Blanesburgh Bequest			£23,119	£23,119	
Restricted - Choir			£700	£700	
Restricted - Churchyard Maintenance			£1,151	£1,151	-£1,682
Restricted - Joseph McCrindle			£10,919	£10,919	£10,580
Restricted - Lighting Appeal			£503	£503	£103
Restricted - Special Giving			£7,169	£7,169	£7,169
Restricted - Churchyard Wildflower Garden			£3,966	£3,966	£6,366
<b>Fund Totals</b>	£5,331	£327,800	£47,527	£380,658	£65,907



## Notes to the Financial Reports

### 1. Cashbook Accounting

The financial reports have been prepared on a cashbook accounting basis, i.e. the receipts and payments for the year have not been adjusted to reflect creditors, accruals, stock, debtors and prepayments at 31 December 2023. All the reports have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and current Church Accounting Regulations.

### 2. Further Analysis of Income Received:

01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023					
	General	Designated	Restricted	This Year	Last Year
Tax Efficient Planned Giving	£19,047			£19,047	£18,900
Other Planned Giving	£1,073			£1,073	£1,335
Collections at Services	£10,180			£10,180	£3,463
Friends Subscriptions and Donations	£7,400			£7,400	£16,800
Appeals	£585		£1,395	£1,980	£2,629
Other Donations	£19,006		£100	£19,106	£30,453
Gift Aid Reclaimed	£8,833			£8,833	£8,372
Legacies	£37,877			£37,877	£0
Grants	£20,000			£20,000	£1,800
<b>Total Voluntary Income</b>	<b>£124,001</b>		<b>£1,495</b>	<b>£125,496</b>	<b>£83,752</b>
Fundraising Events	£4,732			£4,732	£4,566
Other Fundraising Events	£35		£400	£435	£170
Other Trading Activity: Christmas Cards, Lettings Etc.	£1,186			£1,186	£934
<b>Total Activities for Generating Funds</b>	<b>£5,953</b>		<b>£400</b>	<b>£6,353</b>	<b>£5,670</b>
Fees From Wedding, Funerals & Burials	£8,495	£386		£8,881	£4,466
<b>Total Charitable Activities</b>	<b>£8,495</b>	<b>£386</b>		<b>£8,881</b>	<b>£4,466</b>
Bank & CCLA Interest	£3,852		£339	£4,191	
CBF Investment Fund Dividend	£1,330			£1,330	
<b>Total Interest, Dividends and Rent</b>	<b>£5,182</b>		<b>£339</b>	<b>£5,521</b>	<b>£2,037</b>
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>£831</b>	<b>£3,817</b>		<b>£4,648</b>	<b>£2,740</b>
<b>Sale of Fixed Asset</b>		<b>£350,700</b>		<b>£350,700</b>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£144,462</b>	<b>£354,903</b>	<b>£2,234</b>	<b>£501,599</b>	<b>£98,665</b>

### 3. Further Analysis of Costs Paid

01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023					
	General	Designated	Restricted	This Year	Last Year
<b>Cost of Generating Voluntary Receipts</b>	<b>£147</b>			<b>£147</b>	<b>£389</b>
<b>Fundraising Costs</b>					<b>£372</b>
Mission Giving and Donations	£350		£2,400	£2,750	£6,497
Parish Share	£55,000	£10,000		£65,000	£54,000
Fees to Diocese for Weddings, Funerals, Burials	£1,302			£1,302	
Insurance	£5,231			£5,231	£4,524
Salaries, Wage and Honoraria	£4,677			£4,677	£3,345
Clergy and Staff Expenses	£6,869			£6,869	£6,874
Mission & Evangelism Costs	£330			£330	£798
Church Running Costs	£5,426			£5,426	£4,552
Service Costs, Candles, Wine, etc	£812			£812	£912
Printing, Stationery & Sundries	£1,826			£1,826	£2,509
Church Utilities: Gas, Elec, Broadband	£3,722			£3,722	£5,697
Cost Of Church Activities e.g. Magazines, Bookstall	£300			£300	£701
Churchyard Maintenance Cost	£2,152		£2,100	£4,252	£4,509
Minor Church Repairs & Maintenance	£626			£626	£447
Major Church Repairs & Maintenance	£80,046			£80,046	£3,000
New Building Works	£7,395			£7,395	£698
<b>Total Cost of Creditable Activities</b>	<b>£176,064</b>	<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£4,500</b>	<b>£190,564</b>	<b>£99,063</b>
<b>Governance Costs</b>	<b>£1,828</b>			<b>£1,828</b>	<b>£1,993</b>
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>£324</b>	<b>£17,103</b>		<b>£17,427</b>	<b>£498</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>£178,363</b>	<b>£27,103</b>	<b>£4,500</b>	<b>£209,966</b>	<b>£102,315</b>



#### 4. Statement of Funds

<b>Statement of Funds</b> <b>01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023</b>							
<b>Fund</b>	<b>Fund balances B/F 01 Jan 23</b>	<b>Incoming Resources</b>	<b>Outgoing Resources</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Gains and Losses</b>	<b>Fund balances C/F 31 Dec 23</b>	<b>Balances at 31-Dec-22</b>
<b>Unrestricted</b>							
Unrestricted General	£43,371	£144,461	£178,363	-£4,139		£5,331	£43,371
Designated (St Richards Proceeds)		£354,903	£27,103			£327,800	
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>£43,371</b>	<b>£499,364</b>	<b>£205,466</b>	<b>-£4,139</b>		<b>£333,131</b>	<b>£43,371</b>
<b>Restricted</b>							
The Blanesburgh Bequest					£23,119	£23,119	
Choir				£700		£700	
Churchyard Maintenance	-£1,682	£1,495	£2,100	£3,439		£1,151	-£1,682
The Joseph McCrindle Trust	£10,580	£339				£10,919	£10,580
Lighting Appeal	£103	£400				£503	£103
Special Giving	£7,169					£7,169	£7,169
Churchyard Widflower Garden	£6,366		£2,400			£3,966	£6,366
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>£22,536</b>	<b>£2,234</b>	<b>£4,500</b>	<b>£4,139</b>	<b>£23,119</b>	<b>£47,527</b>	<b>£22,536</b>
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>£65,907</b>	<b>£501,598</b>	<b>£209,966</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£23,119</b>	<b>£380,658</b>	<b>£65,907</b>

Jonathan Heyes Rector  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

# Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of ST. Thomas, Winchelsea for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023

## Section A

This is my report to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish (PCC) of All Saints with St Nicolas, Icklesham, on the annual report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 set out on pages to

### 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 this 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. to 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

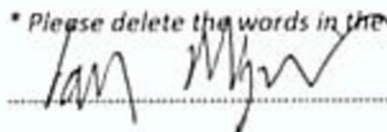
In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below in Section B below \*) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- 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 other 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.

*\* Please delete the words in the (brackets) if they do not apply*

### Examiner's signature



### Examiner's name CAPITALS

Ian Menzies

### Date

### Relevant professional qualification(s) or body if any

Retired CA.....

### Examiner's address

Barling House, Hiham Green, Winchelsea



# Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of ST. Thomas, Winchelsea for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2023

## Section B

### Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners)

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose

None