

THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF THE OCTAGON

England & Wales · Charity number 1156866

Details

Other names	THE OCTAGON PCC, THE OCTAGON
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Status	Registered
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Legal form	Previously excepted
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Registered	2014-04-30
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Register	View on the Charity Commission register
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Contact

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Website	www.theoctagonparish.org.uk
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Activities

Objects: PROMOTING IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

Activities: The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship in our churches and to become part of our parish community. We aim to help ordinary people to live out their faith through: Worship and prayer, Learning about the gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus Christ, Provision of pastoral care for people living in the Parish, Missionary and outreach work.

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services
- **What:** The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Religious Activities, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- West Sussex

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£155,910	£171,782	-	-
2023-12-31	£114,239	£113,382	-	-
2022-12-31	£117,551	£112,247	-	-
2021-12-31	£131,690	£121,737	-	-
2020-12-31	£115,467	£95,296	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Audrey Hamilton		2024-05-18
Carol Elizabeth STAMPER		2025-05-14
EDWARD COTTRELL		2025-05-10
Fiona Mullett		2025-05-14
JENNIE DOLMAN		2025-05-10
Michelle Wooding		2025-05-14
Rev Christopher Hancock		2024-01-29
SARAH LAWTON		2025-05-10
Sally Ann ABLEWHITE		2025-05-10
TOM MAIER		2025-05-14
Yvonne Haggard		2025-05-14

Accounts

THE OCTAGON PARISH

Westbourne Deanery

Diocese of Chichester

Comprising the Parish Churches:

St Mary, Compton;

St Peter, East Marden;

Christchurch, Forestside

St Peter, Racton

St Mary, Stoughton

the Chapels of Ease of:

St Mary, North Marden

St Michael, Up Marden

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2024

INCUMBENT – from 29th January 2024

The Revd Christopher Hancock

The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Charles Lawton

BANK

NatWest Bank

WEBSITE

<http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk>

Charity Registration No. 1156866

The Octagon Parish – Open for All

*“Showing God’s love and caring for our community and churches in
the beautiful South Downs National Park”*

Administrative Information

The Parish is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commission under the name of **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon**, with the Registered Charity Number of 1156866.

During the year 2024 the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):
(year of election/re-election)

Incumbent: Reverend Christopher M.J. Hancock

Churchwardens:

- Mrs Carol Stamper (2022)
- Mrs Sarah Lawton (2018)

Treasurer: Mr Edward Cottrell (2017)

Deanery Synod Reps:

- Mr Edward Cottrell (2024)
- Mrs Jennie Dolman (2024)
- Mrs Annabelle Hancock (May 2023)
- Dr Richard Hancock (May 2023)

Elected members:

- Mrs Sally Ablewhite (2020)
- Mrs Annie Barnes (2024)
- Mr Richard Barnes (2022)
- Mr Tom Maier (2019)
- Mrs Audrey Hamilton (2024)

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Fiona Mullett (2022)

Data Protection and Compliance Officer: Mrs Carol Stamper

Ex-officio members:

Secretary: Ms Rachel Foister (until August 2024) thereafter Mrs. Jennie Dolman

Electoral Roll Officer: Ms Rachel Foister (until August 2024) thereafter Mr Peter Taylor

Standing Committee: Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer

**Lay readers are ex officio members unless requesting not to be on the PCC*

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STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon (hereafter referred to as “the PCC”) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Power’s Measure. The PCC is a registered charity – Reg. No. 1156866. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. For 2024, the membership of the PCC of the Octagon Parish is detailed on page 1.

Parish Local Committees

Each of the historic Parishes of the Octagon Parish is administered by a Parish Local Committee (PLC) representing members of its regular congregation. Each PLC is represented on the Octagon PCC by one of their members or by a Churchwarden.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprised the Rector, the two Parish Churchwardens: Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mrs Carol Stamper and the Treasurer of the Octagon Parish Mr Edward Cottrell.

Members of Parish Local Committees (PLCs) in 2024

Compton and Up Marden	East and North Marden	Forestside	Stoughton	Racton
Sally Ablewhite*	Edward Cottrell *	Jennie Dolman *	Steve Barrett	Annie Barnes*
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd	Sarah Hutchinson	Rosy Bell	Richard Barnes*
Fiona Baker	John Robinson	David Parker	Didi Burden	Anna Blencowe
Annabel Keville	Valerie Robinson		Pamela Harry	Peter Blencowe
Amanda Jackson	Penny Walder		Di Hughes	Philip Cooper
Tom Maier *			Sarah Lawton *	Ros Gordon-Cumming
Steph Newell			Caroline Taylor	Audrey Hamilton *
Robert Sawers			Ros Velton	Elizabeth Stanley
Valerie Seddon			Jane Venables	

*Elected member of PCC

Octagon Voluntary Roles in 2024

Octagon Bell Ringing

Tim Wright and Joanna Woodcock

Octagon Music Licensing

Richard Barnes

Octagon Magazine Editor

Caroline Taylor

Octagon Choir Lead

Martin Phillips

Octagon Magazine Advertising

Roy Fulker till October

Marilyn Clark from November

Ministry Team

Reverend Christopher M.J. Hancock MA FCA (instituted 29th January, 2024)

Mr Edward Mynors – Octagon Lay Reader (retired September 2024)

Mr David Parker – Authorised Lay Minister (from January 2022)

Sidespersons for Local churches 2024

Compton	East Marden	North Marden	Forestside	Racton	Stoughton	Up Marden
Barlie Adams	Penny Walder	Carol Stamper	Jennie Dolman	Annie Barnes	Rosy Bell	Michael Ablewhite
Fiona Baker	Annie Judd		Roy Fulker	Audrey Hamilton	Barney Gowar	Sally Ablewhite
Amanda Jackson			Linda Fulker	Gill King- Smith	Fiona Gowar	Valerie Seddon
Annabel Keville			Paul Holmes		Pam Harry	
Tom Maier			Nonie Holmes		Di Hughes	
Jessica Maier			Helen Honeyman		Charles Lawton	
Thomas Newell			Sarah Hutchinson		Sarah Lawton	
Steph Newell			David Parker		Chris Velton	
Robert Sawers					Ros Velton	

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL 2024

Our Aims and Purposes as a Charity

The Octagon Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent (the Rector), in the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The Parish was in vacancy until the institution of Revd Christopher Hancock as Rector on 29th January 2024. During the interregnum leadership of the Parish was provided by the two Churchwardens Sarah Lawton and Carol Stamper as Sequestrators with the support of Archdeacon Luke Irving-Capel and the Rural Dean, Mother Jessica Reid.

The PCC is specifically responsible for the maintenance of the five historic Parish churches of St Mary Compton, St Mary Stoughton, St Peter Racton, St Peter East Marden, Christ Church Forestside together with two chapels of ease St Mary North Marden and St Michael Up Marden. These came together to form the Octagon Parish in 2012. Responsibility for the upkeep of the Chapel of St Paul at Stansted Park has been transferred to the Stansted Park Foundation though the Parish remains responsible for the services which take place there. The PCC is also responsible for supporting the Rector 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;
- Enabling our churches to be accessible to all regardless of their age, colour, sexual orientation, physical ability or economic status.
- Pastoral support and care for people in the Parish, from the eldest to the youngest;
- Providing financial support to those in need.

What We Planned to do In Order to Achieve our Charitable Objectives

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC 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 recognizing its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For 2024 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aim. These included:

- Institution and onboarding of a new Rector
- Enabling as many people as possible to worship in our churches and to become part of our Parish community
- Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers
- Putting faith into action through community engagement
- Offering a range of services with participation opportunities for worship in prayer and scripture, music and sacrament

- Working to make our churches more welcoming and accessible to the people that live in the Parish and to visitors
- Reaching out to the community through provision of village events, festival services, support of the Octagon Choir, the Stoughton Bell Ringers, the Octagon Magazine, the Octagon Parish Website, the weekly bulletin and the Facebook Group
- Maintaining the fabric of the church buildings as historic centres and focuses of community life in our villages
- Ensuring the provision of pastoral care to people living in the Parish
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the Parish.

What We Achieved and How We Affected Beneficiaries' Lives

Revd Christopher Hancock was instituted as Rector of the Parish and presented with cure of its souls by Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner on 29th January 2024. His focus in the first year has been to get to know the Parish - the needs and aspirations of its people, communities, and churches,

From an administrative perspective, during the year we lost the services of our longstanding Parish Administrator and PCC Secretary, Rachel Foister, when she moved to Cornwall. Her many roles have been distributed through the leadership team of the Rector, Churchwardens and Treasurer with the key function of advertising and communications being taken on by Michelle Wooding and the role of secretary being taken on by Jennie Dolman.

This team operated alongside committed local teams in our seven churches to ensure that we were able to keep running for our beneficiaries. Indeed, the Parish is dependent on over 70 people who give their time to support the work of our Parish.

Provision and Attendance at Worship

Weekly worship is focussed on Holy Communion which is celebrated every Sunday rotating through the five historic parishes on a monthly cycle with evensong held at Racton unless there are five Sundays in the month. Use is also made of the smaller churches: evensong is celebrated once a month during the summer months at Up Marden; special services are held at North Marden on Good Friday, on Ascension Day and on Sea Sunday and midday prayer is said once a month at St Paul's Chapel, Stansted Park. In addition, we look to celebrate each church by keeping its Patronal Festival and by holding additional services in Holy Week and Christmas. We resumed our Tuesday morning online Morning Prayer services during Lent and Advent and in 2025 have commenced a mid-week communion once a month at noon in Compton.

To cater for children and families, a successful and growing family service is held once a month at Compton overseen and co-led by our Authorised Lay Minister, David Parker, and Mrs. Fiona Mullett. They make a very effective team and attendance has risen to over 40 each month.

We continue to support Compton and Up Marden Church of England school, by providing opportunities for prayer and worship through assemblies in the School each week and by hosting end of term services in church.

We are grateful for our band of Octagon organists who accompany our worship under the leadership of Richard Barnes. His fellow organist, Martin Phillips, directs the Octagon Choir which continues to grow and to enhance the worship at festivals and other important services. The bell ringing group have been very active not only in Stoughton but in visiting other churches and hosting visiting bell ringing groups. The choir and the bell ringing group attract several people who are not regular church goers.

In total we held 154 services in 2024 (111 in 2023) with an aggregate attendance of 5,158 people.

There was a small but welcome 5% increase in average weekly church attendance with an encouraging 10.9% increase in attendance at Easter and 13.6% increase in attendance at Christmas. We saw a remarkable 410 people over Christmas in a Parish of just 1,267 souls.

Recent Attendance Across the Octagon:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Easter	-	120	154	178	213
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	20	285	292	316	410
Usual Sunday	-	-	18	25	28

(Data taken from CofE Statistics for Mission)

After a decline over the last 5 years, the renewal of the roll for the 2024 APCM has seen a material increase. At the 2023 APCM the electoral roll had 119 members. Since then, two parishioners have died, seven have moved from the parish and one had been ordained (Maria Sadler is now a priest serving her curacy in Bosham and licensed clergy not allowed be members of the electoral roll). The net brought forward electoral roll therefore stood at 109 but 65 new members have joined and the roll now stands at 174, an increase of 46%.

The evolution of the numbers on electoral roll in recent years has been as follows:

2019	139
2020	138
2021	134
2022	127
2023	125
2024	119
Current	174

In 2024 our long-serving LLM, Edward Mynors, and much-loved retired priest, Revd Andrew Stamp, both decided not to renew their licences and so retired from ministry. We are very grateful to them for their long service to the parish and, in particular, for their support during the recent interregnum.

We are excited that two parishioners, Michelle Wooding and Ian Coleshill have started their training as Authorised Lay Ministers. When authorised in summer 2025 they will join our existing ALM, David Parker in leading worship, especially at family services.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Social

In a parish where there are limited venues and social services, the church people and buildings provide an important focus for community and care.

Our extremely successful Parish magazine, *The Octagon*, has a circulation of approximately 280 and provides an important service to our dispersed rural community. Caroline Taylor and Malcolm Lamb jointly edit the magazine and Marilyn Clark looks after advertising revenue. We are very grateful to all of them and to those who generously give their time to distributing the magazine each month. We held a tea party to show our appreciation of them in the summer.

During the year Michelle Wooding took on the Sisyphean task of producing the weekly Octagon Bulletin. Distributed by email to 276 people, the Bulletin provides up to date information on services and parish events. The Octagon Parish website also provides a valuable communication medium. It enables the distribution of material within the Parish, and (together with our entries on A Church Near You) provides information about the Parish to the wider world and enables those outside the Parish to contact us.

Monthly coffee mornings are held in Compton and in Forestside and our monthly pub lunch continues at the new venue of the Hare and Hounds. Such community events are an important resource in reducing rural isolation and loneliness, especially amongst the elderly in winter.

Sadly, 2024 saw the closure of two of the four public houses of the Octagon resulting in a significant reduction in informal public meeting space and a general loss of amenity to the community (not least its Rector). The Langdale Trust stepped up in Compton organising villagers' drinks on the last Friday of each month. These have subsequently moved to the re-opened Tea Rooms.

Hospitality before and after our services provides an opportunity to get to know new people attending and strengthen our relationships one with the other. Coffee and pastries are served before each family service. Coffee is served after each Octagon Eucharist with the exception of East Marden where sherry is provided. We celebrate the churches' festivals with prosecco.

Many non-liturgical events were held during the year which brought people together to enjoy fun, food and to fund raise. These included a Daffodil Day and Harvest Fair at Stoughton, Christmas Fairs in Compton and Stoughton and the usual Lent lunches which in 2024 raised over £900 in support of the Rural Refugee Network.

Evangelistic

The task of forming and nurturing parishioners in their faith is paramount if the life of the church is to be sustained into the next generation. Encouragingly, there were six baptisms in 2024. All those baptised have been followed up with a card on their birthday for three years post-baptism. Importantly, there were also six confirmations in a joyous deanery service held at Holy Trinity, Bosham and conducted by the Bishop of Horsham.

Significantly, two of the recently confirmed went on to apply for training as Authorised Lay Minsters. This is a short course provided by the Diocese to give guidance on how to lead worship and which can provide a stepping stone to future vocations.

During Lent we held a series of talks following the Diocesan theme on the New Testament.

We are exploring the idea of a homegroup to enable people to explore and expand their faith in a less formal setting.

The seven places of worship for which the PCC are responsible remained open for private prayer and exploration every day of the year. The offering of our church buildings for prayer and peace and quiet is an important part of our mission and outreach and we are grateful to all those across our villages who help to clean and maintain our churches as well as those who arrange flowers in them.

In 2024, over 905 people signed our visitor books, some were walking groups or groups interested in historic churches. Our churches may well have been visited by over 1,000 people this year. They include walkers and cyclists. These buildings are havens in this frantic world and offer a place to “be still and know that I am God”.

Pastoral

To the extent it can, the PCC looks to make provision for the pastoral care of the population of the Parish. The church has a particular role to play around the significant moments in peoples’ lives: at marriage, in childbearing, in sickness and in death. In our community, even those who are not regular attenders at services will look to the church at such times and we welcome them.

We held a well-attended All Souls Service parishioners and families of former parishioners to remember loved ones inviting especially the friends and families of those who had died recently. The PCC plan to provide more special services designed to meet particular needs.

Summary of Birth, Marriage and Funeral Services Across the Parish:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Marriage Services	9	0	9	8	3	4
Marriage Blessings	2	0	3	1	0	1
Baptisms	9	3	6	10	6	6
Burials in our Churchyards	6	2	6	5	2	2
Interments of Ashes	6	4	2	5	7	7
Funeral Services only	3	5	5	4	6	1

In 2024, the PCC looked to organise provision of pastoral care beyond the occasional offices: to make an offer for the long-term sick and those who care for them, for the bereaved and those who live alone. Carol Stamper established a pastoral team of those who offer to call on those who find themselves in such situations and a day of training has been held to offer a structured approach to visiting and listening. A series of ‘networking’ lunches has also been organised for those who find themselves alone.

A number of donations were made from the Rector’s Discretionary Fund to those in need across the Parish at Christmas and throughout the year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Below are the Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2024 based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon central account.

The statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis by the following:

	Treasurer	Independent Examiner
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	Christopher Tite	Edward Cottrell
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

Copies of the separate annual statements are available on request.

2024 saw continued heavy expenditure on the fabric of our beautiful ancient churches. The turnover and expenditure were pushed higher than usual as the local churches got to work on the long list of quinquennial tasks augmented by the cost of architects' fees and requests for faculty permissions. St Mary's Stoughton saw expenditure on the fabric rocket from £2000 in 2023 to over £35,000 in 2024. As their reserves are limited this might have been impossible had it not been for the generosity of The Friends of St Mary's who supplied the lions' share of the costs. St Peter's Racton and St Peter's East Marden also saw unexpected expenditure. At East Marden the previous repairs performed to the Victorian chimney proved to have failed and a further expenditure of over £10,000 was required on the redundant feature for which the boiler has long since been removed. At Forestside, having managed to escape any expenditure the previous year the Parish Local Council had to spend £7,000.

At the same time inflation is still with us and costs were rising across the board not least in the Parish Mission Cost. This rose by 2% to £52,557. All this meant that the churches were very grateful to receive their investment income and, in some cases, had to withdraw capital sums to meet costs. Despite this the parish accounts show a loss for the year of only £15,872.

However, the arrival of our new Rector appears to have had a beneficial effect on activity levels including donations within the Parish. Donations, collections and planned giving were all higher in the year. The latter benefitted from an irresistible encouragement from PCC member Dr Richard Hancock for parishioners to join the Parish Giving Scheme. All churches and the central Octagon were all quickly signed up to the scheme and the uptake has been most satisfactory.

Sadly, during the year our very capable administrator has moved away but with the input of the Rector and some volunteers her duties have been taken up without incurring any costs. This has been very beneficial to the finances of the parish. It is to be hoped that this can be sustained in the future.

Trustee payments and expenses

The PCC provides a contribution towards the heat, light and maintenance for the Vicarage and pays its council tax.

Many thanks to everyone who has donated or helped to raise money for our small parish and thank you to all the treasurers and examiners for the individual churches and the overall parish accounts.

Edward Cottrell, Octagon Treasurer

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2024

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT IN TOTAL FUNDS

	2024 £
Total funds at beginning of year	664,994
Deficit of income over expenditure	(15,872)
Sale of investments	(12,721)
Change in value of investments	25,124
Net movement in total funds	(3,469)
Total funds at end of year	661,525

The Accounts were approved by the Parochial Church Council on 26 March 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:



Christopher Hancock
Rector, The Octagon Parish



Edward Cottrell
Treasurer, The Octagon Parish

Statement of Income & Expenditure

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£
INCOME		
Incoming Resources from Donors		
Planned giving (Gift Aid)	32,238	30,789
Collections (inc. wall safes)	14,887	10,502
Income tax recovery	10,200	11,791
Other Voluntary Incoming Resources		
Fundraising	14,871	16,357
Donations and miscellaneous	54,928	21,478
Incoming Resources from Operating Activities		
Fees received	1,614	3,012
Investment Income	14,451	20,310
Sale of investments	12,721	-
Total receipts	155,910	114,239
EXPENDITURE		
Grants to charities	810	390
Church Activities		
Parish contribution and Deanery expenses	55,835	51,662
Church running expenses (inc. admin)	31,238	27,407
Octagon Costs (inc. Clergy expenses)	12,681	5,105
Church repairs and maintenance	71,218	28,818
Total payments	171,782	113,382
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE	(15,872)	857

STATEMENT OF TOTAL ASSETS

At 31st December, 2024

Cash at bank and in hand	74,682	
Cash deposits	116,421	
Investments	470,421	
Total	661,525	664,994

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton and Up Marden, East & North Marden,
Forestside & Stansted, Stoughton, Racton

Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of Accounts

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2024 are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent Inspector</i>
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	Christopher Tite	Edward Cottrell
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

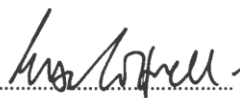
As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2024 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed 

Date 3/5/2025

Inspector of Accounts
Mr Charles Lawton
Walderton House
Walderton
Chichester PO18 9ED

Signed 

Date 3/5/2025

Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Edward Cottrell
Battine House
East Marden
Chichester PO18 9JE

THE OCTAGON PARISH PCC INVESTMENT POLICY

Adopted by the PCC, November 2017, reviewed May 2025

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as trustees of Parish funds, are responsible for investment policy. The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable - this return can then be spent on the charity's aims. It is recommended that PCC members read what the Charity Commission says on the matter: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/money-and-accounts/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/>

In order to act within the law, the PCC must:

- know, and act within, their charity's powers to invest
- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for their charity
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless they have good reason for not doing so
- review investments on a regular basis
- explain their investment policy in the annual report.

