

## **THE PARISH OF WINCHELSEA**

### **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025**

#### **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 (served by the Church of St Thomas the Martyr) forms a Joint Benefice with the Parish of Icklesham (served by the Church of St Nicholas with All Saints). Since 2023, the Parish of Pett (served by the Church of St Mary and St Peter) has been linked in that the Rector of Winchelsea has also acted as Priest-in-Charge of Pett. Each of these Parishes is governed by its own Parochial Church Council (PCC).

2. At the beginning of February, the Reverend Jonathan Meyer retired having ministered here for seven years. The Parish was thus in Interregnum for the rest of the year, although the process of finding a new incumbent priest commenced in August and a selection was announced in November. It is worth recording, at the outset, our thanks to the Reverend Meyer for all that he achieved in his Ministry and, particularly, for keeping the Church alive through all the difficulties associated with the pandemic.

3. In October 2025, the Diocese launched a consultation process to establish a new Joint Benefice comprising all three Parishes. However, this report deals only with the Parish of Winchelsea.

#### **PCC WINCHELSEA – MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

4. 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 Parish Meeting, which precedes the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, for a one-year term. Deanery Synod representatives are elected for a three-year term.

5. The following served on the Parochial Church Council during 2025:

Chairman	The Reverend Jonathan Meyer (until February 2025)
Churchwardens	Celia King Nigel Ashton (until May 2025) John Rodley (from June 2025)
Deanery Synod Representatives	Angela Hill Marion Lovell Deborah Rodley
Elected Office Holders	David Harris (Hon. Treasurer and Vice Chair from February 2025) Mary Parker (Hon. Secretary)

Elected Members                      David Jefferies (until April 2025)  
   Pamela Jefferies (until April 2025)  
   Alice Bolton (Safeguarding Officer)  
   Jeremy Naylor  
   Susan Wood  
   Gavin McFadyean  
   Martin Lew-Gor (from April 2025)  
   Catherine Burnett (from April to November 2025)

6. Electoral Roll. There were 81 on the Electoral Roll at the end of 2025, 65 resident and 16 non-resident.

### **CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES**

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

**Principal address:** St Thomas' Church  
Winchelsea  
East Sussex  
TN36 4EB

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

7. 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 objects 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.

### **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. 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. In seeking to meet its charitable objects, the PCC has had due regard to carrying out its purpose for the public benefit. Throughout the year the Church has been open every day, a service has taken place every Sunday, along with weekly prayer meetings. The support of retired and visiting clergy has been essential in maintaining this pattern. In addition, all the major festivals were celebrated, a monthly Bible study group met in the New Inn and the

Church provided the venue for the Easter Monday Mayoring ceremony.

11. The Register of Services and the Visitors' Book demonstrate the regular use of the Church, not just as a place of worship, but in meeting a need for private reflection. The monthly Church Market has been a successful fundraiser and a key element of outreach and community engagement, as has been the regular Fellowship Lunches at Winchelsea Beach. The Mothers' Prayers group also met monthly at Winchelsea Beach. A community Harvest Barn Dance was held in the New Hall.

12. Supported Charities. Charities supported this year were Family Support, Demelza, Pett Level Rescue Boat, Rye Food Bank, 'You Raise Me Up,' Rye Hospital, Surviving Christmas, the Royal British Legion, Baby Basics and Farm Africa.

13. Events. Musical Events this year featured nine concerts, seven of which were sponsored by Winchelsea Arts and one by the Rye Festival

14. Special Offices. During the year there were three Baptisms, four Weddings and sixteen Burials or Interments.

15. Churchyard. The PCC has sought to maintain the churchyard as place to be enjoyed by residents and visitors. Community support of this has included a grant from Icklesham Parish Council and private sponsorship of the wildflower circles.

16. Our School. With 148 pupils, St Thomas's Primary School has made considerable use of the Church for services and educational visits. It also led on the production of the Christmas Crib service. A group of congregation members has also been engaged with the 'Open the Book' initiative in the School.

17. New Rector. Following an interview on 2 September, the Revd Nathanael Hayler was appointed Rector of the newly-formed Benefice of Winchelsea, Icklesham and Pett. He was inducted on 28 January 2026.

## **FABRIC**

18. Routine care and maintenance and appropriate statutory inspections have been conducted as has a full review of insurance requirements. The major structural work this year was the renovation of the north chancel window and vestry roof. The cost of this work was £12,000, which was supported by grants and by the Friends of Winchelsea Church. Minor repairs were carried out on the organ, the porch floor and gutter and the west door. The War Memorial and surrounds were cleaned, and repair and repointing work was undertaken on the churchyard paths. Discussion on a new lighting system continued and a new sound system was installed.

