

2025 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CHARITY COMMISSION

Aims and purposes

St Nicholas Allington Parochial Church Council (the PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with our joint priest-in-charge in promoting the whole mission of the church – pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for maintaining the church building, halls and church grounds (but not the Rectory which is the responsibility of the Diocese).

Objectives and activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St. Nicholas. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament. When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit, and particularly the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- Worship and prayer; learning about the Gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus through a range of formal and informal worship, with and without communion. The church is committed to providing the Church of England 'occasional offices' of baptism, marriage and funerals.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St. Nicholas and the Church Halls.

The PCC has complied with Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults).

Achievements and Performance

St Nicholas Church was in interregnum during 2024. Rev Claudette Gayle was appointed to the post of priest-in-charge in March 2025. During 2024, the churchwardens assisted by a core 'Hub Team', reporting to the PCC, carried out the day-to-day tasks normally managed by the priest-in-charge, with the support of the Archdeacon and Area Dean.

A new Church Electoral Roll was prepared in April 2025, as required by the Church Representation Rules. There are now 104 parishioners on the electoral roll.

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services during the week and over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. For example, a range of worship services from Morning Worship, Holy Communion and informal worship at Oasis Communion and Oasis with contemporary worship songs. Our reflective worship presence on Facebook remains popular.

Attendance at worship and social activities has returned to pre-pandemic levels, especially at the Christmas services. Hire of the halls and income has returned to acceptable levels. We continue to see generosity from the community for the stock of items that we manage to help supply the local Foodbank and other causes.

All are welcome to attend our regular services. The average weekly attendance, counted during October 2025, was 117, which was a significant increase on previous years, reflecting a growing number of families attending services due to the positive impact of our outreach through children's and families work. Guide and Scout organisations continue to hold Parade Services in the church two or three times a year. We endeavour to

make our services easy for visitors to follow using Power Point projection, enlarged texts, or printed out in short booklets. The church sound system helps all visitors, as well as the hearing-impaired.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. Through baptism we thank God for the gift of life, and through funeral services friends and family express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and to commend the person into God's keeping. We have celebrated nine baptisms in church. Six funerals were conducted during the year. No weddings were conducted, which is not unusual given the church is a modern building.

Fiona Higgs, Children, the Families & Schools Minister has continued a Chaplaincy role within our local primary schools and leads assemblies, supports classrooms and the staff. She has formed strong relationships with the schools and continued to provide the "Explorers" after school clubs at Allington and Palace Wood Primary Schools throughout the year.

St Nicholas has an active Mothers' Union group with monthly Holy Communion services. We also run St Nicholas' Fellowship, a social group for the elderly. Residential Homes are visited, and services conducted there.

Deanery Synod

Two members of the PCC sit on the deanery synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structures of the church. The focus of the deanery is to bring about growth through a number of initiatives known as the Maidstone Mission Mosaic but also to provide an opportunity for churches to network and be more outward looking and missional.

The Church and Church Halls

St Nicholas is open every day to our community for private prayer and is used on a regular basis.

Our present church, consecrated in 1975, is a square building mainly, recently re-ordered by the replacement of pews with chairs. The church space is used for worship every Sunday and one Wednesday per month and at other times as required. It is also used for PCC Meetings, a weekly prayer group, a monthly meeting of mums and babes and other groups, and for appropriate community activities. To one side are the clergy vestry, the Parish Office, which is used three mornings a week, and three toilets, one with disabled access. The church has kitchen facilities in the main body of the church.

There are two church halls in a building adjacent to the church that provide facilities to many local groups and businesses. These halls have a kitchen and toilet facilities, including a baby change and disabled toilets. Both church and halls have disabled access.

A wide range of social and fund-raising events are held throughout the year that are open to the larger community. The Christmas Market draws many people into our buildings and is supported by a number of small local businesses.

Each Tuesday a Community Café takes place in St Nicholas Church. This is run by a team of volunteers and is registered with Maidstone Borough Council. It is attended by up to 78 people each week and is clearly valued by many who come as a place to meet and make friends. Some who come are recently bereaved, others are new to the area, and for many it is a place of warmth and welcome.

During the week the hall is used by many local groups and organisations including a mother and toddlers' group on Tuesdays. We run a monthly Mum & Babes group in the church which has led to a Faith Explorers group led by our Children, Families & Schools Minister. Throughout the year the youth group, JAHFA, have met regularly.