The PCC manages an 'unincorporated charity' and as such the trustees are personally liable for their actions. However, if trustees can demonstrate that they have considered the relevant issues, taken advice where appropriate and reached a reasonable decision, they are unlikely to be criticised for their decisions, or for adopting a particular policy.

Parish Funds and Investment Policy

Parish funds are currently managed in six separate 'pots': the five main churches (Compton, Stoughton, East Marden, Racton and Forestside) and a central fund. It is proposed, until otherwise instructed by the PCC, to continue to manage the six 'pots' separately but to set an investment policy based on the combined financial aims and needs of the Parish. As such, the investment policy will allocate to a combination of suitable investments, taking into account the particular needs of a church and the Parish's needs as a whole. All funds will be either deposited in recognised UK bank accounts or collective investment schemes managed by an authorised investment manager, approved by the trustees.

Investment Objective

The combined investment objective is to protect the capital value of the funds in real terms and to provide sufficient income for any shortfall in cash flow raised annually by the Parish. To this end, the PCC with the advice of the PLC committees will determine from time to time the appropriate investment vehicle given the financial needs of the Parish specifically:

- immediate cash needs (e.g. deposits)
- funds that can be invested for the short term (up to 2 years- e.g. fixed income)
- funds that are not required for the foreseeable future (longer term investments – e.g. balanced funds of equities, bonds and property)
- funding for unforeseen circumstances

Risk Policy

In order to meet the investment objective, some risks need to be taken. These risks will be continually assessed considering the Parish's financial needs. The PCC may also give guidance on capital, market, valuation, liquidity, regulatory, counterparty and governance risks. Above all, the investment policy is to be diversified across asset classes and sectors.

Delegation of Investment Powers

The PCC is responsible for all investment decisions and risk assessments. It may take investment opinions from their appointed Finance Committee, and it will delegate the day-to-day management of funds to the same committee. The PCC may also seek a third-party opinion. The day-to-day management will be performed by the Treasurer with the guidance of the Finance Committee and based on the investment policy and risk profile the PCC determines from time to time given the expected financing needs of the Parish.

Investment Performance

The PCC will review investment performance as a regular item on the PCC agenda.

THE OCTAGON PARISH RESERVES POLICY

Adopted by The Octagon PCC November 2017, reviewed March 2023

The Octagon Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the upkeep and administration of seven churches (the upkeep of St Paul's, Stansted is the responsibility of the Stansted Estate) and for the pastoral care of its Parishioners. The churches are old, some dating back to Saxon times, and require constant upkeep and repair. Their collective insured value is over £16 million.

The PCC has determined to accrue for known expenses relating to the annual running repairs based on previous years' experience but has also set aside reserves of £75,000 per building, for unforeseen repairs identified by the rota of quinquennial inspection reports.

The PCC has also determined to reserve an additional sum of £70,000 to administer the Octagon Parish in case of emergency.

The PCC has designated the responsibility of investing the reserves to the PCC Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer. The committee consists of the PCC treasurer, the local church treasurers, and a churchwarden. All investment decisions will pass through the committee. The committee meets at least once per year. Decisions between meetings, if they are necessary, are made by email.

The reserves are generally to be allocated and invested in recognised and agreed funds of differing risk profiles, managed by UK-regulated Fund Managers, or a bank deposit account. The asset allocation mix of the reserves takes into account the risk profile of each fund and an assessment of the date at which the reserves may be required.

The PCC, together with the Finance Committee, regularly reviews the policy and investments throughout the year based on a continual assessment of expense risks.

MATERIAL STATE OF THE CHURCHES OF THE OCTAGON PARISH

OCTAGON PARISH CHURCH REPAIRS REPORT MAY 2025 to cover 2024/2025

Over the past year, there have been post Quinquennial Inspection (QI) works within the parish and our churches are mostly in good order.

In summer 2024, Simon Dyson, the new inspecting architect for Compton and Up Marden, inspected both churches.

Around the parish, new, updated noticeboards are finally going up showing the name of our new Rector.

Compton, St Mary

The QI indicated that the church building is generally in good order. However, the decorations in the south aisle are in a poor state and redecoration is recommended. The PLC would like this to be undertaken as a priority.

Whilst the major part of the building appears to be watertight there is a recurring leak at the west end of the nave which requires closer examination to inform the likely scope of repair required. This will necessitate the expense of scaffolding for further inspection and the likely requirement of bat surveillance which the PLC wish to defer until after the internal works have been undertaken.

The next QI is due in 2029.

Up Marden, St Michael

It was reported that “The PCC and Friends have kept the building fabric in good order and the roofs are watertight, the structure seems generally sound, and the grounds well maintained.”

However, the tower requires repairs, particularly to the upper stage constructed in timber.

Prior to any works on the bell tower taking place, bat surveillance is being undertaken to assess if a licence or mitigation measures are required before any works take place.

The next QI is due in 2029.

North Marden, St Mary

No works have been necessary within the past year.

The next QI is due in 2025.

East Marden, St Peter

In October 2024, the ongoing problem of water ingress necessitated an investigation of the redundant chimney for which a Revised Interim Faculty was obtained. The chimney was dismantled, the cause of the problem established and repaired before the chimney was reinstated as was required. A Minor Works grant from the Diocese was secured for this to be done.

The church path is in urgent need of maintenance. Minor Works Direction has allowed this to be done with self-bonding Romsey Gravel.

Following plaster-fall from the porch ceiling, a quotation is being sought for repairs to the plaster.

The next QI is due in 2026.

Stoughton, St Mary

With List B approval, post QI remedial works were undertaken to masonry on the belfry louvres, pointing and repairs to the external paving.

Also with List B approval, a redundant water butt causing damp within the sanctuary north wall, has been removed and downpipe adapted.
In September, urgent repair to the organ was required as the bellows failed. The reconditioned blower was re-installed in time for the Remembrance Service.
The next QI is due in 2026.

Racton, St Peter

No works have been required within the past year.
The next QI is due in 2026.

Forestside, Christchurch

This is the only church within the parish which is not listed which cuts off potential sources of finance for renovation. A Heritage Listing application is therefore being made in the hope that listing status will ensure its long-term future and, for the moment at least, allow reclaim on VAT for repair works.

Urgent repairs were undertaken to the North side of the church roof in August 2024 but water ingress continues to be a problem in the church, particularly where there are roof gullies.

In April 2025 part of the blistered painted wall surface which has been peeling away (noted in the last QI) fell from the chancel arch. The inspecting architect has been invited to advise on repair and ongoing damp problems.

The next QI is due in 2027.

Sarah Lawton, Churchwarden, May 2025

SAFEGUARDING IN THE OCTAGON PARISH

Fundamentally, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. Given this, safeguarding is important to a 'healthy' church life and the Octagon Parish works to strengthen a good safeguarding culture and continues to follow sound safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is included as a key area on the Octagon community website, and we continue to prioritise loneliness and isolation issues within our community.

Mrs. Fiona Mullett became the Parish safeguarding officer in 2022 and she has worked during the past year to raise the profile of safeguarding in the Parish and to encourage those who are active in the Parish, especially its officers to undertake training.

The Parish is adopting the Safeguarding Dashboard which has been adopted by the Diocese. Members of the PCC are in the process of undertaking the appropriate levels of Safeguarding training as advised by the Diocese.

All relevant staff and volunteers are up to date with their DBS checks.

A small number of referrals was made to the Diocese in 2024. No further action was required by the Parish in respect of any of the referrals made.

Safeguarding policies (in addition to our Health and Safety Policies) for the Parish are published on our website and are regularly reviewed following the guidance and requirements of the Diocesan Simple Quality Protects system.

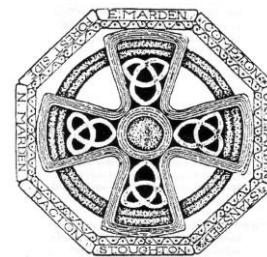
DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Westbourne Deanery is ably led by Mother Jessica Reid (Rural Dean) and Jane Wilkinson (Lay Chair). Matters discussed at synod in the last year have included Safeguarding, Eco Church and Bishop Luffa School. There was also excellent discussion about what makes each parish special.

The Parish enjoys good relationships with deanery colleagues. It hosted choral Evensong for the Deanery in September and is planning a Deanery Pilgrimage to Chichester Cathedral starting at Stoughton in Rogationtide (31st May, 2025).

With its four lay representatives as well as the Rector, the Parish was able to be represented at all meetings of the Deanery Synod in 2024. In 2025, Octagon Deanery Representative, Annabelle Hancock, will take on the role of Secretary to the Deanery Synod where she follows in a long tradition of Octagon representatives who have held the post.

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestsides & Stansted
Stoughton, Racton
www.theoctagonparish.org.uk
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD
Tel: 023 9263 1252



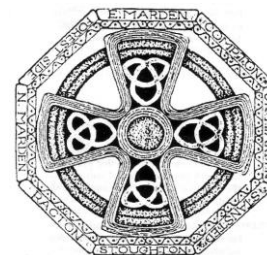
**Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:00pm on
Thursday 14th May 2025
AGENDA**

*The meeting will be chaired by Jennie Dolman
Secretary of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon*

*Only those whose names are entered on the Octagon Parish Electoral Roll or the Local
Government Electoral Roll may attend and vote.*

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting dated 23rd May, 2024
2. To re-elect Mrs Carol Stamper as Churchwarden of the Octagon Parish.

THE OCTAGON PARISH
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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 23rd May 2024
at Compton and Up Marden CE School and Community Hall at 7pm

Present: -

Members of the PCC

- Sally Ablewhite (SA)	Local Warden and PLC Rep. (Up Marden)
- Annie Barnes (AB)	Elected member
- Richard Barnes (RB)	Elected member
- Edward Cottrell (EC)	Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep
- Jennie Dolman (JD)	Deanery Synod Rep.
- Christopher Hancock (CH)	Octagon Rector
- Sarah Lawton (SL)	Parish Churchwarden
- Fiona Mullett (FM)	Octagon Safeguarding Officer
- Tom Maier (TM)	Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC Rep
- Rachel Foister (RDF)	PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator

15 members of the electoral roll were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

Apologies were received from :

Richard Hancock (RH)	Deanery Synod Rep.
Annabelle Hancock (AH)	Deanery Synod Rep.
Carol Stamper (CS)	Churchwarden
Ros Veltom (RV)	PLC Rep. (Stoughton)

1. The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on the 18th May 2023 were approved with one change. Patrick Balfour's role, under the listing of 'those present' should be changed from Churchwarden to PCC representative for North Marden and Octagon Data Protection Officer.

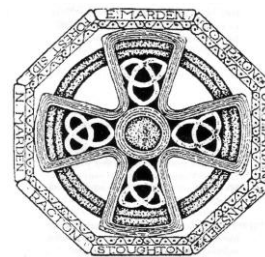
2. Election of Churchwardens of The Octagon Parish:
Carol Stamper and Sarah Lawton were re-elected as Churchwardens of the Octagon Parish by unanimous vote.

The meeting closed at 7:10pm

Approved by: _____

Date:

THE OCTAGON PARISH
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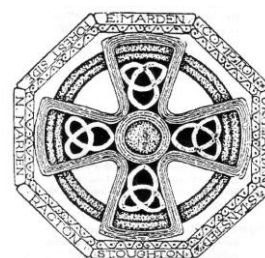


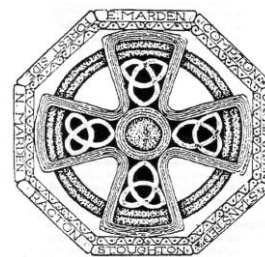
**Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2024 to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall on
Thursday 14th May 2025 at 7:10pm
AGENDA**

Only those whose names are entered on the Church electoral roll may attend and vote.

The meeting will be chaired by The Revd Christopher Hancock, Rector of The Octagon Parish

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting 2023 held on 23rd May, 2024
4. Reports -
 - a) Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish
 - b) Changes to the electoral roll since the last annual meeting
 - c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2024
 - d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) Safeguarding report
5. To adopt the 2024 Annual Report
6. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year
8. Notices
9. Closing prayer





ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of meeting held on 23rd May 2024
held at Compton and Up Marden CE School and Community Hall at 7:11pm

Present:

- Sally Ablewhite (SA)	Local Warden and PLC Rep. Up Marden Church
- Annie Barnes (AB)	Elected Member
- Richard Barnes (RB)	Elected Member
- Edward Cottrell (EC)	Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep
- Jennie Dolman (JD)	Deanery Synod Rep.
- Christopher Hancock (CH)	Octagon Rector
- Audrey Hamilton (AH)	Local Warden (Racton)
- Sarah Lawton (SL)	Churchwarden
- Fiona Mullett (FM)	Octagon Safeguarding Officer
- Tom Maier (TM)	Compton PLC Rep
- Rachel Foister (RDF)	PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator

15 other members of the Electoral Roll – were present.

The meeting was chaired by The Revd Christopher Hancock, Rector of The Octagon Parish

1. The meeting was opened at 7:11pm with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence were received by:

- Richard Hancock (RH)	Deanery Synod Rep.
- Annabelle Hancock (AH)	Deanery Synod Rep.
- Carol Stamper (CS)	Parish Churchwarden
- Ros Velton (RV)	PLC Rep. Stoughton Church
- Peter and Anna Blencowe	

3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the 18th May 2023: The minutes were unanimously accepted subject to one change: Patrick Balfour's role, under the listing of 'those present' should be changed from Churchwarden to PCC representative for North Marden and Octagon Data Protection Officer.

4.a) Annual Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Activities of the Parish.

SL gave an overview of the activities across the Parish as set out in the 2023 Octagon Parish Annual Report which had been written by her colleague Carol Stamper.

She noted that there had been 852 entries in visitors' books across the Parish in 2023 and that we will continue to extend our welcome to visiting groups to our churches in 2024. Charitable support in 2023 included help for Chichester Food bank, with Lent lunches raising over £1,500.

The Family Service at Compton had grown from strength to strength and 6 candidates came forward for confirmation in 2024.

It was noted from the floor that enormous thanks should go out to our churchwardens for all their efforts in keeping the Parish active and in good shape during the interregnum.

4.b) Changes to the Electoral Roll.

There has again been a drop from 125 to 119 mainly due to deaths and churchgoers moving away from the area. CH stated that he aimed to see an increase in numbers on the electoral roll over time to around 20% of the populace (200) and encouraged those present to spread the word. RDF noted that there was a lot of background information available to anyone interested on The Octagon website.

4.c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2023.

EC noted that there had been a small surplus of £857 in 2023, but that looking at figures for individual churches revealed a different picture with Compton, Stoughton and East Marden all in deficit. The very successful Racton fete has masked these figures somewhat in the overall accounts. It should be noted that emerging from Covid and an interregnum last year has taken its toll on fundraising and he hopes that events and initiatives will increase in 2024.

Contributions towards the Diocese in 2024 will be £52,000. Our insurance premium for 2024 is £7,640 to keep all 8 churches open 24/7. Heating costs are also significant, but necessary to make churches welcoming. As such, it is expected that the Parish will need to raise over £100,000 to cover costs for the coming year.

Of this, a 3% income from our investment funds would raise around £20,000. Vicarage garage rental brings in £1,300. The Stansted Foundation kindly donates £6,000 per year. Magazine subscriptions bring in £1,500 and our portion of the income from Marriages and Funerals in our churches is expected to be around £6,000.

The remaining £65,000 will need to be found and this will mainly come from regular donations. The spread of the load for these costs between the churches works out as:

£15,000 from Compton PLC

£15,000 from Stoughton PLC

£12,000 from East Marden PLC

£8,000 from Forestside PLC

£5,000 from Racton PLC

Other important sources of income include:

- Legacies which can make a huge difference, but do not represent regular income. The Parish will provide more information on how legacies will significantly help the Parish in 2024.
- QR code giving and digital card readers – he is keen for both systems of giving to be available in our churches, especially as mobile phone signal will be improving imminently across the Parish, making phone giving much simpler.
- Parish Giving Scheme. The Parish will be signing up to the Parish Giving Scheme now that the system allows for multi-church Parishes. The scheme is especially useful for those that wish to donate regularly, giving much more control to donors. Full details will be made available once the system is set up.

£7,000 from central reserves was spent on vicarage repairs and maintenance in 2023. Further work is still required and the Diocese have stated that they will complete the final window painting works in 2025. The Rector agreed to fund work in the coming year personally as it needs addressing urgently to avoid a deterioration of the fabric of the building..

EC expressed thanks to the Friends of Stoughton St Mary and The Friends of St Michael, Up Marden for their help in the ongoing costs of maintaining and running the two churches

Thanks were given to EC for all his work as Treasurer over the past year.

d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish

SL presented her report. She noted that there have been delays to quinquennial inspections and reports because of post-Covid backlogs and that not much work had been completed in 2023. Works are scheduled for East Marden and Stoughton in 2024. Water ingress at the site of an old chimney and the state of the roof beams at East Marden will be investigated. Costs to repair storm roof damage at Stoughton have been covered by insurance and a dangerous tree has been removed. Masonry repairs, repointing and repairs to uneven paving works are forthcoming. It was stated from the floor that The Friends of Stoughton St Mary will contribute a significant amount to the cost of these repairs in 2024. North Marden and Compton churches are awaiting the results of their next quinquennial inspections before embarking on any further works.

e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

JD presented her report, commencing by summarising the Deanery size, function and membership. RH, AH, JD and EC are all Octagon Deanery Synod Reps. The Deanery arranged for confirmations to take place in 2024 with Bishop Ruth at Fishbourne Church, for which The Octagon Parish had provided 6 candidates. There will be a Deanery evensong in The Parish in September. JD recently attended the Diocesan synod as Deanery representative. 2024 will be the year of the New Testament, with 2025 a year to celebrate 950 years of celebrating and proclaiming the mystery of the Christian Faith in Chichester. There will be a cathedral exhibition highlighting faith across the Diocese all year long.

The Lent course in 2025 will cover the Nicene Creed.

CH thanked JD for her report and her work with the Synod.

f) Safeguarding update.

FM presented her report, noting that:

- She had attended a course on modern slavery which provided information of relevance.
- The Diocese will be outsourcing some of its Safeguarding provision to reduce bias
- She has been attending PLC meetings to introduce herself, her work and the topic of understanding abuse and the systems in place for reporting it, including confidential conversations and where to find contact information on The Octagon website.
- The Diocesan website safeguarding information will be improved over the coming year.

5. Elections of lay members of the Parochial Church Council.

Re-election of Sally Ablewhite – all voted unanimously to re-elect

Re-election of Annie Barnes – all voted unanimously to re-elect

6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives.

AH, RH, EC and JD will continue in their role as Deanery Synod representatives. There was no call for elections this year.

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year.

A conflict of interest was declared at this point due to Mr Lawton being married to SL.

Notwithstanding the notified conflict, all voted in favour of re-electing Charles Lawton.

8. Notices – CH summarised his impressions since arriving in the Parish. He acknowledged the kindness, care and engagement shown by churchgoers and those present at the meeting. He also thanked Parishioners for their patience during the interregnum.

He remarked that he was keen to maintain a regular schedule of holy communion across the Parish but also to add extra services for which communication will improve so that Parishioners have fair warning.

He also noted that he wished for the Parish to become more systematic with its pastoral care offering in a similar fashion to our safeguarding systems.

Succession planning was an important element in the Parish with a younger generation being encouraged to take on roles across the Parish.

He also wanted to see the Parish becoming more fit for the 21st Century, especially with regard to facilities at our main churches. He encouraged Parishioners to be ambitious and make a difference to the Parish.

He was also encouraging of time for contemplation and was eager to re-establish a weekly prayer group.

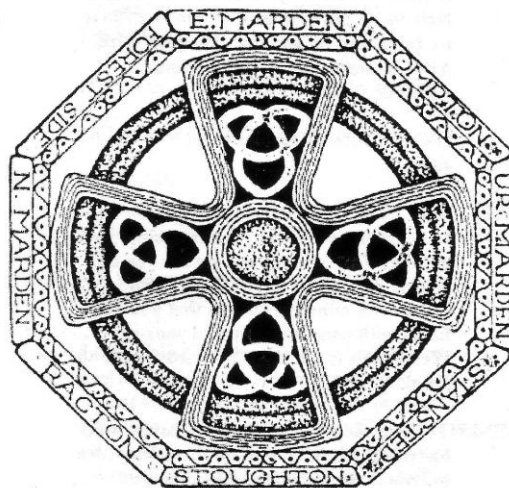
CH went on to thank those present for all their hard work and distributed gifts to those in significant roles.