## **FINANCE**

19. The Statements of Financial Affairs attached to this report shows the existing investments and reserves. The PCC had planned a small surplus for the year on the general unrestricted fund and the receipts and payments for the year demonstrate that this was achieved. Receipts include a generous legacy from the Estate of the late Reverend Paddy Buxton. A grant to the Winchelsea Beach Community Association towards building improvements was funded from proceeds of the sale of St Richard's Church. The PCC has sought to manage the Church for the benefit of all, but pressure on the operating budget, particularly in terms of utility costs and general inflation, has been a considerable challenge. For similar reasons donations have been harder to attract, both from individuals and grant givers. In this context, we remain grateful for the support that has been given by the Friends of Winchelsea Church, by the Sussex Historic Churches Trust, by Icklesham Parish Council

and by the National Churches Trust.

20. The PCC maintains sufficient operating funds in a current account at Lloyds Bank. All surplus funds are held in deposit accounts held by the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities). Funds relating to the Blanesburgh Bequest are held in a separate CCLA Investment Fund for which the Diocese is Custodian Trustee. The Diocese reports performance annually, which is reflected in the PCC's Annual Accounts.

21. In accordance with Charity Commission guidance, the PCC maintains a reserve equivalent to six months' budgeted expenditure. For 2026, this equates to £62,229. This policy is reviewed by the PCC annually. Funds above this sum and which are not restricted are available to match fund projects or to finance future projects such as the delivery of major fabric expenditure following periodic structure reports by the Diocesan Architect.

The financial statements for the year follow.

<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>					
<b>As at: 31 December 2025</b>					
	<b>General (Unrestricted) Fund</b>	<b>Designated Fund</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Prior Year</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Current Assets - Investments</b>					
CCLA Blanesburgh Bequest (Diocese)			22,703	22,703	23,648
<b>Current Assets- Cash At Bank And In Hand</b>					
Lloyds - Current Account	20,457			20,457	6,080
CCLA Guide Book - Deposit Account	3,681		43	3,724	3,562
CCLA PCC - General Deposit Account	7,505	315,679	2,750	325,934	325,628
CCLA Lighting & Sound Appeal - Deposit Account			1,562	1,562	20,649
CCLA Joseph McCrindle - Deposit Account			12,019	12,019	11,499
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>39,077</b>	<b>386,399</b>	<b>391,066</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Funds Due to Diocese			145	145	1,090
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>38,932</b>	<b>386,254</b>	<b>389,976</b>
<b>Represented by</b>					
General (Unrestricted)	31,643	-	43	31,686	5,784
Designated - Sale of St Richards		315,679	-	315,679	315,373
Restricted - Blanesburgh			22,703	22,703	23,648
Restricted - Choir			700	700	700
Restricted - Churchyard			1,218	1,218	1,401
Restricted - Joseph			12,019	12,019	11,499
Restricted - Lighting & Sound			2,249	2,249	21,014
Restricted - Special Giving			-	-	7,169
Restricted - Wild Flower			-	-	3,388
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,643</b>	<b>315,679</b>	<b>38,932</b>	<b>386,254</b>	<b>389,976</b>

**Summary of Receipts and Payments**  
**1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025**

	General Unrestricted Fund	Designated Fund	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Prior Year
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts</b>					
Tax Efficient Giving	19,350			19,350	21,007
Collections at Services	6,019			6,019	4,153
Appeals			7,950	7,950	27,414
Black Box	8,339			8,339	8,862
Digital Machine	13,931		838	14,769	11,447
Ride & Stride - Sussex Historic Churches Trust	412			412	
Other Donations	7367		10	7377	6,677
Gift Aid Recovered	6,572		5,312	11,884	6,744
Legacies	20,151			20,151	
Grants - National Churches Trust	5,000			5,000	0
Grants - Sussex Historic Churches Trust & Listed Building VAT	4,804			4,804	22,127
Grants - Friends of Winchelsea Church	16,340			16,340	4,505
Church Markets	3,202			3,202	3,337
Harvest Supper	175			175	1,115
Church Lettings	2,430			2,430	2,193
Fees ex DBF Wedding, Funerals & Burials	10,376			10,376	7,680
Bank & CCLA Interest	161	14,342	1,434	15,937	18,478
CBF Investment Fund Dividend	657			657	642
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>125,286</b>	<b>14,342</b>	<b>15,544</b>	<b>155,172</b>	<b>146,381</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Donations to External Mission & Charities	23,560			23,560	3,977
Parish Share	60,000			60,000	66,000
Costs ex DBF re - Weddings, Funerals Etc.	2,010			2,010	1,191
Insurance	5,231			5,231	5,093
Salaries, Wage and Honoraria	5,355			5,355	4,254
Recruitment of New Incumbent	641			641	-
Clergy Expenses	-322			-322	1,989
Rectory Running Costs	587			587	4,857
Staff Expenses - Choir & Music	679			679	543
Mission & Evangelism Costs	207			207	1,691
Church Running Costs	2,942			2,942	11,952
Service Costs, Candles, Wine, etc	1,176			1,176	1,183
Printing, Stationery & Sundries	1,767			1,767	1,824
Church Utilities	6,753			6,753	5,080
Cost Of Church Activities/Trading eg Magazine, Bookstall	1,110			1,110	1,889
Churchyard Maintenance Cost			3,963	3,963	4,018
Minor Church Repairs & Maintenance	1,826			1,826	14,661
Major Church Repairs & Maintenance	9,638			9,638	3,235