Our church halls offer valuable meeting places for a wide variety of community and commercial activities, including the numerous branches of the Guide and Scout organisations. The halls are booked frequently for private bookings by local residents.

Income from hall hire is strong and the church building is also being used more as a space for use by the community.

Pastoral Care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Prayer and pastoral work has continued through a very supportive network within the congregation. The Prayer and Pastoral Care co-ordinator maintains ongoing contact with many members of the congregation, particularly the elderly. Care Home ministry is provided through the Anna Chaplaincy network that draws from all denominations across the town and visits most care homes once a month.

Mission and Evangelism

Helping those in need is a demonstration of our faith. St Nicholas gives monthly to a range of charities both local and abroad including Alongside Africa.

St Nicholas provides reflections three times month via Facebook which reaches many people do not regularly connect with St Nicholas in other ways.

Communication of the life and events at St Nicholas is maintained through the weekly newsletter, via the St Nicholas website, our Facebook group and page, and on the church noticeboard. These are a vital means of not just keeping people within the church informed but also a way of reaching out to the wider community. The newsletter is sent to 248 people who have requested a copy. Paper copies are also available in church and just under 20 copies are taken each week.

We maintain a significant presence in the Primary Schools, which are non-church, through the work of our Children's, Families & Schools Minister.

Ecumenical Relationships

The church is a member of Maidstone Church Leaders which involves all Christian denominations from across the town.

Financial Review

Finances are healthy with good reserves, although there are indications of potential challenges ahead. Total income for the year amounted to £131,965 (2023 - £128,551) of which £1318 related to restricted income. There was a net deficit for the year of £14,151 (2023 - £9,886 surplus), of which £13,268 deficit related to general funds, mainly due to items of expenditure on periodic improvements and maintenance. At the year-end, funds totalled £92,716 (2023 - £106,867) of which £46,865 is held in designated and restricted funds.

The condition of the fabric of the church and halls are thankfully sound, and no substantial items have been highlighted as needing urgent repair. Our halls remain popular with hirers and provide a valuable source of income.

Reserves Policy

The policy of the PCC is to maintain reserves at a level of three months of annual expenditure.

The building reserve of £25,000 is designated for major repairs, such as possible roof repairs, that may be needed in the future.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all the volunteers who work so hard to make our church the lively and vibrant community it is. There are many people actively involved in worship and prayer, pastoral work, leading or contributing on a working group or simply helping out on a rota. A huge thank you to everyone contributing to the life within the parish at St Nicholas in this way.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. At St. Nicholas the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our priest-in-charge), churchwardens and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services, the members of our congregation, are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC.

The full PCC met six times during the year with an average level of attendance of 74%. Given its wide responsibilities the PCC has several committees each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. These committees, which include worship, social, halls, fabric and finance, are all responsible to the PCC and report back to it regularly with minutes of their decisions being received by the full PCC and discussed as necessary.

Administrative information

St. Nicholas Church is situated on Poplar Grove, Allington, Maidstone. It is part of the Diocese of Canterbury within the Church of England. The parish is legally known as the Parish of St Nicholas, Allington with St Peter, Maidstone. Roughly it stretches at its western edge from the railway, either side of the London Road, toward the town centre down to the river and Lockmeadow. The river end of the parish is the area which formerly came under the previous St Peter's Church, no longer in use. The running of the parish comes under two Churchwardens and the Parochial Church Council or PCC. Ministry and worship comes under a Priest-in-Charge.

The correspondence address is The Parish Office, Poplar Grove, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0DE. The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2006) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served at any time from 1st January 2024 until the date this report was approved are:

Incumbent: Parish in vacancy between February 2022 and March 2025.

Churchwardens: Dr Nigel Smetham, Mrs Jenny Stone
Children, Families & Schools Minister: Mrs Fiona Higgs

Elected members:

Ms Helen Rogers - Treasurer
Ms Emily Stone - Secretary
Mr Michael Froude (retired November 2024)
Mrs Gill Waite
Ms June Bagshaw
Mrs Gill Poole
Mrs Martina Tidball

Mrs Nicola Tulip
Mr David Salvage
Ms Jacqueline Wilkinson
Ms Ruth Brind
Mrs Angela Redford
Mr Seb Lincoln

Approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by Nigel Smetham (PCC Vice-Chair – Parish in vacancy during 2024).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Smetham', written diagonally across the page.