9. The meeting closed with The Grace

Signed:

Date:

The Octagon Parish – Open for All



Accounts

THE OCTAGON PARISH

West Sussex

Comprising the Parish Churches:

**St Mary, Compton;
St Peter, East Marden;
Christchurch, Forestside
St Peter, Racton
St Mary, Stoughton**

the Chapels of Ease of:

**St Mary, North Marden
St Michael, Up Marden**

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2023

INCUMBENT – from 29th January 2024

The Revd Christopher Hancock

The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HD

From 31st December 2022 to 28th January 2024– the parish was in interregnum

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Charles Lawton

BANK

NatWest Bank

WEBSITE

<http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk>

Charity Registration No. 1156866

The Octagon Parish – Open for All

*“Showing God’s love and caring for our community and churches in
the beautiful South Downs National Park”*

Administrative Information

The Parish is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commission under the name of **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon**, with the Registered Charity Number of 1156866.

During the year 2023 the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):
[year of election/re-election]

Incumbent: in Interregnum

Churchwardens:

- Mrs Carol Stamper [2022]
- Mrs Sarah Lawton [2019]

Treasurer: Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]

Deanery Synod Reps:

- Mr Edward Cottrell [May 2023]
- Mrs Jennie Dolman [May 2023]
- Mrs Annabelle Hancock [May 2023]
- Mr Richard Hancock [May 2023]

Elected members:

- Mrs Sally Ablewhite [2020]
- Mr Patrick Balfour [2022]
- Mrs Annie Barnes [2020]
- Mr Richard Barnes [2022]
- Mr Tom Maier [2019]
- Mrs Ros Velton [2021]

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Fiona Mullett [2022]

Data Protection and Compliance Officer: Mr Patrick Balfour

Ex-officio members:

Appointed roles: Ms Rachel Foister, Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer

Standing Committee: Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer

**Lay readers are ex officio members unless requesting not to be on the PCC*

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20	Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Meeting of the PCC, 18 th May 2023

Structure Governance and Management

PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon (hereafter referred to as “the PCC”) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Power’s Measure. The PCC is a registered charity – Reg. No. 1156866. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. For 2023, the membership of the PCC of the Octagon Parish is detailed on page 3.

Parish Local Committees

Each church in the Octagon Parish is run by a Parish Local Committee (PLC), comprising elected members. Each PLC is represented on the Octagon PCC by one of their members or by a Churchwarden and reports regularly on its activities.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprised the two Parish Churchwardens: Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mrs Carol Stamper and the Treasurer of the Octagon Parish Mr Edward Cottrell. The Parish was in interregnum for the entirety of 2023.

Members of Parish Local Committees (PLCs) in 2023

Compton and Up Marden	East and North Marden	Forestside	Stoughton	Racton
Sally Ablewhite*	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Steve Barrett	Annie Barnes*
Fiona Baker	Edward Cottrell	Linda Fulker	Rosemary Bell	Richard Barnes
Judith Davies	Annie Judd	Sarah Hutchinson	Didi Burden	Anna Blencowe
Annabel Keville	John Robinson	David Parker	Pamela Harry	Peter Blencowe
Amanda Jackson	Valerie Robinson		Di Hughes	Phillip Cooper
Tom Maier	Penny Walder		Joan Langmead	Ros Gordon-Cumming
Steph Newell			Sarah Lawton	Audrey Hamilton
Robert Sawers			Caroline Taylor	Elizabeth Stanley
Valerie Seddon			Ros Velton	
			Jane Venables	

*served as Local Churchwarden in 2023

Octagon Voluntary Roles in 2023

Octagon Bell Ringing

Tim Wright and Joanna Woodcock

Octagon Magazine Editor

Caroline Taylor

Octagon Magazine Advertising

Roy Fulker

Octagon Music Licencing

Richard Barnes

Octagon Choir Lead

Martin Phillips

Ministry Team

In interregnum until Jan 2024

Mr Edward Mynors – Octagon Lay Reader

Mr David Parker – Authorised Lay Minister (from January 2022)

The Revd Canon David Nason – Rural Dean (until July 2023)

The Revd Jessica Reid – Rural Dean (from July 2023)

Sidespeople for Local churches 2023

Compton	East Marden	North Marden	Forestside	Racton	Stoughton	Up Marden
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Annie Barnes	Rosemary Bell	Michael Ablewhite
Fiona Baker		Jean Balfour	Linda Fulker	Audrey Hamilton	Barney Gowar	Sally Ablewhite
Judith Davies			Roy Fulker	Gill King-Smith	Fiona Gowar	Valerie Seddon
Amanda Jackson			Nonie Holmes		Pam Harry	
Annabel Keville			Paul Holmes		Di Hughes	
Stephanie Newell			Helen Honeyman		Charles Lawton	
Thomas Newell			Sarah Hutchinson		Sarah Lawton	
Robert Sawers			David Parker		Chris Velton	
					Ros Velton	
					Jane Venables	

Trustees Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council 2023

Our Aims and Purposes as a Charity

The Octagon Parochial Church Council has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent Rector, in the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. However, the parish was in an interregnum during 2023. Leadership of the parish was provided by the two Churchwardens Sarah Lawson and Carol Stamper as Sequestrators with the support of Archdeacon Luke Irving-Capel.

The PCC is specifically responsible for the maintenance of five Parish Churches in the Octagon Parish, St Mary Compton, St Mary Stoughton, St Peter Racton, St Peter East Marden, Christchurch Forestside and two Chapels of Ease St Mary North Marden and St Michael Up Marden. Responsibility for the former Chapel of Ease of St Paul Stansted has been transferred to the Stansted Park Foundation.

The PCC is also responsible for supporting the Rector 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;
- Enabling our churches to be accessible to all regardless of their faith or lack of, age, colour, sexual orientation, ability, need.
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the eldest to the youngest, 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 In Order to Achieve our Charitable Objectives

When planning our activities for the year, the PCC 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 recognizing its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For 2023 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aim. These included:

- Recruitment of a part-time Rector
- Enabling as many people as possible to worship in our churches during the interregnum and to become part of our parish community;
- Teaching, baptizing and nurturing new and existing believers;
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish;
- Putting faith into action, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament;
- Considering how we can make our churches more welcoming and accessible to the various groups that live in the parish;
- Reaching out to the community through provision of village events, festive services, support of the Octagon Choir, the Stoughton Bell Ringers, the Octagon Magazine, the Octagon Parish Website, the weekly bulletin and the Facebook Group;
- Maintaining the fabric of the church buildings as historic centres and focuses of community life in our villages;

- Ensuring the provision of pastoral care to people living in the parish;
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish.

What We Achieved and How We Affected Beneficiaries' Lives

We succeeded in recruiting a suitable candidate as Rector and looked forward to his Institution and Induction in January 2024.

Throughout the interregnum, the PCC has maintained regular worship at all of our churches thanks to the invaluable assistance of a team of visiting clergy who were assisted by those who read and prepared intercessions. We are grateful to our Bishop, the Right Reverend Bishop Martin Warner, our Archdeacon, the Venerable Luke Irvin-Capel, the Acting Rural Dean, the Rev. Canon David Nason and Mother Jessica Reid, the newly appointed Rural Dean, who have supported us. Our Lay Reader, Edward Mynors and Authorised Lay Minister, David Parker, took on extra work with the Family Service, supporting the School Assemblies and taking Funerals amongst many other tasks. Fiona Mullett, a retired Head Teacher, joined them in taking school assemblies and leading the Family Services. They made a very effective team.

A simpler form of the Family Service which commences with breakfast once a month, was initiated at St Mary Compton. It has proven successful in enabling more young people and families to access the liturgy. Fiona Mullett also provided activity bags for children and young people to use during other church services.

The PCC continued to support the provision of baptisms, funerals and weddings across the parish.

The standard of church music has been maintained by our many organists under the leadership of under the leadership of Richard Barnes and Martin Phillips, who has also directed the Octagon Choir which has enhanced the worship at festivals and other important services. The bell ringing group have been very active not only in Stoughton but in visiting other churches and hosting visiting bell ringing groups. The choir and the bell ringing group attract several people who are not regular church goers.

On the administrative side of the parish work was invested in a Standing Committee comprising Rachel Foister, Administrator and PCC Secretary, Sarah Lawton and Carol Stamper, Churchwardens, and Edward Cottrell, Treasurer. This team operated alongside committed local teams in our seven churches to ensure that we were able to keep running for our beneficiaries. Indeed, the parish is dependent on over 70 people who give their time to support the work of our parish.

We have continued to support Compton and Up Marden Church of England Primary School, by providing opportunities for prayer and worship through assemblies in Church and in the School.

Attendance at Worship

Unfortunately, we were not able to provide our full pattern of services during the interregnum as in previous years, but we offered a weekly Eucharist and a monthly Family Service and service of midday prayer at Stansted House Chapel.

We resumed our Tuesday morning online Morning Prayer services during Advent.

We held a special service to celebrate the King's coronation in May.

Our Easter and Christmas services were well attended. We were able to provide a Carol Service at every church and chapel, a crib service at St Mary's Compton and a new special family service at Christchurch Forestside.

We provided several Evensongs using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, at St Peter's, Racton along with four BCP Communion Services.

There was also a small but welcome increase in church attendances overall.

Recent Attendance Across the Octagon*:

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Easter	-	120	154	178
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day	20	285	292	316
Usual Sunday	-	-	18	25

** data taken from CofE Statistics for Mission 2023*

Numbers on electoral roll:

2023	125
2022	127
2021	134
2020	138

Mission and Outreach

Our extremely successful Parish magazine, *The Octagon*, has a circulation of approximately 280 and provides an important service to our dispersed rural community. Miss Caroline Taylor and Malcolm Lamb edit the magazine and Roy Fulker looks after advertising revenue. We are very grateful to all of them and to all who generously give their time to distributing the magazine each month.

The Octagon website also provides a valuable communication medium. It enables the distribution of material within the parish, and (together with our entries on A Church Near You) provides information about the parish to the wider world and enables those outside the parish to contact us.

We resumed providing coffee after each service which gives us an opportunity to get to know new people attending and strengthen our relationships one with the other.

There were 6 baptisms in 2023. All those baptised have been followed up with a card on their birthday for three years post-baptism.

We had good attendance at our Mothering Sunday and Crib services. The Family Services attracted regular attendance by families in the parish had has been growing steadily under the auspices of David Parker and Fiona Mullett. The Pet Service was re-established, as was the celebration of Harvest in every church in the parish. The Christmas crib Service was particularly well attended in 2023 as was a special Christmas Day Family service at Christchurch, Forestside.

We now have seven people considering confirmation next year.

We held a well-attended All Souls Service for those families and people living in the parish to remember their loved ones who had died recently. The PCC plan to provide more special services designed to meet particular needs once the Rector is in place.

Many events were held which brought people together to enjoy fun, food and to fund raise. These included a Daffodil Day at Stoughton, Garden Fete at Lordington House in August and a Church fundraising evening at Watergate House. Various concerts were held at Stoughton, East Marden and Up Marden churches.

We supported the events held in each village to celebrate the King's coronation.

The seven places of worship remained open for private prayer and exploration. The offering of our church buildings for prayer and peace and quiet is an important part of our mission and outreach. We are grateful to all those across our villages who help to clean and maintain our churches as well as those who arrange the flowers and make our visitors welcome.

In 2023, over 852 people signed our visitor books, some were walking groups or groups interested in historic churches. Our churches may well have been visited by over 1,000 people this year. They include walkers and cyclists. This, coupled with the folk who attend weddings, baptisms and funerals, gives us a wonderful opportunity for outreach.

The provision of pastoral care to people living in the parish is a vital service offered to our beneficiaries and pastoral care has continued in person where possible and over the telephone. The Rural Dean and our Lay Leader stepped up to help and assist those in need and we publicised the availability of support on our website and bulletin. Monthly coffee mornings in Compton and in Forestside and our monthly pub lunch in Walderton continued as popular community events and are an important resource in reducing rural isolation and loneliness, especially amongst the elderly in winter.

We supported Chichester Foodbank with both donations and financial contributions through the simple Lent Lunches in 2023 which raised over £1,500 and our many Harvest Festival services across the Parish which resulted in 24.5 kilos of food being collected. We also provided collection points in our churches for those wishing to contribute items to the Chichester Food Bank at any time of the year.

A number of donations were made from the Rector's Discretionary Fund to those in need across the parish at Christmas and throughout the year.

Summary of Birth, Marriage and Funeral Services Across the Parish:

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Marriage Services	9	0	9	8	3
Marriage Blessings	2	0	3	1	0
Baptisms	9	3	6	10	6
Burials in our Churchyards	6	2	6	5	2
Interments of Ashes	6	4	2	5	7
Funerals Services only	3	5	5	4	6

Financial Review

Attached are the Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2023 based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon central account. The statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	Treasurer	Independent Inspector
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	Christopher Tite	Edward Cottrell
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

Please find below the statement of investment policy.

2023 was the first full year of vacancy for the parish and the finances suffered from lower activity levels in fundraising and a general loss of impetus from the empty vicarage. Nevertheless, the consolidated accounts for 2023 show a small surplus of £857. As usual with five separate church accounts as well as a separate central Octagon account this number hides some very different outcomes at a local level.

Three churches delivered a deficit on their accounts Stoughton, Compton and East and North Marden. Stoughton saw a decline in planned givers and collections and hence gift aid recovery. In the absence of any fundraising the resultant deficit was just over £3500. East and North Marden had repairs of £12,000 on St Mary's North Marden much of which was met by a withdrawal from reserves. The church also suffered as it was debanked by Barclays. Sadly this is a familiar story with Barclays where, despite the production of the requisite paperwork, a letter and cheque for the account balance was received out of the blue. This meant that all planned giving ended as the standing orders failed. A new account was set up with another bank but planned givers are proving slow to round up. There was no fund-raising event during the year. The deficit was over £2,000. St Mary's Compton saw a similar fall in planned givers and tax recovery to that experienced by St Mary's Stoughton. The deficit was £1,300.

All these deficits were disguised by the result of another successful fete at Racton which resulted in a surplus of nearly £7,000.

Central costs were lower thanks to a waiver on the vicarage council tax and an absence of Rector's expenses.

Staff Costs

The PCC pays for an administrator who assists in running the parish. This is a vital role during a vacancy, without our amazing administrator the parish would grind to a halt.

Trustee payments and expenses

The PCC provides a contribution towards the heat, light and maintenance for the vicarage. In advance of the arrival of our new rector £7000 was withdrawn from reserves to pay for improvements to the vicarage.

We are very fortunate to have two Friends charities who raise money for the church fabric of St Mary Stoughton and St Michael Up Marden. They are very active in fund raising which helps address the cost of maintaining both churches. The Parish Council would also like to thank the Trustees of Stansted Foundation for their generous financial support which was renewed in 2023.

Many thanks to everyone who has donated or helped to raise money for our small parish and thank you to all the treasurers and auditors for the individual churches. Many thanks also to R Sadler & Co who manage our payroll very efficiently.

Edward Cottrell, Octagon Treasurer

Octagon PCC Accounts 2023

INCOME	2023	2022
	£	£
Incoming Resources from Donors		
Planned giving (Gift Aid)	30,789	36,345
Collections (inc. wall safes)	10,502	10,295
Income tax recovery	11,791	15,514
Other Voluntary Incoming Resources		
Fundraising	16,357	11,288
Donations and miscellaneous	21,478	25,781
Incoming Resources from Operating Activities		
Fees	3,012	7,289
Investment Income	20,310	11,039
Total receipts	114,239	117,551
EXPENDITURE		
Grants to charities	390	3,501
Church Activities		
Parish contribution and Deanery exps.	51,662	49,164
Church running expenses (inc. admin)	27,407	27,693
Octagon Costs (inc. Clergy expenses)	5,105	10,156
Church repairs and maintenance	28,818	21,733
Total payments	113,382	112,247
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE	857	5,304
ASSETS Including Investments and Restricted Funds	664,994	635,078
Movement over year	29,916	83,651

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton and Up Marden, East & North Marden,
Forestside & Stansted, Stoughton, Racton

Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of Accounts

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2023 are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent Inspector</i>
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	Christopher Tite	Edward Cottrell
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2023 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed Charles Lawton

Date 14th March 2024

Inspector of Accounts
Mr Charles Lawton
Walderton House
Walderton
Chichester PO18 9ED

Signed Edward Cottrell

Date 11/3/24

Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Edward Cottrell
Battine House
East Marden
Chichester PO18 9JE

The Octagon Parish PCC Investment Policy

Adopted by the PCC, November 2017, reviewed March 2023

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as trustees of parish funds, are responsible for investment policy. The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable - this return can then be spent on the charity's aims. It is recommended that PCC members read what the Charity Commission says on the matter: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/money-and-accounts/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/>

In order to act within the law, the PCC must:

- know, and act within, their charity's powers to invest
- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for their charity
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless they have good reason for not doing so
- review investments on a regular basis
- explain their investment policy in the annual report.

The PCC manages an 'unincorporated charity' and as such the trustees are personally liable for their actions. However, if trustees can demonstrate that they have considered the relevant issues, taken advice where appropriate and reached a reasonable decision, they are unlikely to be criticised for their decisions, or for adopting a particular policy.

Parish Funds and Investment Policy

Parish funds are currently managed in six separate 'pots': the five main churches (Compton, Stoughton, East Marden, Racton and Forestside) and a central fund. It is proposed, until otherwise instructed by the PCC, to continue to manage the six 'pots' separately but to set an investment policy based on the combined financial aims and needs of the parish. As such, the investment policy will allocate to a combination of suitable investments, taking into account the particular needs of a church and the parish's needs as a whole. All funds will be either deposited in recognised UK bank accounts or collective investment schemes managed by an authorised investment manager, approved by the trustees.

Investment Objective

The combined investment objective is to protect the capital value of the funds in real terms and to provide sufficient income for any shortfall in cash flow raised annually by the parish. To this end, the PCC with the advice of the PLC committees will determine from time to time the appropriate investment vehicle given the financial needs of the parish specifically:

- immediate cash needs (e.g. deposits)
- funds that can be invested for the short term (up to 2 years- eg fixed income)
- funds that are not required for the foreseeable future (longer term investments – eg balanced funds of equities, bonds and property)
- funding for unforeseen circumstances

Risk Policy

In order to meet the investment objective, some risks need to be taken. These risks will be continually assessed considering the parish's financial needs. The PCC may also give guidance on capital, market, valuation, liquidity, regulatory, counterparty and governance risks. Above all, the investment policy will be diversified across asset classes and sectors.

Delegation of Investment Powers

The PCC is responsible for all investment decisions and risk assessments. It may take investment opinions from their appointed Finance committee, and it will delegate the day-to-day management of funds to the same committee. The PCC may also seek a third-party opinion. The day-to-day management will be based on the investment policy and risk profile the PCC determines from time to time based on the expected financing needs of the parish.

Investment Performance

The PCC will review investment performance as a regular item on the Annual Meeting agenda.

The Octagon Parish Reserves Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC November 2017, reviewed March 2023

The Octagon Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the upkeep and administration of seven churches (the upkeep of St Paul's, Stansted is the responsibility of the Stansted Estate) and for the pastoral care of its parishioners. The churches are old, some dating back to Saxon times, and require constant upkeep and repair. Their Collective insured value is over £16 million.

The PCC has determined to accrue for known expenses relating to the annual running repairs based on previous years' experience but has also set aside reserves of £75,000 per building, for unforeseen repairs identified by the rota of quinquennial inspection reports.

The PCC has also determined to reserve an additional sum of £70,000 to administer the Octagon Parish in case of emergency.

The PCC has designated the responsibility of investing the reserves to the PCC Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer. The committee consists of the PCC treasurer, the local church treasurers, and a churchwarden. All investment decisions will pass through the committee. The committee should meet at least once per year. Decisions between meetings, if they are necessary, can be made by email.

The reserves are generally to be allocated and invested in recognised and agreed funds of differing risk profiles, managed by UK-regulated Fund Managers, or a bank deposit account. The asset allocation mix of the reserves takes into account the risk profile of each fund and an assessment of the date at which the reserves may be required.

The PCC, together with the Finance Committee, regularly reviews the policy and investments throughout the year based on a continual assessment of expense risks.

Material State of the Churches of The Octagon Parish

Octagon Parish Church Repairs Report May 2024

The effect of post-covid backlog is still evident leading to ongoing delays in post Quinquennial Inspection (QI) works within the parish. and the subsequent work specifications and recommended works have been slow over the past year but there is nothing of great urgency at any of the parish churches.

Compton, St Mary

The situation at this church remains the same in that the inspecting architect for Compton and Up Marden retired in December 2022 before a specification for the last QI Phase 2 works had been drawn up. Simon Dyson, who already inspects a number of The Octagon churches, has agreed to take on the inspection of these two churches and the PLC has decided to defer any outstanding works until after the next QI due in 2024. This includes the redecoration of the South transept and repairs to windows.