New Building Projects (Light & Sound)			30,009	30,009	3,473
Accounting Software Subscription	180			180	204
Bank Charges	638			638	525
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>123,978</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,972</b>	<b>157,950</b>	<b>137,636</b>
<b>Difference in Receipts and Payments</b>	<b>1,308</b>	<b>14,342</b>	<b>-18,428</b>	<b>-2,778</b>	<b>8,745</b>

### Summary of Funds Movement 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

Fund	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Transfers	Gains and Losses	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Blanesburgh Bequest - Restricted	23,648				-945	22,703
Choir - Restricted	700					700
Churchyard Maintenance - Restricted	1,401	3,780	3,963			1,218
General Unrestricted	5,741	125,286	123,978	24,593		31,642
Joseph McCrindle - Restricted	11,499	520				12,019
Light & Sound - Restricted	21,014	11,244	30,009			2,249
Sale of St Richards - Designated	315,373	14,342		-14,036		315,679
Special Giving - Restricted	7,169			-7,169		
Wildflower - Restricted	3,388			-3,388		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>389,933</b>	<b>155,172</b>	<b>157,950</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-945</b>	<b>386,210</b>

#### Note to the Financial Reports

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

The Blanesburgh Bequest is a restricted fund for the repair and maintenance of the organ using interest and capital.

The Choir Fund is a restricted fund solely for the monies received following the closure of the Winchelsea Singers in 2020.

The Churchyard Maintenance Fund is a restricted fund comprising donations from the congregation and Winchelsea residents specifically for the maintaining the churchyard. There is an annual appeal and an application is made each year to Icklesham Parish Council for a grant..

The Joseph McCrindle Legacy is a restricted fund for the general beautification of the church and its fixtures and fittings.

The Light and Sound Appeal is a restricted fund for donations towards the installation of new sound and lighting systems in the church. The fund was created following the launch of the

appeal in November 2024.

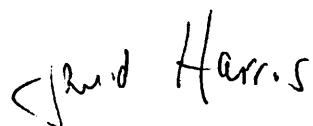
The Sale of St Richard's Fund is a designated fund, agreed by the PCC in 2023 to monitor the use of the proceeds from the sale of the church at Winchelsea Beach in the summer of 2023.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

22. Our priorities for 2026 will be:

- To work with the new Rector to achieve tangible, spiritual and measurable spiritual and material development across the joint Benefice, as it is developed.
- To examine with the new Rector how income streams might be enhanced, particularly encouraging stewardship and generosity in regular giving and in accessing potential grant givers.
- To work towards resolving outstanding matters regarding organ sustainability and the lighting project.

23. I am pleased to acknowledge and thank all those who have voluntarily given so much time to maintaining the life of the Church and its service to the whole community throughout the year. Many of these have already been mentioned in this report. It is too easy to take for granted the vital contribution of so many people within and beyond the regular congregation. The fact is that we could not manage without you all. Lastly, we fully appreciate the help of the Diocese, Archdeaconry and Deanery in so many ways that often go unnoticed, but upon which we sometimes depend.



David Harris  
Vice-Chair (to 28 January 2026)  
For and on behalf of the PCC



## The Parish of Winchelsea

### Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Parish of Winchelsea

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Parish of Winchelsea for the year ended 31 December 2025.

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of The Parish of Winchelsea you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of The Parish of Winchelsea's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

#### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of The Parish of Winchelsea as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



James Moreno FCCA

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

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