18th May 2025

ALLINGTON P C C

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

Notes

RECEIPTS

Voluntary Receipts

Regular Giving

Pledged giving

Income tax recovered

Collections in church

Other voluntary receipts

Activities for generating funds

Receipts from Church activities

Interest on Deposits

3a

3b

3c

PAYMENTS

Church activities

Diocesan Parish Share

Other Payments

3d

Surplus/(deficit) before transfers

Transfers between funds

Surplus/(deficit) for year after transfers

Cash Balances at 01/01/24

Cash Balances at 31/12/24

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Cash Funds

Bank Current Account

CBF Deposit Fund

Bequest Account

Goodbox

Liquidity Manager

Cash

Other Monetary Assets

Paye

Diocese

Halls lettings due

Liabilities

Pension payment

Amounts collected for Charity Appeals

2024				2023
General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
£	£	£	£	£
			42090	42837
42090			11221	12530
11221		975	6247	4907
5272		975	59558	60274
58583		343	3480	4217
3137		0	4053	4684
4053			63356	58305
63356			1517	1071
1517			131965	128551
130647	0	1318		
£	£	£	£	£
			59752	54547
59752		201	86363	64118
84162	2000	201	146115	118665
143914	2000			
		1117	-14151	9886
-13268	-2000			
-5000	5000			
		1117	-14151	9886
-18268	3000			
		605	106867	
64119	42143			
		1722	92716	
45851	45143			

2024				2023
General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
21153			21153	35351
12759			12759	12116
27060			27060	59211
115			115	129
30024			30024	0
1605			1605	60
92716	0	0	92716	106867
			0	863
			5568	0
5568			1450	1915
1450			7018	2778
7018				
			944	657
944			1327	9
1327		0	2271	666
2271	0	0		

Approved by the PCC on 3/3/25 and signed on their behalf by :

..... signed
 Nigel Smitham (PCC Chairman) and Mrs Helen Rogers (PCC Treasurer during 2024)

NOTES

- Fixed Assets retained for church use are written-off in the year of purchase.
 The two church halls previously shown in restricted fixed assets have an insured value of approximately £2,600,000.

- The movement in designated and restricted funds during the year were:

	Balance b/f	Receipts	Payments	Transfers	Balance
Designated: Building fund	20000			5000	25000
Bequest fund (unrestricted)	22143		2000		20143
	42143	0	2000	5000	45143
Sunday Lunch Club	172		172		0
Fellowship	424		29		395
Special charity appeals	9	1318			1327
	605	1318	201	0	1722

- Receipts and Payments analysis

- Other voluntary receipts

Donations

- Activities for generating funds

Fund Raising

- Receipts from Church activities

Halls Income

Sunday Lunch Club

2024				2023
General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
3137	0	343	3480	4217
3137	0	343	3480	4217
4053	0	0	4053	4684
4053	0	0	4053	4684
63356	0	0	63356	57819
			0	486
63356	0	0	63356	58305

3. Receipts and Payments analysis ctd

d. Church activities - payments

Charitable payments
Overseas
Christian Relief and Development
Home Mission

Fees
Church running expenses
Halls running expenses
Salaries, wages and honoraria
Training
Administration expenses
Youth Work
Fundraising
Sunday Lunch Club
Fellowship
Sundries
Halls Deposit

2024				2023
General fund	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
595			595	1000
1400			1400	2400
295			295	400
2290	0	0	2290	3800
715			715	416
17637			17637	9641
16979			16979	19402
42120	2000		44120	26373
177			177	0
3803			3803	3000
198			198	138
242			242	391
		172	172	724
		29	29	6
			0	27
			0	200
84162	2000	201	86363	60318

4. The expenses paid to clergy may include a small immaterial proportion, which relates to their function as PCC members. No other payments were made to PCC members.

Gemma Sturley

CIMA Chartered Accountant

Independent examiner's report to Allington PCC

I have completed my examination of the accounts of Allington PCC for the year ended 31 December 2024.

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 charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Gemma Sturley
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)

33 Larking Drive, Allington ME16 0UT

29th April 2025