Up Marden, St Michael

As above, any works to this church are on hold. These include repairs to tower weatherboarding and lead flashing, the windows, and replacing the rain runoff drains. The next QI is due in 2024.

North Marden, St Mary

No works have been required within the past year.
The next QI is due in 2025.

East Marden, St Peter

Water ingress is still a problem despite emergency repair works to a collapsed roof beam caused through damp were undertaken in 2021. This is likely to be caused by the junction with a redundant boiler chimney. An Interim Faculty was granted in October 2023 for the erection of scaffolding to undertake investigative works. The Inspecting Architect has already drawn up a specification of works post the 2021 QI. Once the investigative works have been done (due shortly) we will have a better understanding top priorities for which Diocesan approval will need to be sought.
The next QI is due in 2026.

Stoughton, St Mary

List B approval was granted and storm damage repairs to the roof (covered by insurance) were undertaken in June 2023.

Having obtained permissions from the South Downs National Park and the Diocese a Poplar tree which was detrimental to the fabric of the church and had the potential to cause considerable damage to the church has now been felled to the ground.

The Inspecting Architect has drawn up a specification for masonry, pointing and other associated post QI repairs which went to tender and a contractor has been appointed to undertake the work in summer 2024. List B approval is being sought for these works.
The next QI is due in 2026.

Racton, St Peter

No works have been required within the past year.
The next QI is due in 2026.

Forestside, Christchurch

The building is generally in good condition internally. However, the PCC has agreed to repair work needed to the North side of the church roof and chancel arch and quotations are being sought before DAC approval is applied for.

Diocesan permission was granted as an emergency for the felling of a tree in the churchyard following storm damage. This has now been undertaken.

The next QI is due in 2027.

Sarah Lawton, Churchwarden, May 2024

Safeguarding in The Octagon Parish

Fundamentally, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. Given this, safeguarding is important to a 'healthy' church life and the Octagon Parish work to strengthen their good safeguarding culture and continue to follow sound safeguarding practice. Safeguarding is included as a key area on the Octagon community website, and we continue to prioritise loneliness and isolation issues within our community.

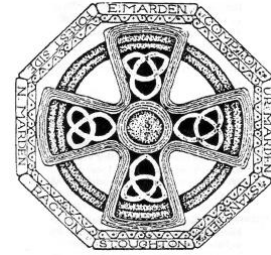
We welcomed Fiona Mullett, to the role of Safeguarding Officer in early 2023.

The members of the PCC are in the throes of undertaking the appropriate levels of Safeguarding training as advised by the Diocese.

All relevant staff and volunteers are up to date with their DBS checks.

Safeguarding policies (in addition to our Health and Safety Policies) for the Parish are published on our website and are regularly reviewed following the guidance and requirements of the Diocesan Simple Quality Protects system.

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestside & Stansted
Stoughton, Racton
www.theoctagonparish.org.uk
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD
Tel: 023 9263 1252



**Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:00pm on
Thursday 23rd May 2024
AGENDA**

*The meeting will be chaired by Rachel Foister
Secretary of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon
Only those whose names are entered on the Church electoral roll may attend and vote.*

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting
2. To re-elect Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mrs Carol Stamper as Churchwardens of the Octagon Parish

followed by:

**Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall on
Thursday 23rd May 2024 at 7:05pm
AGENDA**

*The meeting will be chaired by The Revd Christopher Hancock, Rector of The Octagon Parish
Only those whose names are entered on the Octagon Parish Electoral Roll or the Local Government
Electoral Roll may attend.*

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2023
4. Reports -
 - a) Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish
 - b) Changes to the electoral roll since the last annual meeting
 - c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2023
 - d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) Safeguarding report
5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
6. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year
7. Notices
8. Closing prayer

THE OCTAGON PARISH
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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023
at Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7pm

Present: -

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| - Sally Ablewhite (SA) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Up Marden Church |
| - Patrick Balfour (PB) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Annie Barnes (AB) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Racton Church |
| - Richard Barnes (RB) | Octagon Music |
| - Edward Cottrell (EC) | Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep [arr. 6:45] |
| - Sarah Lawton (SL) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Fiona Mullett (FM) | Octagon Safeguarding Officer |
| - Carol Stamper (CS) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Tom Maier (TM) | Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC Rep. |
| - Ros Velton (RV) | PCC Rep. Stoughton Church |
| - Rachel Foister (RDF) | PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator |

14 members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

1. Apologies for absence were received by:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| - Jennie Dolman (JD) | Deanery Synod Rep. and PCC Rep. Forestside Church |
|----------------------|---|

1. The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on the 12th May 2022 were approved unanimously.

2. Election of Churchwardens of The Octagon Parish:

Carol Stamper and Sarah Lawton were re-elected by unanimous vote

The meeting closed at 7:04pm

Approved by: _____

Date: _____



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
Draft Minutes of meeting held on 18th May 2023
held at Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:05pm

Present:

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Sally Ablewhite (SA) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Up Marden Church |
| - Patrick Balfour (PB) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Annie Barnes (AB) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Racton Church |
| - Richard Barnes (RB) | Octagon Music |
| - Edward Cottrell (EC) | Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep [arr. 6:45] |
| - Sarah Lawton (SL) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Fiona Mullett (FM) | Octagon Safeguarding Officer |
| - Carol Stamper (CS) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Tom Maier (TM) | Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC Rep. |
| - Ros Velton (RV) | PCC Rep. Stoughton Church |
| - Rachel Foister (RDF) | PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator |
| - 14 members of the public were present. | |

The meeting was chaired by Sarah Lawton, Octagon Parish Churchwarden

1. The meeting was opened at 7:05pm with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence were received by:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| - Jennie Dolman (JD) | Deanery Synod Rep. and PCC Rep. Forestside Church |
| - David Parker | Octagon Lay Authorised Lay Minister |
| - Barlie Adams | Parishioner |

3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the 12th May 2022 - all members of the PCC voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

4.a) Annual Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Activities of the Parish.

CS gave an overview of activities across the parish.

4.b) Changes to the Electoral Roll.

There has been a drop from 127 to 126, mainly due to deaths and churchgoers moving away from the area, although there have been a small number of new joiners thanks to local church efforts.

4.c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2022.

EC noted that there had been a surplus of £5000 in 2022, mainly due to a legacy of £6000. Costs are continuing to rise, with the PMC at £51,000 in 2023. Reserves fell in 2022 due to changes in the markets, but they continue to help in providing much needed income to run the parish. All churches made a surplus, but central costs were in deficit and negotiations are in place for churches to contribute towards central costs. EC remarked that the smaller fundraising events run by the churches were proving very effective and far less onerous to run than larger

traditional fetes, noting the recent plant sale in Wets Marden which raised £1241 for St Mary's in Compton. He also mentioned that Parish Giving scheme whereby individuals can easily sign up for regular giving – it was remarked that the scheme falls short in providing a clear service for parishes with multiple churches and can confuse users.

EC expressed thanks on behalf of the PCC John Robinson who recently retired as Treasurer to East Marden church after 40 years of service. Christopher Tite was recently voted in as the new Treasurer. EC noted John's proactive and successful approach at encouraging the East Marden community to give regularly to the church. He thanked the trustees of Stansted Park for their donation to the parish which was increased by 5% last year. He also thanked the local treasurers and their auditors for their efforts throughout the year as well as Charles Lawton who audits the central account and has oversight of the local church accounts.

d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish

SL presented a report. She noted that there have been delays to quinquennial inspections and reports as a result of post Covid backlogs, such that all churches in the Octagon were doing their inspections at the same time. All churches were generally in good condition with no major issues although the water ingress at St Peter's East Marden due to an old chimney will require remedial work. A new architect has been found for St Mary's Compton and St Michael's Up Marden, following on from the retirement of the previous architect. Roof work subsequent to a storm damage insurance claim is currently being undertaken at St Mary's Stoughton. St Peter's Racton is watertight and structurally sound. A new architect is now working on Christchurch Forestside where some roof maintenance and moss removal will be forthcoming. SL noted that any work requiring a faculty is expensive so jobs for each church are bundled together wherever possible.

e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

It was noted that The Octagon currently only has 2 representatives from a possible 4 on the Synod. As there is no rural dean in place, The Revd Canon David Nason is temporarily running the Synod.

f) Safeguarding update.

SL thanked TH for her four years of service as the Octagon Safeguarding Officer. Fiona Mullet introduced herself to those present, noting that she has now completed all the required training. She has reviewed the parish safeguarding policies and DBS register – all of which are now up to date. The Diocesan SQP self-audit was completed early in 2023. Going forwards she is looking to introduce the concept of 'Safeguarding in the Community' across the parish.

5. Elections of lay members of the Parochial Church Council - none

6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives.

All voted in favour of re-electing the current Deanery Synod members. From the floor – Richard and Annabelle Hancock volunteered to act as Deanery Synod representatives for the parish. Proposed by Sarah Lawton and seconded by Carol Stamper. All voted to accept them as parish representatives.

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year.

All voted in favour of re-electing Charles Lawton.

8. Notices – none received

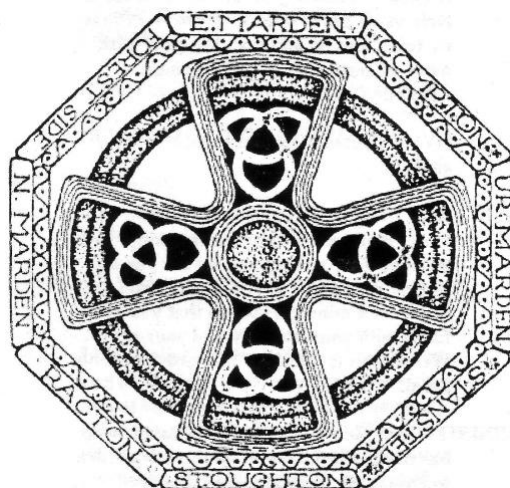
9. The meeting closed with The Grace

The meeting ended at 7:53pm

Signed:

Date:

The Octagon Parish – Open for All



Accounts

THE OCTAGON PARISH

West Sussex

Comprising the Parish Churches:

St Mary, Compton;

St Peter, East Marden;

Christchurch, Forestside

St Peter, Racton

St Mary, Stoughton

the Chapels of Ease of:

St Mary, North Marden

St Michael, Up Marden

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2022

INCUMBENT – until 4th July 2022

The Revd Lindsay Yates

The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HD

From 4th July 2022 until 31st December 2022 – the parish was in interregnum

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Charles Lawton

BANK

NatWest Bank

WEBSITE

<http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk>

Charity Registration No. 1156866

The Octagon Parish – Open for All

*“Showing God’s love and caring for our community and churches in
the beautiful South Downs National Park”*

Administrative Information

The Parish is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commission under the name of **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon**, with the Registered Charity Number of 1156866.

During the year 2022 the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):
[year of election/re-election]

Incumbent: The Revd Lindsay Yates – until July 2022

Churchwardens:

- Mrs Carol Stamper [2022]
- Mrs Sarah Lawton [2019]

Treasurer: Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]

Deanery Synod Reps:

- Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]
- Mrs Jennie Dolman [2017]
- Ms Pamela Payne [2017] - until November 2022

Elected members:

- Mrs Sally Ablewhite [2020]
- Mr Patrick Balfour [2022]
- Mrs Annie Barnes [2020]
- Mr Richard Barnes [2022]
- Mr Tom Maier [2019]
- Ms Pamela Payne [2020] - until November 2022
- Mrs Ros Velton [2021]

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Tracey Hodkin [2018]

Data Protection and Compliance Officer: Mr Patrick Balfour

Ex-officio members: Mrs Maria Sadler [2018]* - until June 2022

Appointed roles: Ms Rachel Foister, Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer

Standing Committee: Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer

**Lay readers are ex officio members unless requesting not to be on the PCC*

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27th May 2022

Structure Governance and Management

PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon (hereafter referred to as “the PCC”) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Power’s Measure. The PCC is a registered charity – Reg. No. 1156866. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. For 2022, the membership of the PCC of the Octagon Parish is detailed on page 3.

Parish Local Committees

Each church in the Octagon Parish is run by a Parish Local Committee (PLC), comprising elected members. Each PLC is represented on the Octagon PCC by one of their members or by a Churchwarden and reports regularly on its activities.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprised the Rector: The Revd Lindsay Yates (until July 2022), the two Parish Churchwardens: Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mrs Carol Stamper and the Treasurer of the Octagon Parish Mr Edward Cottrell.

Members of Parish Local Committees (PLCs) in 2022

Compton and Up Marden	East and North Marden	Forestside	Stoughton	Racton
Sally Ablewhite*	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Rosy Bell	Anna Blencowe
Fiona Baker	Edward Cottrell	Linda Fulker	Joanne Briffet	Peter Blencowe
Judith Davies	Annie Judd	Sarah Hutchinson	Pamela Harry	Phillip Cooper
Annabel Keville	John Robinson	David Parker	Di Hughes	Ros Gordon-Cumming
Amanda Jackson	Valerie Robinson		Joan Langmead	Audrey Hamilton
Tom Maier	Penny Walder		Sarah Lawton	Elizabeth Stanley
Steph Newell	Denise Watson		Caroline Taylor	Annie Barnes*
Pamela Payne*	Steve Watson		Ros Velton*	Richard Barnes
Robert Sawers			Jane Venables	
Valerie Seddon				

*served as Local Churchwarden in 2022

Octagon Voluntary Roles in 2022

Octagon Bell Ringing

Tim Wright and Joanna Woodcock

Octagon Magazine Editor

Caroline Taylor

Octagon Magazine Advertising

Roy Fulker

Octagon Music Licencing

Richard Barnes

Octagon Choir Lead

Martin Phillips

Ministry Team

The Revd Lindsay Yates – Octagon Rector (until 4th July 2022)

Mr Edward Mynors – Octagon Lay Reader

Mrs Maria Sadler – Octagon Lay Reader (until July 2022)

Mr David Parker – Authorised Lay Minister (from January 2022)

The Revd Canon David Nason – Rural Dean

Sidespeople for Local churches 2022

Compton	East Marden	North Marden	Forestside	Racton	Stoughton	Up Marden
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Annie Barnes	Rosemary Bell	Michael Ablewhite
Fiona Baker		Jean Balfour	Linda Fulker	Audrey Hamilton	Fiona Gowar	Sally Ablewhite
Judith Davies			Roy Fulker	Gill King-Smith	Barney Gowar	Valerie Seddon
Amanda Jackson			Nonie Holmes		Pam Harry	
Annabel Keville			Paul Holmes		Di Hughes	
Stephanie Newell			Helen Honeyman		Charles Lawton	
Thomas Newell			Sarah Hutchinson		Sarah Lawton	
Pamela Payne			David Parker		Ros Velton	
Robert Sawers					Jane Venables	

Trustees Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council 2022

Our Aims and Purposes as a Charity

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, currently a vacant position since July 2022.

- 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;
- Enabling our churches to be accessible to all regardless of their faith or lack of, age, colour, sexual orientation, ability, need.
- Knowing Jesus and making Him better known;
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the eldest to the youngest, 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 In Order to Achieve our Charitable Objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our incumbent and PCC 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 recognizing its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For 2022 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aim. These included:

- Enabling as many people as possible to feel confident to worship in our churches as Covid regulations are lifted and to reduce the reliance on online platforms;
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community;
- Teaching, baptizing and nurturing new and existing believers;
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish;
- Considering how services can involve the various groups that live in the parish;
- Putting faith into action, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament;
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in Jesus;
- Reaching out to the community through provision of village events, festive services, support of the Octagon Choir, the Stoughton Bellringers, the Octagon Magazine and the Octagon Parish Website and Facebook Group;
- Maintaining the fabric of the church buildings as historic centres and focuses of community life in our villages;
- Provision of pastoral care of people living in the parish;
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish.

What We Achieved and How We Affected Beneficiaries' Lives

In July 2022 our Rector, the Reverend Lindsay Yates left to move to Canterbury. The parish organised a well-attended farewell party outside St Mary's at Stoughton following the morning service. Her leaving presented us with a challenge as a vacancy ensued. However, the PCC rose to that challenge and was instrumental in supporting the Church Wardens and part-time parish administrator in enabling most of our services to continue along with our work in the school and the wider community. We are grateful to our Bishop, the Right Reverend Bishop Martin Warner, our Archdeacon, the Venerable Luke Irvin Capel and the Acting Rural Dean, the Rev. Canon David Nason who have supported us. Also, the many retired clergy who have been more than willing to officiate at the Eucharist each week. Indeed, their contributions have brought new and interesting perspectives to our acts of worship. They were assisted by those who read and intercede. Our Lay Reader, Edward Mynors and David Parker, who was commissioned as an Authorised Lay Minister at Chichester Cathedral by Bishop Ruth Bushyager on 8 January 2022, have taken on extra work with the All Age Service, supporting the School Assemblies and taking Funerals amongst many other tasks. Fiona Mullett, a retired Head Teacher has joined them in taking school assemblies and leading the All Age Services. They make a very effective team.

Maria Sadler completed her ordination training and was ordained Deacon on 2nd July. We said a tearful goodbye as she left to take up her Curacy at Bosham.

The standard of church music has been maintained by our many organists under the leadership of Richard Barnes.

It was also a year of recovery from the effects of the Covid Pandemic, although Covid itself had not disappeared, with many parishioners and volunteers suffering several bouts of illness. However, we managed to maintain church attendance and catch up on the Quinquennials and health safety audits which had to be deferred as a result of the restrictions.

On the administrative side is the Standing Committee of the PCC, comprising the Rector until July, Rachel Foister, Administrator and PCC Secretary, Sarah Lawton and Carol Stamper, Churchwardens, and Edward Cottrell, Treasurer. This team operates alongside committed local teams in our seven churches to ensure that we are able to keep running for our beneficiaries. Indeed, the parish is dependent on over 70 people who give their time to support the work of our parish.

We have continued to support Compton and Up Marden C of E school by taking the school assembly weekly and supporting its school fetes. Many children progress from the school to the Bishop Luffa School in Chichester. In April, the school attained a rating of good in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

Attendance at Worship

Unfortunately, we had not been able to provide our full pattern of services after the Rector left but we have offered a weekly Eucharist and a monthly All Age Service, morning prayer service, and service of prayer at Stansted House Chapel. Evensong once a month at East Marden continued until the winter set in. We were unable to continue with our Wednesday morning Eucharist.

We hope to resume our Tuesday morning online Morning Prayer services next year.

We held special services to commemorate the late Queen's Jubilee and her funeral and provided a book of remembrance in each church.

Our Christmas services were well attended despite the rise in Covid and influenza. We were able to provide a Carol Service at every church and a crib service at St Mary's Compton.

Recent Attendance Across the Octagon:

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Easter	228	0	120	154
Christmas and Advent	581	20	285	526
October (average Sunday attendance)	45	7	45	24

Numbers on electoral roll:

2022	127
2021	134
2020	138
2019	139

Teaching, Baptizing and Nurturing New and Existing Believers

We resumed providing coffee after each service which gives us an opportunity to get to know new people attending and strengthen our relationships one with the other.

There were 10 baptisms in 2022 which provided an opportunity to share the Christian faith with young families and to welcome visitors to our churches for the services.

We followed up those baptised with a card on their birthday.

During Lent 2022 we set up a series of talks on the theme of the 'Church in the World' at St Peter's East Marden.

We had good attendance at our Mothering Sunday and Crib services. Our All Age services for those who feel more comfortable with a less formal service were well attended.

Edward Mynors, Lay Reader, David Parker, Authorised Lay Minister and Fiona Mullett, a retired Head Teacher, continued to lead weekly assemblies at Compton and Up Marden CE Primary School.

At Christmas we held a Christingle service for the School in St Mary's Compton.

Evangelism and Outreach

The Octagon Magazine continued to be disseminated to most members of the community. The parish also continues to publicise its activities and those of other organisations in a weekly email bulletin which is received by around 230 individuals and on its Facebook page.

Many events were held which bring people together to enjoy fun, food and fund raise. These included a flower festival at St Mary's Stoughton, a vintage tea party in Compton, a school fete and a village barn dance.

We supported the many events held in each village to commemorate the Queen's jubilee, including the dedication of a Jubilee tree in Stoughton.

Provision of the Church Buildings for People to Enjoy

During 2022 we have maintained our seven historic church buildings. Our churches remained open during the daytime for private prayer and exploration. The offering of our church buildings for prayer and peace and quiet is an important part of our mission and outreach and we are grateful to all those across our villages who help to clean and maintain our churches as well as those who arrange the flowers.

In 2022, over 745 people signed our visitor books, some were walking groups or groups interested in historic churches. Our churches may well have been visited by over 1000 people this year. They include walkers and cyclists. This, coupled with the folk who attend weddings, baptisms and funerals, gives us a wonderful opportunity for outreach. We intend to capitalise on this next year by initiating a project to improve our welcome and provide information and other facilities to enable people to feel comfortable and cared for.

Provision of Pastoral Care for People Living in the Parish

This is a vital part of what we offer to our beneficiaries and pastoral care has continued in person where possible and over the telephone until our rector left in July. However, the Rural Dean and our Lay Leader have made themselves available and we publicise the availability of support on our website and bulletin. Monthly coffee mornings in Compton for those who are living alone and Forestside have resumed along with our monthly pub lunch in Walderton.

The Nursing home at Lordington Park where we provided pastoral care closed this year

Provision of Tangible Support to Those in Need and Charitable Giving

The parish made a concerted effort to support the West Sussex project to provide homes and support to those fleeing from the hostilities in Ukraine. However, our very rural nature and distance from towns, along with our lack of public transport and school places proved too difficult to overcome in most cases. Two young women were housed by one of our families.

The Parish supported Sage House set up to support those suffering from Alzheimers disease and their families, raising funds through our Lent Lunches.

We also provided collection points in our churches for those wishing to contribute items to the Chichester Food Bank.

We collected money for the Marine Society for Sea Cadets at our service at St Peter's, East Marden on Sea Sunday in July.

A number of donations were made from the Rector's Discretionary Fund to those in need across the parish at Christmas and throughout the year. This year we made a smaller number of more substantial amounts to assist with fuel bills of some of our less affluent parishioners.

Summary of Birth, Marriage and Funeral Services Across the Parish:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Marriage Services	7	9	0	9	8
Marriage Blessings	6	2	0	3	1
Baptisms	6	9	3	6	10
Burials in our Churchyards	6	6	2	6	5
Interments of Ashes	3	6	4	2	5
Funerals Services only	4	3	5	5	4

Financial Review

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2022 are presented on page 13. These are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon central account. The statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Independent Inspector</u>
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

A copy of the separate annual statements. Also attached is the statement of investment policy.

The consolidated accounts for 2022 show a surplus of just over £5,000. Without a generous legacy of £6000, a deficit would have been recorded. The five churches managed to produce surpluses in their accounts. Over the last three years the centre has waived contributions from the churches so that they can meet the cost of the Parish Mission Cost. This rises relentlessly every year. 2022 saw a rise of £2157 and we know that another £2029 has been asked for in 2023. This takes the Parish Mission Cost for our half stipend parish to £51,186, a 19% rise over the last five years. We must hope that we can continue to fundraise and donate whilst bearing in mind that, like many other things, religion costs more each year. The central account had a deficit of just over £4000. Almost half of this was down to a reprint of the Octagon Walks magazine which helps increase the footfall in our churches and hopefully donations from walkers. The central account relies on a few generous donors who have been very supportive. However central costs have been rising and these have not been passed on to the churches. Sadly we have now fallen into a vacancy as a result of our rector leaving and so our churchwardens and the community will have to carry on without any help from the vicarage. The Parish Mission Cost is still payable even if we have no incumbent.

Planned giving was lower in 2022 and fundraising saw a substantial fall as no fête was held.

Happily, fees, collections and investment income took up some of the slack and the aforementioned legacy underpinned the income numbers. On the expenditure side, some of the lumpy items of 2021 were not repeated, and repairs and maintenance were a lot lower.

Staff Costs

The PCC pays for an administrator who assists the Rector in running the parish. This is a vital role during a vacancy, without our amazing administrator the parish would grind to a halt.

Trustee payments and expenses

In the absence of a rector the PCC still has to provide heat, light and maintenance for the vicarage so that a new incumbent will still have a comfortable home.

Reserves

Reserves fell by £53,840 as investment markets all fell. At the end of the year reserves were £635,078. The current insurance valuation for the churches of £16,400,000 also provides a perspective on this number.

Many thanks to everyone who has donated or helped to raise money for our small parish and thank you to all the treasurers and auditors for the individual churches. Many thanks also to R Sadler & Co who manage our payroll very efficiently. Let us pray for peace in Europe and lower inflation.

Edward Cottrell, Octagon Treasurer

OCTAGON PCC Accounts 2022

		Totals	
INCOME		2022	2021
		£	£
Incoming Resources from Donors			
	Planned giving (Gift Aid)	36345	42960
	Collections (inc. wall safes)	10295	7969
	Income tax recovery	15514	10617
Other Voluntary Incoming Resources			
	Fundraising	11288	34156
	Donations and miscellaneous	25781	20986
Incoming Resources from Operating Activities			
	Fees	7289	4868
	Investment Income	11039	10135
	Total receipts	117551	131690
EXPENDITURE			
	Grants to charities	3501	4045
Church Activities			
	Parish contribution and Deanery exps.	49164	47142
	Church running expenses (inc. admin)	27693	34806
	Octagon Costs (inc. Clergy expenses)	10156	2546
	Church repairs and maintenance	21733	33198
	Total payments	112247	121737
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE		5304	9954
ASSETS			
	Investments	635078	688918
	Restricted Funds		
	Movement over year	-53840	83651

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton and Up Marden, East & North Marden,
Forestside & Stansted, Stoughton, Racton

Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of Accounts

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2022 are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent Inspector</i>
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2021 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed 

Date 20th March 2023

Inspector of Accounts
Mr Charles Lawton
Walderton House
Walderton
Chichester PO18 9ED

Signed 

Date 20/3/23

Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Edward Cottrell
Battine House
East Marden
Chichester PO18 9JE

The Octagon Parish PCC Investment Policy

Adopted by the PCC, November 2017, reviewed March 2023

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as trustees of parish funds, is responsible for investment policy. The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable - this return can then be spent on the charity's aims. It is recommended that PCC members read what the Charity Commission says on the matter: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/money-and-accounts/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/>

In order to act within the law, the PCC must:

- know, and act within, their charity's powers to invest
- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for their charity
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless they have good reason for not doing so
- review investments on a regular basis
- explain their investment policy in the annual report.

The PCC manages an 'unincorporated charity' and as such the trustees are personally liable for their actions. However, if trustees can demonstrate that they have considered the relevant issues, taken advice where appropriate and reached a reasonable decision, they are unlikely to be criticised for their decisions, or for adopting a particular policy.

Parish Funds and Investment Policy

Parish funds are currently managed in six separate 'pots': the five main churches (Compton, Stoughton, East Marden, Racton and Forestside) and a central fund. It is proposed, until otherwise instructed by the PCC, to continue to manage the six 'pots' separately but to set an investment policy based on the combined financial aims and needs of the parish. As such, the investment policy will allocate to a combination of suitable investments, taking into account the particular needs of a church and the parish's needs as a whole. All funds will be either deposited in recognised UK bank accounts or collective investment schemes managed by an authorised investment manager, approved by the trustees.

Investment Objective

The combined investment objective is to protect the capital value of the funds in real terms and to provide sufficient income for any shortfall in cash flow raised annually by the parish. To this end, the PCC with the advice of the PLC committees will determine from time to time the financial needs of the parish specifically:

- immediate cash needs (eg deposits)
- funds that can be invested for the short term (up to 2 years- eg fixed income)
- funds that are not required for the foreseeable future (longer term investments – eg balanced funds of equities, bonds and property)
- funding for unforeseen circumstances

Risk Policy

In order to meet the investment objective, some risks need to be taken. These risks will be continually assessed guided by the parish's financial needs. The PCC may also give guidance on capital, market, valuation, liquidity, regulatory, counterparty and governance risks. Above all, the investment policy will be diversified across asset classes and sectors.

Delegation of Investment Powers

The PCC is responsible for all investment decisions and risk assessments. It may take investment opinions from their appointed Finance committee, and it will delegate the day-to-day management of funds to the same committee. The PCC may also seek a third-party opinion. The day-to-day management will be based on the investment policy and risk profile the PCC determines from time to time based on the expected financing needs of the parish.

Investment Performance

The PCC will review investment performance as a regular item on the Annual Meeting agenda.

The Octagon Parish Reserves Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC November 2017, reviewed March 2023

The Octagon Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the upkeep and administration of seven churches (the upkeep of St Paul's, Stansted is the responsibility of the Stansted Estate) and for the pastoral care of its parishioners. The churches are old, some dating back to Saxon times, and require constant upkeep and repair. Their Collective insured value is over £16 million.

The PCC has determined to accrue for known expenses relating to the annual running repairs based on previous years' experience but has also set aside reserves of £75,000 per building, for unforeseen repairs exposed by the rota of quinquennial inspection reports.

The PCC has also determined to reserve an additional sum of £70,000 to administer the Octagon Parish in case of emergency.

The PCC has designated the responsibility of investing the reserves to the PCC Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer. The committee consists of the PCC treasurer, the local church treasurers, and a churchwarden. All investment decisions will pass through the committee. The committee should meet at least once per year. Decisions between meetings, if they are necessary can be made by email.

The reserves are generally to be allocated and invested in recognised and agreed funds of differing risk profiles, managed by UK-regulated Fund Managers, or a bank deposit account. The asset allocation mix of the reserves takes into account the risk profile of each fund and an assessment of the date at which the reserves may be required.

The PCC, together with the Finance Committee recommendations, regularly reviews the policy and investments throughout the year based on a continual assessment of expense risks.

Material State of the Churches of The Octagon Parish

Octagon parish church repairs report May 2023

The post-covid backlog has meant delays in some Quinquennial Inspections (QI) and the subsequent work specifications and recommended works have been slow over the past year. However, it should be noted that the churches are generally in sound condition. The status of recent inspections and consequent works is:

Compton, St Mary

The inspecting architect for Compton and Up Marden retired in December 2022 before a specification for the last QI Phase 2 works had been drawn up. Simon Dyson, who already inspects a number of The Octagon churches, has agreed to take on the inspection of these two churches and the PLC has decided to defer any outstanding works until after the next QI due in 2024. This includes the redecoration of the South transept and repairs to windows.

Up Marden, St Michael

As above, any works to this church are on hold. These include repairs to tower weatherboarding and lead flashing, the windows, and replacing the rain runoff drains. The next QI is due in 2024.

North Marden, St Mary

Repairs to defects reported after the 2020 QI, including replacing the wooden casement of the bell tower, have now been completed by Couzens Ltd. Additionally, removing a stump of the weathercock and replacing ineffective lead flashing was required. The final bill for £12,419.02, including VAT, has been paid. The next QI is due in 2025.

East Marden, St Peter

The most pressing work required for St Peter's East Marden consists of measures to prevent water ingress from the redundant chimney, with other miscellaneous minor defects. The PLC agreed to obtain a report from the architect to be included in the faculty application to address this problem and others reported after the 2021 QI. Removal of the chimney is the favoured action. The faculty application will also include proposed measures to improve the church access path, and any other work considered necessary and affordable. The PLC secretary has approached AIM to enquire whether they may be interested in bidding for work of repairing East Marden church, and possibly becoming involved with the regular maintenance of Octagon churches.

Stoughton, St Mary

Following the QI in 2021, the inspecting architect has been instructed to draw up a specification of works considered the highest priority, mostly around the south transept/bell tower, plus repointing and ground-level water drainage repairs which will be submitted for List B approval.

The Archdeacon's approval has already been granted for repair to storm damage of the roof surface and, as an insurance claim, work is due to be undertaken by The Tarrant Group. The advice of an arboriculturist was requested regarding the Poplar tree which overhangs the Chancel roof and as a result, permission is now being sought from the South Downs National Park and the Diocese for the removal of the tree. Not only will this help with the dampness caused by leaf-fall and blocked drains but will pre-empt the future structural failure of the tree that would very likely cause considerable damage to the church.

The next QI is due in 2026.

Racton, St Peter

Delays due to the pandemic meant the QI was undertaken in 2022. The church was found to be both watertight and structurally sound and there is little of major concern within the report. Permission is being sought to fit a wireless light switch at the entrance to the church.

Forestside, Christchurch

Following the failure of the previous architect to produce a report of his QI carried out in September 2020, the newly appointed inspecting architect, David Swarbrick, inspected the church in April 2022. The building is generally in good condition internally and a quotation is awaited for maintenance work to areas of the roof covering and general moss removal. The next QI is due in 2027.

Sarah Lawton, Churchwarden

Safeguarding in The Octagon Parish

Fundamentally, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. Given this, safeguarding is very much about how 'healthy' our church life is. In the Octagon Parish we work within a good safeguarding culture and follow sound safeguarding practices.

Safeguarding was included as a key area on the Octagon community website, and we continue to prioritise loneliness and isolation issues within our community.

Tracey Hodkin, our Octagon Safeguarding Officer for four years, stepped down from the role in January 2023. Tracey offered the PCC consistent and valuable advice for which we were extremely grateful.

We welcomed Fiona Mullett, retired Head Teacher to South Harting CE Primary School, to the role in early 2023.

The members of the PCC are in the throes of undertaking the appropriate levels of Safeguarding training as advised by the Diocese.

All relevant staff and volunteers are up to date with their DBS checks.

Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policies for the Parish are published on our website and are regularly reviewed following the guidance and requirements of the Diocesan Simple Quality Protects system.

Westbourne Deanery Synod - Annual Report for 2022

Role: To promote the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical. We aim to help parishes **grow together**, become a **mutual resource**, and feel part of the wider church.

Our parishes: **Bosham, Chidham** (St Mary & St Wilfrid), **Funtington** with W Stoke & Sennicotts, **The Octagon** (Compton, N. E. and Up Marden, Forestside, Racton, Stansted, Stoughton), **Southbourne** with W Thorney, **Valley** (E Dean, W Dean, Singleton) and **Westbourne** with Woodmancote, with 20 churches.

The Synod met five times in 2022. Reports from the General Synod were received in February, and in September from an invited guest, and from the Diocesan Synod in February and June. Each month the Synod was reminded of need to keeping Safeguarding on the Agenda and ensure training was undertaken as recommended.

Two members of the clergy left the Deanery during the year. The Octagon parish remains in vacancy, but a new vicar was appointed to Southbourne with West Thorney to be inducted in February 2023.

The Rural Dean retired from that appointment at the end of April.

In February the Secretary resigned after 14 years in post, and a new secretary was appointed.

Sadly, the treasurer died in April, and a new treasurer was appointed in September.

At the February meeting, a report of the review of the Deanery by the Diocese was shared, and members discussed in small groups the parish initiatives which would form their Mission Action Plans.

At the June meeting, the draft Deanery Mission Action Plan was received, and the meeting noted that the small size of the Deanery made it difficult to have a broad focus. It was hoped that neighbouring parishes might join our Deanery. The Synod learnt that this was under discussion together with an appointment of a new Rural Dean.

In June the Synod thanked the retiring Rural Dean and bid farewell to two members of the clergy moving to new pastures.

In September we welcomed a new Curate to Bosham parish and learnt of the appointment of an interim Rural Dean. We received a presentation on the July General Synod from an invited guest.

An extraordinary meeting was held in October to consider the proposal that Apuldram and Fishbourne parishes should join the Westbourne Deanery – the proposal was welcomed by the Synod with enthusiasm.

At the November meeting, we learnt that the Chapter had discussed suggested changes to the Deanery MAP, which would be sent to the Diocese with the hope of approval by the Bishop of Horsham. It was also hoped that the incumbent of Fishbourne and Apuldram would attend a Chapter meeting in November.

The new treasurer introduced himself and presented a financial report giving the details of the Parish Share for 2023 and the pledges being sought from the parishes both for 2023 and aspirations for future years.

Consideration was given to the efforts being made in the Deanery to support the Warm Places initiative to help those in need in the forthcoming winter months.

A confirmation service was held in Chichester Cathedral in May jointly with the Chichester Deanery, and candidates from the Parishes of Bosham, Southbourne with West Thorney and Westbourne were confirmed by the Bishop of Chichester.

A Deanery Evensong was held in St Mary's Church Funtington which was well attended.

Training was held for new Lay Ministers of Holy Communion in Southbourne and Westbourne.

Monthly Prayer Gatherings continued throughout the year, visiting the churches in the Deanery and meeting in a different Parish each month.

MK/March 2023

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestside & Stansted
Stoughton, Racton
www.theoctagonparish.org.uk
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD
Tel: 023 9263 1252



**Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:00pm on
Thursday 18th May 2023
AGENDA**

*The meeting will be chaired by Rachel Foister
Secretary of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon*

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting
2. To re-elect Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mrs Carol Stamper as Churchwardens of the Octagon Parish.

followed by:

**Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting to be held at
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall on
Thursday 18th May 2023 at 7:05pm
AGENDA**

*The meeting will be chaired by Sarah Lawton
Chair of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon*

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2022
4. Reports -
 - a) Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish
 - b) Changes to the electoral roll since the last annual meeting
 - c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2022
 - d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) Safeguarding report
5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives
7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year
8. Notices
9. Closing prayer

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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 12th May 2022
at Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7pm

Present:

- Sally Ablewhite (SA)	Local Warden and PCC Rep. Up Marden Church
- Patrick Balfour (PB)	Parish Churchwarden
- Annie Barnes (AB)	Local Warden and PCC Rep. Racton Church
- Edward Cottrell (EC)	Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep [arr. 6:45]
- Sarah Lawton (SL)	Parish Churchwarden
- Pamela Payne (PP)	Deanery Synod Rep. and Local Warden and PCC Rep. Compton Church
- Maria Sadler (MS)	Octagon Lay Reader
- Carol Stamper (CS)	
- Ros Velton (RV)	PCC Rep. Stoughton Church
- Rachel Foister (RDF)	PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator

11 members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Jennie Dolman (JD)	Deanery Synod Rep. and PCC Rep. Forestside Church
- Tom Maier (TM)	Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC Rep.

1. The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on the 27th May 2021 were approved unanimously.

2. Election of Churchwardens of The Octagon Parish:

Carol Stamper was elected and Sarah Lawton was re-elected by unanimous vote

The meeting closed at 7:00pm

Approved by:

Date: 18th May 2023

THE OCTAGON PARISH
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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on 12th May 2022
held at Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:05pm

Present:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| - Sally Ablewhite (SA) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Up Marden Church |
| - Annie Barnes (AB) | Local Warden and PCC Rep. Racton Church |
| - Edward Cottrell (EC) | Octagon Treasurer and Deanery Synod Rep [arr. 6:45] |
| - Sarah Lawton (SL) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Pamela Payne (PP) | Deanery Synod Rep. and Local Warden and PCC Rep. Compton Church |
| - Maria Sadler (MS) | Octagon Lay Reader |
| - Carol Stamper (CS) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Ros Velton (RV) | PCC Rep. Stoughton Church |
| - Rachel Foister (RDF) | PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator |

12 members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by The Revd Lindsay Yates, Rector of the Octagon

1. The meeting was opened at 7:05pm with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| - Jennie Dolman (JD) | Deanery Synod Rep. and PCC Rep. Forestside Church |
| - Tom Maier (TM) | Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC Rep. |

3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the 27th May 2021

PB proposed and PP seconded – all voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

4.a) Annual Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Activities of the Parish.

LY gave an overview of activities across the parish and presented her report for the meeting. The Rector expressed her thanks to Patrick Balfour for all his hard work as Churchwarden of the Octagon Parish for the past 7 years, noting particularly his efforts in keeping the buildings in excellent condition.

4.b) Changes to the Electoral Roll.

There has been a drop from 138 to 130, mainly due to deaths and churchgoers moving away from the area.

4.c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2021.

EC expressed thanks on behalf of the PCC to all to all those who had donated money to the church in the previous year. He also thanked the local treasurers and their auditors for their efforts throughout the year as well as Charles Lawton who audits the central account and has oversight of the local church accounts.

d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
PB presented his report.

LY thanked PB for all his hard work.

e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

PP remarked that Deanery Synod had been notably quiet despite the move to online meetings.

LY noted that the Mission Action Plan will be completed on a Deanery basis and that the rural Dean will collate input from the various parishes. The next Deanery Synod meeting will be held on the 16th June via Zoom. LY noted that she has received a lot of help from the Deanery incumbents and Martin Lane during the previous year. PP remarked that the Synod prayer gatherings continue on the 1st Tuesday of each month touring the different churches of the Deanery. Those interested should contact PP or MS for details.

f) Safeguarding update.

LY thanked TH for her ongoing help and expertise. TH will be standing down in the coming year and a replacement is currently being sought.

5. Elections of lay members of the Parochial Church Council.

Patrick Balfour and Richard Barnes stood for election to the PCC. All voted in favour.

6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives.

All voted in favour of re-electing the current Deanery Synod members. It was noted that the position for a 4th representative remained vacant.

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year.

All voted in favour of re-electing Charles Lawton.

8. Notices.

9. The meeting closed with The Grace.

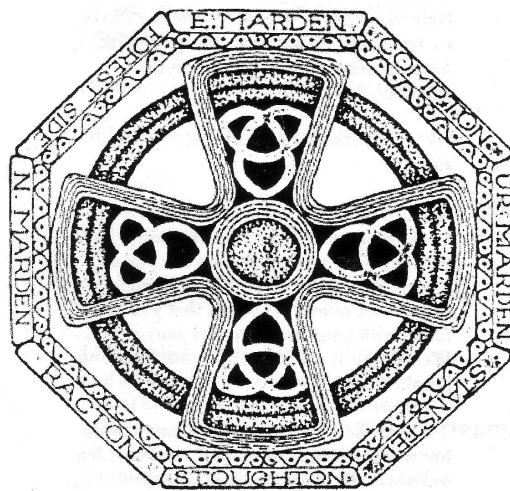
LY thanked all for attending.

The meeting ended at 8:15pm

Signed:

Date: 18th May 2023

The Octagon Parish – Open for All



Accounts

THE OCTAGON PARISH

West Sussex

*Comprising the Parish Churches:
of:*

St Mary, Compton;

Marden

St Peter, East Marden;

Marden

Christchurch, Forestside

St Peter, Racton

St Mary, Stoughton

the Chapels of Ease

St Mary, North

St Michael, Up

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2021

INCUMBENT

The Revd Lindsay Yates

The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Charles Lawton

BANK

NatWest Bank

WEBSITE

<http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk>

Charity Registration No. 1156866

The Octagon Parish - Open for All

“Showing God’s love and caring for our community and churches in the beautiful South Downs National Park”

Administrative Information

The Parish is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commission under the name of

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon,

with the Registered Charity Number of 1156866.

During the year 2021 the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):

[year of election/re-election]

Incumbent: The Revd Lindsay Yates

Churchwardens:

- Mr Patrick Balfour [2016]
- Mrs Sarah Lawton [2019]

Treasurer: Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]

Deanery Synod Reps:

- Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]
- Mrs Jennie Dolman [2017]
- Ms Pamela Payne [2017]

Elected members:

- Mrs Sally Ablewhite [2020]
- Mrs Annie Barnes [2020]
- Mr Tom Maier [2019]
- Ms Pamela Payne [2020]
- Mr Robert Sawers [2016] (until May 2021)
- Mrs Ros Veltom [2021]

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Tracey Hodkin [2018]

Foundation Governor: Mrs Carolyn Costello [2021] (until Sept 2021)

Data Protection and Compliance Officer: Mr Patrick Balfour

Ex-officio members: Mrs Maria Sadler [2018]*

Appointed roles: Ms Rachel Foister, Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer

Standing Committee: Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer

**Lay readers are ex officio members unless requesting not to be on the PCC*

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15)	The Octagon PCC Investment Policy
16)	The Octagon PCC Reserves Policy
17)	Material State of the Octagon Churches
18)	Octagon Safeguarding Report
19)	Agenda - Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Meeting of the PCC
20)	Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Meeting of the PCC, 27 th May 2021 ~~8~~

Structure Governance and Management

PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon (hereafter referred to as “the PCC”) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Power’s Measure. The PCC is a registered charity – Reg. No. 1156866. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. For 2020~~8~~, the membership of the PCC of the Octagon Parish is detailed on page 2.

Parish Local Committees

Each church in the Octagon Parish is run by a Parish Local Committee (PLC), comprising elected members. Each PLC is represented on the Octagon PCC by one of their members or by a Churchwarden and reports regularly on its activities.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprised the Rector: The Revd Lindsay Yates, the two Parish Churchwardens: Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mr Patrick Balfour and the Treasurer of the Octagon Parish Mr Edward Cottrell.

Members of Parish Local Committees (PLCs) in 2021

Compton and Up Marden	East and North Marden	Forestside	Stoughton	Racton
Sally Ablewhite*	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Rosy Bell	Anna Blencowe
Fiona Baker	Edward Cottrell	Linda Fulker	Joanne Briffet	Peter Blencowe
Judith Davies	Annie Judd*	Sarah Hutchinson	Pamela Harry*	Phillip Cooper
Annabel Keville	John Robinson	David Parker	Di Hughes	Ros Gordon-Cumming
Amanda Jackson	Valerie Robinson		Joan Langmead	Audrey Hamilton
Tom Maier	Penny Walder		Sarah Lawton	Elizabeth Stanley
Steph Newell	Denise Watson		Maria Sadler	Annie Barnes*
Pamela Payne*	Steve Watson		Caroline Taylor	Richard Barnes
Robert Sawers			Ros Velton*	
Valerie Seddon			Jane Venables	

*served as Local Churchwarden in 2021

Octagon Voluntary Roles in 2021

Octagon Tower Captain – Bell Ringing
Licencing

Tim Wright and Joanna Woodcock

Octagon Magazine Editors

Caroline Taylor

Octagon Magazine Advertising

Roy Fulker

Octagon Music

Richard Barnes

Octagon Choir Lead

Martin Phillips

Sidespeople for Local churches 2021

Compton	East Marden	North Marden	Forestside	Racton	Stoughton	Up Marden
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Audrey Hamilton	Rosemary Bell	Michael Ablewhite
Fiona Baker		Jean Balfour	Linda Fulker	Annie Barnes	Donald Fowler-Watt	Sally Ablewhite
Judith Davies			Roy Fulker	Richard Barnes	Wendy Goodall	Charles Robinson
Amanda Jackson			Sarah Hutchingson	Gill King-Smith	Steve Goodall	Fiona Robinson
Annabel Keville			David Parker		Fiona Gowar	Valerie Seddon
Jessica Maier					Barney Gowar	
Tom Maier					Pam Harry	
Stephanie Newell					Di Hughes	
Thomas Newell					Joan Langmead	
Pamela Payne					Charles Lawton	
Robert Sawers					Sarah Lawton	
					Olivia Pemberton	
					Maria Sadler	
					Ros Veltom	
					Jane Venables	

Trustees Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council 2021

Our Aims and Purposes as a Charity

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, the Reverend Lindsay Yates, 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;
- Knowing Jesus and making Him better known;
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the eldest to the youngest, 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 In Order to Achieve our Charitable Objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our incumbent and PCC 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 recognizing its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For 2021 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aim. These included:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship both in our churches when appropriate and within the Covid regulations and also at home via online platforms;
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community;
- Teaching, baptizing and nurturing new and existing believers;
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish;
- Considering how services can involve the various groups that live in the parish;
- Putting faith into action, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament;
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in Jesus;
- Reaching out to the community through provision of village events, festive services, support of the Octagon Choir, the Stoughton bellringers, the Octagon Magazine and the Octagon Parish Website and Facebook Group;

- Maintaining the fabric of the church buildings as historic centres and focuses of community life in our villages;
- Provision of pastoral care of people living in the parish;
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish.

What We Achieved and How We Affected Beneficiaries' Lives

During 2021 the parish continued to benefit from a ministry team consisting of the Rector, Lindsay Yates, Honorary Assistant Priest, Will Adam and Lay Reader Edward Mynors who were assisted by those who read and intercede. Maria Sadler continued with her ordination training on the Part-time Portsmouth Pathway Cuddesdon and was also able to lead services occasionally. David Parker completed training as an Authorised Lay Minister (Worship Elective) in preparation for joining the Ministry Team in January 2022.

On the administrative side is the Standing Committee of the PCC, comprising the Rector, Rachel Foister, Administrator and PCC Secretary, Patrick Balfour and Sarah Lawton, Churchwardens, and Edward Cottrell, Treasurer. This team operates alongside committed local teams in our churches to ensure that we are able to keep running for our beneficiaries.

The Rector and Carolyn Costello remained involved as governors of the school as it joined the Downland Village Schools Federation in March 2021. Joining the DVSF both ensured the future of the school and also began to strengthen its offering. The numbers starting in reception increased substantially as a result and the school remains at the centre of the Octagon community.

Although we are continuing to upload historic documents, the Sharepoint project has now been largely completed and enables various church officers to access numerous documents at the touch of a button. The Church and Community website was launched during 2021 and is updated on a regular basis, helping the Church, community groups and businesses based in the Octagon to share their activities with those living in the parish and beyond. We are grateful to Rachel Foister for all her input into both these projects.

The Octagon Facebook Group continued to grow and was involved in enabling a number of people to stay connected with their neighbours during the Covid period including approaching a new dairy to take over delivering milk in the area when the existing dairy stopped delivering to the Octagon.

Attendance at Worship

At the beginning of 2021 we continued to worship via Zoom with a mixture of Services of the Word and Eucharists from the Vicarage. Occasional pre-recorded services also continued and were made available via YouTube and Facebook. The parish provided the Church of England's national recorded service for Plough Sunday which included participation from members of our farming community and was broadcast via the Church of England's website. We returned to in person services on Palm

Sunday at Forestside and sang outside for the first time at Easter. Our full service pattern resumed at the beginning of June, and we were once more able to offer a wide variety of services including Eucharists and Services of the Word from both Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer.

Our Tuesday morning online Morning Prayer services have continued and are now an established part of our weekly worship. Midweek Eucharist services resumed in person and were broadcast via the Octagon Parish Facebook page.

Our Christmas services were well attended despite the rise in the Omicron Covid variant.

Recent Attendance Across the Octagon:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Easter	196	228	0	120
Christmas and Advent	572	581	20	285
October (average Sunday attendance)	52	45	7	53

Numbers on electoral roll:

2022	127
2021	134
2020	138
2019	139

Teaching, Baptizing and Nurturing New and Existing Believers

There were 6 baptisms in 2021 which provided an opportunity to share the Christian faith with young families and to welcome visitors to our churches for the services and a young candidate was confirmed by the Bishop of Lewes at St Mary's Littlehampton in July.

During Lent 2021 we followed the Diocesan Lent Course and met together as a parish via Zoom. The course was led by our two new suffragan bishops and enabled us to engage with both them and the wider diocese.

Both the Rector and Mr Mynors, Lay Reader, continued to lead weekly assemblies at Compton and Up Marden CE Primary School which were online until June when they resumed in person at school. For the first time in a number of years pupils from the school made a pilgrimage from the school to St Michael's, Up Marden where the Rector introduced them to the history of the building and said a prayer with them.

Evangelism and Outreach

As a result of the continuing pandemic the church was required to reach out to the community by providing short accessible services online which included an online Valentine's Day service from St Peter's Racton and a live broadcast from St Mary's Stoughton for Christmas Day on YouTube. This was our first ever live YouTube broadcast and was made possible by a generous donation enabling WiFi to be installed in the church.

The Octagon Magazine continued to be disseminated to members of the community via FlipSnack. The subscription fee for the Octagon Magazine increased to £10 per year which has increased its profitability. It now contains a cover and middle page with colour photos and businesses which advertise in the magazine are listed on the Parish website at no additional cost. The parish also continues to publicise its activities and those of other organisations in a weekly email bulletin which is received by around 230 individuals.

Each year there is at least one event such as a fête held in the parish, which is organized under the umbrella of the church and which involves many members of the church and wider communities. As well as fundraising, these events provide a good opportunity for the church and community to come together to offer fun, food and fellowship to those that live here as well as many visitors.

This year fêtes were held at Lordington House in August and in Compton at the Vicarage in September. Also in September the Friends of St Mary's Stoughton hosted a well-attended fundraising concert in the church featuring the young cellist Butterfly Patterson and one of our organists Richard Barnes.

Although the Octagon Choir was unable to sing for most of the year it was reconvened in the run-up to Christmas and sang at the carol service at Stoughton and Midnight Mass at Compton and their input was much appreciated by those who attended. St Mary's Stoughton also benefits from the input of a team of bell-ringers drawn from across the parish who resumed ringing as soon as this was permitted.

Provision of the Church Buildings for People to Enjoy

During 2021 we have maintained our seven historic church buildings. Our churches remained open during the daytime for private prayer and were open more generally as soon as this was permitted. The offering of our church buildings for prayer and peace and quiet is an important part of our mission and outreach and we are grateful to all those across our villages who help to clean and maintain our churches as well as those who arrange the flowers and have opened and closed the churches when they have been open during the Covid period.

In the run up to Christmas St Mary's Stoughton was visited by two groups of pilgrims on pilgrimages organised by the British Pilgrimage Trust. The Rector welcomed each party and gave them a blessing. Their visit was mentioned in an article in the Guardian Newspaper on 22 December.

Provision of Pastoral Care for People Living in the Parish

This is a vital part of what we offer to our beneficiaries and pastoral care has continued in person where possible and over the telephone. Monthly coffee mornings in Compton were unable to take place in 2021 due to the ongoing pandemic but pub lunches in Stoughton recommenced towards the end of the year. It was only possible to offer pastoral and sacramental care to those at Lordington Park on an occasional basis due to the ongoing Covid situation.

Provision of Tangible Support to the Poor and Needy and Charitable Giving

We collected money for the RNLI service at St Peter's, East Marden on Sea Sunday in July. A number of donations were made from the Rector's Discretionary Fund to those in need across the parish at Christmas and throughout the year. This year we made a smaller number of more substantial amounts to assist with fuel bills of some of our less affluent parishioners.

Summary of Birth, Marriage and Funeral Services Across the Parish:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Marriage Services	7	9	0	9
Marriage Blessings	6	2	0	3
Baptisms	6	9	3	6

Burials in our Churchyards	6	6	2	6
Interments of Ashes	3	6	4	2
Funerals Services only	4	3	5	5

Financial Review

Attached are the Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2021 based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon central account. The statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Independent</u>
<u>Inspector</u>		
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah
Hutchinson		
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George
Papworth		
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen
Spilsted		
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles
Lawton		

The consolidated accounts for 2021 show a surplus of just under £10,000. Once again, this disguises the uneven nature of the accounts at an individual church level where repairs and fund raisers saw deficits for some and surpluses for others. It also hides the relentless annual dilution of parish income from the inflation of our parish costs which as everyone will know from their own experience is accelerating in 2022.

Overall, after the shutdown of the previous year, 2021 was a more normal year with a bounce back in giving, fundraising and weddings. It is wonderful to see the community coming back together after lockdown and thank you on behalf of all the treasurers for your continued generosity.

Donations and income tax recovery were higher. The Stansted Foundation renewed its very generous donation. The new channels for donations such as Amazon Smile, Goodbox and the CAF donate button on the parish website that didn't exist a few years ago continue to build. The latter has benefited from the wonderful new and enhanced Octagon community website, for which the parish received a grant of £2000 from Chichester District Council.

Highlights of the year included a hugely successful Racton fete which raised over £11,000, enough to account for all of the consolidated surplus mentioned above. Without this the consolidated accounts would have shown a deficit for 2021. Hopefully this will keep Racton church afloat until 2023. On the expenditure end of the accounts, Forestside paid for their new roof at the expected cost of just under £20,000. The current year should see a pick-up in repairs and maintenance for the other churches as the results of several quinquennials are tackled by the parish local councils.

The Parish Mission Cost which is paid to the diocese continues to be the largest single item of expenditure for the parish to meet. 2021 saw a big increase to £47,000 as the standstill granted to the Octagon for 2020 was put to one side. Although this seems like a large sum it must be remembered that it includes the direct and indirect costs of employing the rector. Once this modest amount for a fully qualified professional is removed the residual amount of £19,000 for the support and membership of the Church of England appears entirely reasonable. However, it does highlight the main threat for the parish going forward, namely inflation. The Parish Mission Cost has grown at 2/3% per annum and this rate will probably increase to 5% or more than £2000 per annum going forward. Currently officially measured inflation is above 7% and forecasts point to inflation perhaps reaching double digits before long. Inflation is a problem for everyone except governments with debts in conventional bonds where their liabilities are diminished in real terms by inflation. As a result, it is likely that a period of financial repression will be prolonged. This is where interest rates remain below the rate of inflation. For the Octagon Parish inflation means higher costs from the Parish Mission Cost, the administration of the parish, the vicarage office, insurance, and the repairs needed for the buildings. Unfortunately, the parish income is predominantly static. The Octagon magazine managed 100% price increase last year to £10 for an annual subscription and that helped to raise an extra £1100. Some generous individuals do inflate their donations, but in the majority of cases the struggle to fill the shopping basket after the incredible jump in energy costs means that this is not possible.

After the shutdown from the Covid pandemic we now have a brutal and unjust war once again on the European continent. The horror of this terrible war in Ukraine is available to us to witness daily and there has been a fantastic response in donations of food, clothing and money from all quarters of the parish. It is perhaps of some comfort that our tranquil churches, which have witnessed so many dark periods over the centuries, are once again able to offer sanctuaries of peace for prayer as well as providing an infrastructure for the mobilisation of local communities. When household budgets are so tight and there are so many important calls for charitable donations both at home and abroad it is tempting to forego an appeal for yet another cause. However if we are to play our part in sustaining Christian belief in the face of evil and passing on the churches to future generations it is important to ask for financial support. Despite the half stipend establishment of the rector the costs of maintaining our parish are close to £100,000 each year. This requires a significant effort from our small community. If you are able to commit to a regular amount each month or year or can add a little inflationary increase to your existing donation then please get in touch with anyone listed at the front of the Octagon magazine or on the website.

<https://theoctagonparish.org.uk/>

Staff Costs

The PCC pays for an administrator who assists the Rector in running the parish. This is an important role in allowing the Rector to maximise her

time with her parishioners and the local community. The pandemic has underlined the importance of this position and as we shall have a vacancy from July this role will be vital.

Trustee payments and expenses

The PCC supports the clergy by paying council tax of £3247 as well as contributions towards the running costs of the vicarage where the parish office is located.

Reserves

Despite holding a large cash position during the year the continued support for investment markets from low interest rates and central bank purchases meant that reserves rose to £688,000. The natural consequence of these buoyant investment values is that income is low and so capital will be needed to supplement running costs in the parish. In 2022 there are quinquennials on at least three churches to pay for and this together with the recent fall in investment markets and rising interest rates will reduce reserves substantially. The current insurance valuation for the churches of £16,400,000 also provides a further perspective on the size of these reserves.

Many thanks to everyone who has donated or helped to raise money for our beautiful parish and thank you to all the treasurers and auditors for the individual churches. Let us pray for peace in Europe and lower inflation.

Also appended are the PCC Investment and Reserves policies.

Edward Cottrell, Octagon Treasurer

OCTAGON Parochial Church Council Accounts 2021

	<u>TOTALS</u>	
INCOME	2021	2020
	£	£
<u>Incoming Resources from Donors</u>		
Planned giving (Gift Aid)	42,960	37,396
Collections (inc. wall safes)	7,969	4,084
Income tax recovery	10,617	8,956
<u>Other Voluntary Incoming Resources</u>		
Fundraising	34,156	12,970
Donations and miscellaneous	20,986	30,732
<u>Incoming Resources from Operating Activities</u>		
Fees	4,868	5,053
Investment Income	10,135	16,276
Total receipts	131,690	115,467
EXPENDITURE		
Grants to charities	4,045	1,404
<u>Church Activities</u>		
Parish contribution and Deanery expenses	47,142	42,835
Church running expenses (inc. administration)	34,806	20,206
Octagon Central Costs (inc. Clergy expenses)	2,546	12,280
Church repairs and maintenance	33,198	18,571
Total payments	121,737	95,296
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE	9,954	20,171
ASSETS Including Investments and	688,918	613,231
Restricted Funds		
Movement over year	75,687	41,962

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestside & Stansted, Stoughton, Racton

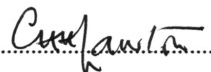
Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of Accounts

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending **31st December 2018** are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent Inspector</i>
Compton with Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Joan Langmead	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2018 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed 

Signed 

Date 3rd April 2019

Date 3 April 2019

Inspector of Accounts
Mr Charles Lawton
Walderton House
Walderton
Chichester PO18 9ED

Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Edward Cottrell
Battine House
East Marden
Chichester PO18 9JE

**Compton & Up Marden, East & North
Marden Forestside & Stansted,
Stoughton, Racton**

**Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of
Accounts**

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31 December 2021 are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Compton with Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	<i>Inspector</i> Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2021 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed: 

Signed: 

Date: 9th April 2022

Date: 9th April 2022

Inspector of Accounts Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Charles Lawton Mr Edward Cottrell
Walderton House Battine House
Walderton East Marden
Chichester PO18 9ED Chichester PO18 9JE

The Octagon Parish PCC Investment Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC, November 2017, reviewed March 2022

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as trustees of parish funds, is responsible for investment policy. The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable - this return can then be spent on the charity's aims. It is recommended that PCC members read what the Charity Commission says on the matter:

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/money-and-accounts/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/>

In order to act within the law, the PCC must:

- know, and act within, their charity's powers to invest
- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for their charity
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless they have good reason for not doing so
- review investments on a regular basis
- explain their investment policy in the annual report

The PCC manages an 'unincorporated charity' and as such the trustees are personally liable for their actions. However, if trustees can demonstrate that they have considered the relevant issues, taken advice where appropriate and reached a reasonable decision, they are unlikely to be criticised for their decisions, or for adopting a particular policy.

Parish Funds and Investment Policy

Parish funds are currently managed in six separate 'pots': the five main churches (Compton, Stoughton, East Marden, Racton and Forestside) and a central fund. It is proposed, until otherwise instructed by the PCC, to continue to manage the six 'pots' separately but to set an investment policy based on the combined financial aims and needs of the parish. As such, the investment policy will allocate to a combination of suitable investments, taking into account particular needs of a church and the parish needs as a whole. All funds will be either deposited in recognised UK bank accounts or collective investment schemes managed by an authorised investment manager, approved by the trustees.

Investment Objective

The combined investment objective is to protect the capital value of the funds in real terms and to provide sufficient income for any shortfall in cash flow raised annually by the parish. To this end, the PCC will determine from time to time the financial needs of the parish specifically:

- immediate cash needs (eg deposits)
- funds that can be invested for the short term (up to 2 years- eg fixed income)
- funds that are not required for the foreseeable future (longer term investments - eg balanced funds of equities, bonds and property)
- funding for unforeseen circumstances

Risk Policy

In order to meet the investment objective, some risks need to be taken. These risks will be continually assessed guided by the parish's financial needs. The PCC may also give guidance on capital, market, valuation, liquidity, regulatory, counterparty and governance risks. Above all, the investment policy will be diversified across asset classes and sectors.

Delegation of Investment Powers

The PCC is responsible for all investment decisions and risk assessment. It may take investment opinions from their appointed Finance Committee and it will delegate the day to day management of funds to the same committee. The PCC may also seek a third-party opinion. The day-to-day management will be based on the investment policy and risk profile the PCC determines from time to time based on the expected financing needs of the parish.

Investment Performance

The PCC will review investment performance as a regular item on the Annual Meeting agenda.

The Octagon Parish PCC Reserves Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC, November 2017, reviewed March 2022

The Octagon Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the upkeep and administration of seven churches (the upkeep of St Paul's, Stansted is the responsibility of the Stansted Estate) and for the pastoral care of its parishioners. The churches are old, some dating back to Saxon times, and require constant upkeep and repair. Their Collective insured value is over £16 million.

The PCC has determined to accrue for known expenses relating to the annual running repairs based on previous years' experience but has also set aside reserves of £70,000 per building, for unforeseen repairs exposed by the rota of quinquennial inspection reports.

The PCC has also determined to reserve an additional sum of £100,000 to administer the Octagon Parish in case of emergency.

The PCC has designated the responsibility of investing the reserves to the PCC Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer. The committee consists of the PCC treasurer, the local church treasurers and a churchwarden. All investment decisions will pass through the committee. The committee should meet at least once per year. Decisions between meetings, if they are necessary, can be made by email.

The reserves are generally to be allocated and invested in recognised and agreed funds of differing risk profiles, managed by UK regulated Fund Managers, or a bank deposit account. The asset allocation mix of the reserves takes into account the risk profile of each fund and an assessment of the date at which the reserves may be required.

The PCC, together with the Finance Committee recommendations, regularly reviews the policy and investments throughout the year based on a continual assessment of expense risks.

Material State of the Churches of The Octagon

Octagon parish church repairs report

May 2022

The churches are generally in sound condition. The status of recent Quinquennial Inspections (QI) and consequent works is:

Compton

Phase 1 of the post QI works, consisting of the priority 1 and 2 items, has been completed. The work package for Phase 2, consisting of lower priority items and requiring a faculty by virtue of the repairs to the windows, and moving the flagpole, is under discussion with the architect, prior to her drawing up the work specification for inclusion with the faculty application. The next QI is due in 2024.

Up Marden

Phase 1 of the post QI works, consisting of the priority 1 and 2 items, has been completed. Phase 2, consisting of lower priority items and requiring a faculty by virtue of the repairs to the windows, and replacing the rain runoff drains, is under discussion with the architect, with the aim of drawing up the work specification for inclusion with the faculty application, and to embark on a tendering exercise. The next QI is due in 2024.

North Marden

Progress with repairs to defects reported after the QI carried out in October 2020 has been very slow. The smaller items have mostly been completed, but the most important one, replacement of the wooden casement of the bell tower has not begun. The contractor is unable to say when it will be started, citing post-covid backlog in their timber workshop, and adverse weather. The next QI is due in 2025.

East Marden

The report of the QI completed in October 2021 is being considered with a view to decision on what items are to be addressed. The single item of most concern is the continued ingress of water from above the recently repaired roof truss. The next QI is due in 2026.

Stoughton

The recent QI was completed in October 2021. The report is under consideration with a view to deciding the items requiring early repair. There is little of major concern in the report. The next QI is due in 2026.

Racton

The QI due in 2021 has been delayed by the architect's post-covid backlog. The architect has agreed to reschedule this summer.

Forestside

Following the failure of the previous architect to produce a report of his QI carried out in September 2020, a new architect has been engaged, and has carried out a QI in April 2022. The report is awaited. The next QI is due in 2027.

Safeguarding in The Octagon Parish

Fundamentally, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power, and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. Given this, safeguarding is very much about how 'healthy' our church life is. In the Octagon Parish we work within a good safeguarding culture and follow sound safeguarding practice.

Safeguarding was included as a key area on the Octagon community website and we continue to prioritise loneliness and isolation issues within our community

The Revd Lindsay Yates, Octagon Rector
~~The aim this year has been to raise the profile of safeguarding in the Parish and not just as something to think about if there is a concern but also to think about safety and people in general. Two articles have been published in the Parish magazine and the Forestside newsletter – the first about battery safety and the 2nd concerning the Zero Suicide Alliance, promoting the free training resources available on their website.~~

~~Several parish safeguarding policies have been updated.~~

~~For the coming year – the aim is to continue to update all policies, to further promote safety and to consider the issues that affect rural areas such as loneliness and isolation and what we can do as a community to help.~~

Tracey Hodkin, Octagon Safeguarding Officer

Westbourne Deanery Synod



Our role: to promote the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical

Locally we aim to help parishes grow together, become a mutual resource and feel part of the wider church.

Our parishes: Southbourne with W Thorney; Bosham; Chidham, from 2020 jointly staffed and financed with Funtington with W Stoke & Sennicotts; The Octagon (Compton, North Marden, East Marden, Up Marden, Forestside, Racton and Stoughton

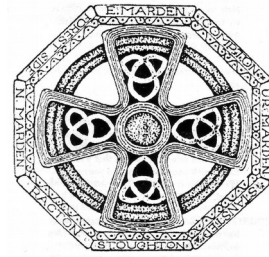
churches), Valley (East Dean, West Dean and Singleton churches), and Westbourne with Woodmancote; 20 churches.

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestsides & Stansted
Stoughton, Racton

www.theoctagonparish.org.uk

The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD

Tel: 023 9263 1252



Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held in
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall at 7:00pm on
Thursday 12th May 2022
AGENDA

The meeting will be chaired by Rachel Foister
Secretary of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The
Octagon

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting
2. To re-elect Mrs Sarah Lawton as Churchwarden of the Octagon Parish. To elect a new churchwarden for the Octagon Parish

followed by:

Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting in
Compton and Up Marden CE School Hall on
Thursday 12th May 2022 at 7:05pm
AGENDA

The meeting will be chaired by The Revd Lindsay Yates
Chair of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The
Octagon

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2021
4. Reports -
 - a) Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish
 - b) Changes to the electoral roll since the last Annual Meeting
 - c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2021
 - d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) Safeguarding report
5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year
8. Notices

Closing prayer

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 27th May 2021
at St Mary's Church, Stoughton at 7:00pm

Present:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| - Patrick Balfour (PB) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Edward Cottrell (EC) | Octagon Treasurer |
| - Pamela Harry (PH) | Local Warden, Stoughton Church |
| - Sarah Lawton (SL) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Tom Maier (TM) | Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton |

PLC Rep.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| - Pamela Payne (PP) | Deanery Synod Representative |
| - David Parker (DP) | Local Warden, Forestside |
| - Maria Sadler (MS) | Octagon Lay Reader |
| - Ros Velton (RV) | Local Warden, Stoughton |
| - Lindsay Yates (LY) | Octagon Rector |
| - Rachel Foister (RDF) | PCC Secretary and Octagon |

Administrator

7 members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

Apologies were received from:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - Sally Ablewhite (SA) | Local Warden, Compton and Up Marden |
| - Annie Barnes (AB) | Local Warden, Racton |
| - Jennie Dolman (JD) | Deanery Synod Representative |
| - Tracey Hodkin (TH) | Octagon Safeguarding Officer |

1. The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on the 22nd October 2020 were approved unanimously.

2. Election of Churchwardens of The Octagon Parish:

Patrick Balfour and Sarah Lawton were re-elected by unanimous vote

The meeting closed at 7:00pm

Approved by



Date: 12th May 2022

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on 27th May 2021
held at St Mary's Church Stoughton at 7:00pm**

Present:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| - Patrick Balfour (PB) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Annie Barnes (AB) | Local Warden, Racton |
| - Edward Cottrell (EC) | Octagon Treasurer |
| - Pamela Harry (PH) | Local Warden, Stoughton Church |
| - Sarah Lawton (SL) | Parish Churchwarden |
| - Tom Maier (TM) | Octagon fundraising advisor and Compton PLC |

Rep.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| - Pamela Payne (PP) | Deanery Synod Representative |
| - David Parker (DP) | Local Warden, Forestside |
| - Maria Sadler (MS) | Octagon Lay Reader |
| - Ros Veltom (RV) | Local Warden, Stoughton |
| - Lindsay Yates (LY) | Octagon Rector |
| - Rachel Foister (RDF) | PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator |

7 members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

The meeting was chaired by The Revd Lindsay Yates, Rector of the Octagon

1. The meeting was opened at 7:02pm with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence were received from:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - Sally Ablewhite (SA) | Local Warden, Compton and Up Marden |
| - Jennie Dolman (JD) | Deanery Synod Representative |
| - Edward Mynors (EM) | Octagon Lay Reader |
| - Tracey Hodkin (TH) | Octagon Safeguarding Officer |

3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the 22nd October 2020.

PB proposed and PP seconded – all voted unanimously to accept the minutes.

4.a) Annual Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Activities of the Parish. LY gave an overview of activities across the parish and presented her report for the meeting. She expressed thanks to the Standing Committee for their dedicated work over the year, Sarah Lawton (Churchwarden) for her help in ensuring that the parish responded appropriately and in a timely fashion to Covid security arrangements and to Patrick Balfour (Churchwarden) for his continued care of our church buildings. She noted that it was PB's last year as Churchwarden and that it had been suggested that a buildings committee be formed to take over this aspect of his role in 2022. The PCC was also actively involved in looking for a replacement as Churchwarden. LY noted that working in teams and responding to the needs and preferences of volunteers was important in encouraging new members to our PLC's, groups and committees. LY went on to thank all local church wardens and all those involved in leading worship, noting

the Plough Sunday service at Stoughton shared nationally on the CofE website. She especially thanked our organists for their efforts in the previous year. She also remarked on the success of our online services with 1,500 views on Facebook for our BCP service at Racton.

Those retiring from their roles in the Parish were thanked, including David Parker after 16 years as Local Warden for Forestside Church, Pam Harry as Local warden for Stoughton Church, Audrey Hamilton as Local Warden for Racton Church, and Edward Mynors retiring from running the Octagon Parish website.

4.b) Changes to the Electoral Roll.

Numbers now stood at 138, remaining the same as the previous year.

4.c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending

the 31st December 2020.

EC expressed thanks on behalf of the PCC to all to all those who had donated money to the church in the previous year. He also thanked the local treasurers and their auditors for their efforts throughout the year as well as Charles Lawton who audits the central account and has oversight of the local church accounts. He thanked RDF and Caroline Taylor for their efforts in continuing to make the Octagon Magazine available during the pandemic.

EC remarked that there had been some negatives due to the pandemic. Collections have been lower, as well as tax reclaims. There have been fewer opportunities for fundraising events and marriages had all been cancelled in 2020. Revenues from the magazine have been reduced although the move to online publication has helped with reducing printing costs. Other savings have been made in church supplies and music licencing and the remaining costs for the licences are being covered by a donation. Alongside this, parishioners have been generous with donations and with a legacy for Forestside as well as a donation from Stansted and planned building works not done in 2020, we have made a small surplus. An appeal for donations in the Spring went well with £1830 donated to The Octagon and £7000 to the Rector's discretionary fund. He also noted that the 'Donate Now' button on the website was working well. Looking forwards EC noted that costs in 2021 will increase as building repairs recommence.

Reserves are currently at £600,000 with the various funds performing well.

He summarised priorities for the coming year, which included:

- Increasing regular giving, both numbers of givers and amounts given
- Fundraising at the Local and Octagon levels
- Raising awareness of legacies

New pew cards (different colour) have been produced and will be circulated shortly.

d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish PB presented his report.

East Marden St Peter - The quinquennial inspection has been delayed until 2021. An excellent repair job was completed by Trevor Couzens after the dramatic roof beam failure, which had required an emergency faculty.

North Marden St Mary - The quinquennial inspection has been completed and a quote for works costing £6000 has been received from Trevor Couzens

Compton St Mary - The quinquennial inspection was completed 2 years previously. Works will start this coming Thursday.

Up Marden, St Michael - The quinquennial inspection was completed 2 years

previously and a contract with the builders has been signed. The Friends of UP Marden church will be covering the costs for the necessary repairs, and it is hoped that the works will be completed before a planned wedding this summer.

Christchurch Forestside – Sections of the roof have now been replaced. The quinquennial inspection was completed 6 months previously, but the report is still pending. Replacement of the cast iron guttering with modern aluminium has met with faculty issues, so the works are still pending

Racton St Peter – The quinquennial inspection is due in 2021. Various minor works have been completed including pruning the Hornbeam in the churchyard and repairs to the door latch.

Stoughton St Mary – The quinquennial inspection has been delayed and will be completed in 2021. A significant amount of works from the previous inspection have not been completed, so it is expected that the recommended work from a new inspection will be costly.

LY thanked PB for all his hard work.

e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod.

PP remarked that Deanery Synod had been notably quiet despite the move to online meetings. LY noted that the Mission Action Plan will be completed on a Deanery basis and that the rural Dean will collate input from the various parishes. The next Deanery Synod meeting will be held on the 16th June via Zoom. LY noted that she has received a lot of help from the Deanery incumbents and Martin Lane during the previous year. PP remarked that the Synod prayer gatherings continue on the 1st Tuesday of each month touring the different churches of the Deanery. Those interested should contact PP or MS for details.

f) Safeguarding update.

LY thanked TH for ongoing help and expertise.

5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC.

Election of Ros Velton to the PCC as Local Warden and PLC rep for Stoughton Church. SL proposed and PB seconded. All voted in favour.

6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives.

All voted in favour of re-electing the current Deanery Synod members. It was noted that the position for a 4th representative remained vacant.

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year.

All voted in favour of re-electing Charles Lawton.

8. Notices.

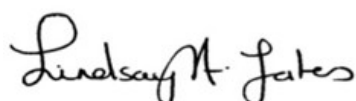
SL announced the Open Gardens event at Walderton to raise money for Stoughton Church, noting that any volunteers to help on the day would be very welcome.

PP noted a plant and baked goods sale at Noredown House in West Marden on the 26th June to raise funds for Compton Church.

9. The meeting closed with The Grace.

LY thanked all for attending.

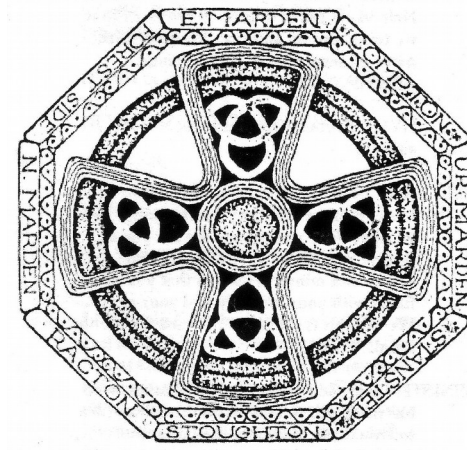
The meeting ended at 8:21pm



Signed:

Date: 12th May 2022

***The
Parish -***



***Octagon
Open for All***

Accounts

THE OCTAGON PARISH

West Sussex

Comprising the Parish Churches:

**St Mary, Compton;
St Peter, East Marden;
Christchurch, Forestside
St Peter, Racton
St Mary, Stoughton**

the Chapels of Ease of:

**St Mary, North Marden
St Michael, Up Marden**

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT of the PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

For the year ended 31st December 2020

INCUMBENT

The Revd Lindsay Yates
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Charles Lawton

BANK

NatWest Bank

WEBSITE

<http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk>

Charity Registration No. 1156866

The Octagon Parish – Open for All

*“Showing God’s love and caring for our community and churches in
the beautiful South Downs National Park”*

Administrative Information

The Parish is a Charity Registered with the Charity Commission under the name of **The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon**, with the Registered Charity Number of 1156866.

During the year 2020 the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC):
[year of election/re-election]

Incumbent:	The Revd Lindsay Yates
Churchwardens:	Mr Patrick Balfour [2016] Mrs Sarah Lawton [2019]
Treasurer:	Mr Edward Cottrell [2017]
Deanery Synod Reps:	Mr Edward Cottrell [2017] Mrs Jennie Dolman [2017] Ms Pamela Payne [2017]
Elected members:	Mrs Sally Ablewhite [2020] Mrs Annie Barnes [2020] Mrs Audrey Hamilton [2016] (<i>until April 2020</i>) Mrs Pamela Harry [2018] (<i>until September 2020</i>) Mr Tom Maier [2019] Mr David Parker [2017] (<i>until September 2020</i>) Ms Pamela Payne [2020] Mr Robert Sawers [2016] Mrs Ros Velton (<i>co-opted September 2020</i>) Mrs Penny Walder [2016] (<i>until September 2020</i>)
Safeguarding Officer:	Mrs Tracey Hodkin [2018]
Data Protection and Compliance Officer:	Mr Patrick Balfour
<i>Ex-officio</i> members:	Mrs Maria Sadler [2018]*
Appointed roles:	Ms Rachel Foister, Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer
Standing Committee:	Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer

*Lay readers are ex officio members unless requesting not to be on the PCC

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- 7) Trustees Annual Report
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- 13) Octagon PCC Accounts
- 14) Independent Examiner's Report
- 15) The Octagon PCC Investment Policy
- 16) The Octagon PCC Reserves Policy
- 17) Material State of the Octagon Churches
- 18) Octagon Safeguarding Report
- 19) Agenda – Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Meeting of the PCC
- 20) Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and the Annual Meeting of the PCC,
22nd October 2020

Structure Governance and Management

PCC Membership

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of the Octagon (hereafter referred to as “the PCC”) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. It operates under the Parochial Church Council Power’s Measure. The PCC is a registered charity – Reg. No. 1156866. The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. For 2020, the membership of the PCC of the Octagon Parish is detailed on page 2.

Parish Local Committees

Each church in the Octagon Parish is run by a Parish Local Committee (PLC), comprising elected members. Each PLC has a representative on the Octagon PCC and reports regularly on its activities.

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee comprised the Rector: The Revd Lindsay Yates, the two Parish Churchwardens: Mrs Sarah Lawton and Mr Patrick Balfour and the Treasurer of the Octagon Parish Mr Edward Cottrell.

Members of Parish Local Committees (PLCs) in 2020

Compton and Up Marden	East and North Marden	Forestside	Stoughton	Racton
Sally Ablewhite*	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Rosy Bell	Anna Blencowe
Fiona Baker	Anna Clarke	Linda Fulker	Joanne Briffet	Peter Blencowe
Judith Davies	Barry Clarke	Sarah Hutchinson	Pamela Harry*	Phillip Cooper
Annabel Keville	John Harmer	David Parker*	Di Hughes	Ros Gordon-Cumming
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd		Joan Langmead	Audrey Hamilton*
Steph Newell	Lyn Pearce		Sarah Lawton	Elizabeth Stanley
Pamela Payne*	John Robinson		Maria Sadler	Annie Barnes*
Robert Sawers	Penny Walder*		Caroline Taylor	Richard Barnes
Valerie Seddon	Steve Watson		Ros Veltom*	
			Jane Venables	

*served as Local Churchwarden in 2020

Octagon Voluntary Roles in 2020

Octagon Tower Captain – Bell Ringing

Tim Wright,

Octagon Music Licencing

Richard Barnes

Octagon Magazine Editors.

Caroline Taylor

Octagon Webmaster

Edward Mynors

Octagon Magazine Advertising

Roy Fulker

Sidespeople for Local churches 2020

Compton	East Marden	North Marden	Forestside	Racton	Stoughton	Up Marden
Sally Ablewhite	Barry Clarke	Patrick Balfour	Jennie Dolman	Anna Blencowe	Rosemary Bell	Michael Ablewhite
Barlie Adams	Annie Judd	Jean Balfour	Linda Fulker	Peter Blencowe	Donald Fowler-Watt	Sally Ablewhite
Fiona Baker			Roy Fulker	Audrey Hamilton	Wendy Goodall	Charles Robinson
Judith Davies			Sarah Hutchinson	Annie Barnes	Steve Goodall	Fiona Robinson
Annabel Keville			David Parker	Richard Barnes	Fiona Gowar	Valerie Seddon
Jessica Maier				Gill King-Smith	Barney Gowar	
Tom Maier					Pam Harry	
Stephanie Newell					Di Hughes	
Thomas Newell					Joan Langmead	
Pamela Payne					Charles Lawton	
Robert Sawers					Sarah Lawton	
Valerie Seddon					Olivia Pemberton	
Amanda Jackson					Maria Sadler	
					Ros Veltom	
					Jane Venables	

Trustees Annual Report of the Parochial Church Council 2020

Our aims and purposes as a charity

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector, the Reverend Lindsay Yates, 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;
- Knowing Jesus and making Him better known;
- Practical support and care for people in the parish, from the eldest to the youngest, 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 in order to achieve our charitable objectives

When planning our activities for the year, our incumbent and PCC 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 recognizing its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

For 2020 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aim. These included:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship both in our churches when appropriate and within the Covid regulations and also at home via online platforms;
- Enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community;
- Teaching, baptizing and nurturing new and existing believers;
- Maintaining an overview of worship throughout the parish;
- Considering how services can involve the various groups that live in the parish;
- Putting faith into action, through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament;
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in Jesus;
- Reaching out to the community through provision of village events, festive services, Messy Church, support of the Octagon Choir, the Stoughton bellringers and the Octagon Magazine;
- Maintaining the fabric of the church buildings as historic centres and focuses of community life in our villages;
- Provision of pastoral care of people living in the parish;
- Providing assistance to the poor and needy of the parish.

What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries' lives

2020 was an unprecedented year due to Covid lockdowns which were in operation from March until July and then again in November. During these lockdowns public worship was not permitted. As soon as lockdown was announced the parish set up the Octagon Parish Facebook group for the church and community which quickly gained members and was able to provide recorded services on Facebook reaching members of our community that had not previously engaged with church. A number of our churches were open for private prayer and public worship once this was permitted but we also continued to provide online worship, both recorded and live streamed. Communication with the PCC and individual PLCs continued via Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

We continued to benefit from a ministry team consisting of the Rector, Lindsay Yates, Honorary Assistant Priest, Will Adam and Lay Readers, Maria Sadler and Edward Mynors who were assisted by those who read, intercede and assist with administering communion. In addition Maria Sadler began her ordination training on the Part-time Portsmouth Pathway Cuddesdon.

On the administrative side is the Standing Committee of the PCC, comprising the Rector, Rachel Foister, Administrator and PCC Secretary, Patrick Balfour and Sarah Lawton, Churchwardens, and Edward Cottrell, Treasurer. This team operates alongside committed local teams in all of our churches to ensure that we are able to keep running for our beneficiaries.

As well as continuing with our Sharepoint project, which proved invaluable during the pandemic, our administrator started an ambitious project to establish a new website for the whole Octagon community. This new site includes a significant church presence as well as showcasing our beautiful area for those who live outside the Octagon and increasing communication for those who live here.

Attendance at Worship

Services occurred as usual during the first two months of 2020 but stopped during March as a result of the pandemic. Pre-recorded services continued on Facebook and services started again during July. There were no services in church during the November lockdown.

During March in addition to our Sunday services a small group of parishioners began to meet weekly on Zoom for Morning Prayer and this continued throughout the year.

Our electoral roll has fallen over the past few years mainly as a result of deaths and the elderly moving out of our villages.

Recent Attendance Across the Octagon:

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Easter	157	196	228	0
Christmas and Advent	469	572	581	20
October (average Sunday attendance)	61	52	45	7

Numbers on electoral roll:

2020	138
2019	139
2018	170
2017	169

Teaching, baptizing and nurturing new and existing believers

There were only 3 baptisms in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. Nonetheless we continued with occasional Messy Church sessions and a Christingle service online and the Rector and two Lay Readers continued to provide pre-recorded weekly assemblies for Compton and Up Marden School throughout the year including during lockdown.

During Lent 2020 we started our series of Lent Talks on the theme of The Church and the World and welcomed two guest speakers, Professor Graeme Smith from Chichester University and the Very Reverend Stephen Waine, Dean of Chichester. The remainder of the planned talks had to be cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

During the rest of the year the Rector ran Lectio Divina sessions and two York courses on Zoom which were well attended. All these events provided an opportunity for parishioners to deepen their knowledge and faith and to pray for the parish and other concerns and were open to all those who wished to attend.

Evangelism and Outreach

As a result of the pandemic the church was required to reach out to the community in different ways by providing short and accessible pre-recorded services drawing on the input of a range of church members in reading, leading intercessions and music making. One such service, recorded in St Peter's, Racton, was viewed by 1,500 people on Facebook.

Of particular note was a pre-recorded Remembrance service for the community which was filmed at St Mary's, Compton in accordance with the regulations and included a sermon by the Right Reverend Tim Thornton, Bishop to the Forces. At Christmas there was an online Christingle service with Christingles provided through the Village Shop and Tea Rooms in Compton, an online carol service with singing from the Octagon Choir and an online service for Christmas Day. Midnight Mass was livestreamed onto Facebook from Compton Church and a highly memorable outdoor socially-distanced carol service took place at East Marden.

Fundraising continued in a modest way with a small produce sale at Compton in September which provided an opportunity for villagers to see each other in a socially distanced manner. The planned Stoughton fete which was to have been held at Watergate was not possible owing to the pandemic. However, just before the first lockdown, there was a very successful fundraising reception and subsequently there was a generous response to an appeal for donations in lieu of the fete.

Although it was necessary to suspend the delivery of the Octagon Magazine for a number of months due to the pandemic, the magazine was published on the Church website with the aid of Flipsnack and paper copies were posted to those who were unable to access the magazine in this way.

The Rector and Carolyn Costello, foundation governor and chair of governors, remain actively involved at Compton and Up Marden CE School which draws many children from beyond the parish as well as those from the local area. During the Autumn term work began towards the school joining the Downland Village School Federation in order to strengthen the provision at the school and to ensure its long-term viability.

Provision of the church buildings for people to enjoy

During 2020 we have maintained our seven historic church buildings. Although we were required to shut these for certain period, many of our churches were open weekly for private prayer as soon as this was possible and this was advertised in our weekly bulletin which has a readership of over two hundred people. The offering of our church buildings for this purpose is an important part of our mission and outreach and we are grateful to all those across our villages who help to clean and maintain our churches as well as those who arrange the flowers and have opened and closed the churches when they have been open. Evidence from our visitors' books demonstrates how much our churches are appreciated by visitors as places of peace and spiritual refreshment.

During the year, emergency repairs were necessary at St Peter's Church East Marden when a roof tie beam partially collapsed as a result of becoming rotten at one end. St Mary's church North Marden underwent a quinquennial inspection, but quinquennial inspections due on St Peter's East Marden and St Mary's Stoughton were postponed until 2021 because of coronavirus restrictions.

Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish

This is a vital part of what we offer to our beneficiaries and pastoral care has continued where possible over the telephone. Our monthly coffee mornings in Compton and pub lunches in Stoughton were sadly unable to take place for most of the year but members of our churches joined with other members of the community in providing practical assistance to the elderly and vulnerable in our community. In addition to our recorded online services we held a number of Zoom get togethers on Sunday mornings for the purpose of fellowship.

Goodie bags were delivered at Christmas to those known to us within the parish who had been isolated throughout the year due to the pandemic.

Provision of tangible support to the poor and needy and charitable giving

In 2020 our Lent charity was Papyrus, a suicide prevention charity. We also held a collection for the Mission to Seafarers at our outdoor Sea Sunday service at St Mary's, Stoughton in July and encouraged giving to The Children's Society at our online Christingle service.

The Churchwardens made an appeal for funds for the Rector's Discretionary Fund at Easter and received a generous response from the community. A number of donations were made from this fund to those in need across the parish at Christmas and throughout the year.

Summary of Birth, Marriage and Funeral Services Across the Parish

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Marriage Services	2	7	9	0
Marriage Blessings	2	6	2	0
Baptisms	10	6	9	3
Burials in our Churchyards	4	5	6	2
Interments of Ashes	8	3	6	4
Funerals Services only	5	4	3	5

Financial Review

Attached are the Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31st December 2020 based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon central account. The statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<u>Treasurer</u>	<u>Independent Inspector</u>
Compton and Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

Also attached are the PCC Investment and Reserves policies.

The financial outturn for 2020 appears healthy with a surplus over expenditure of just over twenty thousand pounds on revenues of £115,000. This reflects the very generous rise in

giving by parishioners and neighbours in response to appeals for funds during the covid pandemic year. The Church Parish Council is extremely grateful. In particular the operational numbers have been flattered by a few significant donations and a large response to the Rectors Discretionary Fund which is limited to charitable donations within the parish. There was a fall in the general running expenses of the churches as they remained shut for much of the year. However the surplus also reflects a continued mismatch in timing between income and expenditure amongst the seven churches of The Octagon where large bills for repairs continue to appear with unexpected regularity.

Planned giving was higher than 2019 across almost all churches at £37,000 but with few services collections were substantially lower by almost seven thousand pounds. Gift aid tax recoveries were also down as a result. Fund raising was down. Stoughton were unable to hold their biennial fete which helps to cover the annual running costs for the church. Fortunately some events had taken place at the beginning of the year and these along with generous donations to mark the absence of the fete replaced half the missing fete proceeds.

Donations in the parish were up substantially at £30,000. This was due to successful appeals at the centre and St Peter's East Marden. Christchurch Forestside was also the beneficiary of nine thousand pounds from some unexpected legacies. At the centre an Easter appeal for the Rectors Discretionary Fund raised over four thousand pounds. A general appeal for church support raised a further eighteen hundred pounds. The most significant contribution came from the Trustees of The Stansted Foundation, who in recognition of their historic support for the parish and our close working relationship, very generously gave £6000 to the parish. These donations have been key to supporting the work of the parish to the local community in these difficult times described in detail by the Rector above.

An unexpected beam failure discovered by the Rector at St Peter's East Marden led to an emergency fund raise. This together with four thousand pounds from the Historic Churches Trust and the utilisation of the De Sallis Trust covered the cost of repair of just over eleven thousand pounds. The timely addition of a CAF donate button to the parish website brought in a further eleven hundred pounds. It was pleasing to see a small contribution from Amazon as a result of nominations to The Octagon by their customers. With the churches closed it was unsurprising to see fee income halved at £5000.

The Parish Mission Cost which goes towards paying clerical salaries, training, housing, pensions and the other costs of running the diocese remained unchanged at £42,835. Church running expenses were nearly five thousand pounds lower due to the closure of the churches for much of the year. Church repairs were higher by ten thousand pounds at £18,000 including the East Marden repair but not the new roof at Forestside where a bill of £20,000 is due in 2021. The round of quinquennials for the seven churches continues with significant costs identified at Compton. Repairing old churches has an inflation rate above that measured in the Consumer Price Index due to the artisan skills required and the need for professional oversight.

Despite holding a large cash position during the year, the continued support for investment markets from low interest rates and central bank purchases meant that reserves rose to £606,000. However, this number should be seen in the context of seven churches which have an insurance valuation of £16,400,000 and our small number of parishioners of just over one thousand. The natural consequence of the buoyant investment values is that income is low and so capital will be needed to supplement running costs in the parish. This together with the

lumpy nature of the repair and maintenance costs for the seven churches means that there is not as much wool on the back of this sheep as it first appears

Summary

The pandemic appeals for the Rector's Discretionary Fund (£4270) and the Octagon (£1830) are specific to 2020. The former being for charitable need within the parish and not available for the costs of running the parish. Legacies to Christchurch Forestside of over £9000 are unlikely to be repeated. The donation from the Stansted Foundation (£6000) was unexpected and unbudgeted. In the absence of these income numbers the operational surplus for 2020 would have been a small deficit of just under one thousand pounds. As 2021 begins there are reasons to expect a return to normal services and perhaps sociable fund raising. However, there are invoices pending for of £20,000 for the roof repairs at Forestside and over £10,000 for the quinquennial works at Compton. North Marden has had a quinquennial inspection and is now looking for estimates from builders. East Marden, Stoughton and Racton are all due to have quinquennial inspections in 2021. Let us hope that conditions are suitable for some new fund raising opportunities.

Staff Costs

The PCC pays for an administrator who assists the Rector in running the parish. This is a vital role in allowing the Rector to maximise her time with her parishioners and the local community. The pandemic has underlined the importance of this position. The administrator has also been working overtime in order to complete the new website. This year the administrator became eligible for a pension and was enrolled with NEST.

Edward Cottrell, Octagon Treasurer

OCTAGON Parochial Church Council Accounts 2020

	<i>Totals</i>	
INCOME	2020	2019
	£	£
<u>Incoming Resources from Donors</u>		
Planned giving (Gift Aid)	37,396	34,580
Collections (inc. wall safes)	4,084	10,970
Income tax recovery	8,956	11,627
<u>Other Voluntary Incoming Resources</u>		
Fundraising	12,970	15,191
Donations and miscellaneous	30,732	19,009
<u>Incoming Resources from Operating Activities</u>		
Fees	5,053	7,888
Investment Income	16276	21,383
Total receipts	115,467	110,648
EXPENDITURE		
Grants to charities	1,404	1,943
<u>Church Activities</u>		
Parish contribution and Deanery expenses	42,835	42,885
Church running expenses (inc. administration)	20,206	24,772
Octagon Central Costs (inc. Clergy expenses)	12,280	12,652
Church repairs and maintenance	18,571	8,044
Total payments	95,296	90,206
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE	20,171	20,442
ASSETS Including Investments and	613,231	571,769
Restricted Funds		
Movement over year	41,962	83,651

THE OCTAGON PARISH

Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden Forestside & Stansted, Stoughton, Racton

Independent Report by the appointed PCC Inspector of Accounts

The Consolidated Accounts for the Octagon PCC for the year ending 31 December 2020 are based on the five constituent PLC annual statements and the Octagon Central Account. Separate statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis as follows:

	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Independent Inspector</i>
Compton with Up Marden PLC	Robert Sawers	Sarah Hutchinson
East and North Marden PLC	John Robinson	George Papworth
Stoughton PLC	Steve Barrett	Ken Symons
Forestside PLC	Sarah Hutchinson	Robert Sawers
Racton PLC	Philip Cooper	Helen Spilsted
Octagon Central Account	Edward Cottrell	Charles Lawton

As the appointed Independent Examiner of Accounts for the PCC, I have seen all of the separate accounts and copies of the reports by the six Independent Inspectors listed above. I have also checked that the published consolidated accounts of the Parish, as prepared by the Treasurer Edward Cottrell, are an accurate statement of the facts presented to me.

A copy of the inspected Consolidated Accounts 2020 is part of the annual report of the parochial church council.

Signed: 

Signed: 

Date: 26th April 2021

Date: 21st April 2021

Inspector of Accounts Octagon PCC Treasurer
Mr Charles Lawton Mr Edward Cottrell
Walderton House Battine House
Walderton East Marden
Chichester PO18 9ED Chichester PO18 9JE

The Octagon Parish PCC Investment Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC, November 2017, reviewed May 2021

Introduction

The Parochial Church Council (PCC), as trustees of parish funds, is responsible for investment policy. The purpose of financial investment is to yield the best financial return within the level of risk considered to be acceptable - this return can then be spent on the charity's aims. It is recommended that PCC members read what the Charity Commission says on the matter:

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/detailed-guidance/money-and-accounts/charities-and-investment-matters-a-guide-for-trustees-cc14/>

In order to act within the law, the PCC must:

- know, and act within, their charity's powers to invest
- exercise care and skill when making investment decisions
- select investments that are right for their charity
- take advice from someone experienced in investment matters unless they have good reason for not doing so
- review investments on a regular basis
- explain their investment policy in the annual report

The PCC manages an 'unincorporated charity' and as such the trustees are personally liable for their actions. However, if trustees can demonstrate that they have considered the relevant issues, taken advice where appropriate and reached a reasonable decision, they are unlikely to be criticised for their decisions, or for adopting a particular policy.

Parish Funds and Investment Policy

Parish funds are currently managed in six separate 'pots': the five main churches (Compton, Stoughton, East Marden, Racton and Forestside) and a central fund. It is proposed, until otherwise instructed by the PCC, to continue to manage the six 'pots' separately but to set an investment policy based on the combined financial aims and needs of the parish. As such, the investment policy will allocate to a combination of suitable investments, taking into account particular needs of a church and the parish needs as a whole. All funds will be either deposited in recognised UK bank accounts or collective investment schemes managed by an authorised investment manager, approved by the trustees.

Investment Objective

The combined investment objective is to protect the capital value of the funds in real terms and to provide sufficient income for any shortfall in cash flow raised annually by the parish. To this end, the PCC will determine from time to time the financial needs of the parish specifically:

- immediate cash needs (eg deposits)
- funds that can be invested for the short term (up to 2 years- eg fixed income)
- funds that are not required for the foreseeable future (longer term investments – eg balanced funds of equities, bonds and property)
- funding for unforeseen circumstances

Risk Policy

In order to meet the investment objective, some risks need to be taken. These risks will be continually assessed guided by the parish's financial needs. The PCC may also give guidance on capital, market, valuation, liquidity, regulatory, counterparty and governance risks. Above all, the investment policy will be diversified across asset classes and sectors.

Delegation of Investment Powers

The PCC is responsible for all investment decisions and risk assessment. It may take investment opinions from their appointed Finance committee and it will delegate the day to day management of funds to the same committee. The PCC may also seek a third party opinion. The day to day management will be based on the investment policy and risk profile the PCC determines from time to time based on the expected financing needs of the parish.

Investment Performance

The PCC will review investment performance as a regular item on the Annual Meeting agenda.

The Octagon Parish PCC Reserves Policy

Adopted by The Octagon PCC, November 2017, reviewed May 2021

The Octagon Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for the upkeep and administration of seven churches (the upkeep of St Paul's, Stansted is the responsibility of the Stansted Estate) and for the pastoral care of its parishioners. The churches are old, some dating back to Saxon times, and require constant upkeep and repair. Their Collective insured value is over £16 million.

The PCC has determined to accrue for known expenses relating to the annual running repairs based on previous years' experience but has also set aside reserves of £70,000 per building, for unforeseen repairs exposed by the rota of quinquennial inspection reports.

The PCC has also determined to reserve an additional sum of £100,000 to administer the Octagon Parish in case of emergency.

The PCC has designated the responsibility of investing the reserves to the PCC Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer. The committee consists of the PCC treasurer, the local church treasurers and a churchwarden. All investment decisions will pass through the committee. The committee should meet at least once per year. Decisions between meetings, if they are necessary can be made by email.

The reserves are generally to be allocated and invested in recognised and agreed funds of differing risk profiles, managed by UK regulated Fund Managers, or a bank deposit account. The asset allocation mix of the reserves takes into account the risk profile of each fund and an assessment of the date at which the reserves may be required.

The PCC, together with the Finance Committee recommendations, regularly reviews the policy and investments throughout the year based on a continual assessment of expense risks.

Material State of the Churches of The Octagon

1st January to 31st December 2020

St Peter, East Marden

The last quinquennial inspection was completed in June 2015. Defects raised in the report have been rectified. While the church was unused during the covid 19 lockdown, the North end of the roof tie beam running from above the south door to above the vestry door partly collapsed, due to the wood where it rested on top of the North wall having rotted and lost all strength. Fortunately, the South end of the beam, and some electrical cables at the North end prevented the beam from falling completely into the nave. An emergency faculty was granted for repair of the beam, and the repair was completed by Couzens Ltd in 2021. Part of the repair work consisted of improving the flashing to the old chimney stack, situated above the failed end of the tie beam, to prevent future water ingress so that the repaired beam will not rot again. The quinquennial inspection due in 2020 was delayed by the covid pandemic, and will be undertaken in 2021.

St Mary, North Marden

The quinquennial inspection was completed in September. The only significant defect reported is the deterioration of the woodwork of the louvred casement in the bell tower, which needs renewal. An appeal will be made in 2021 for funds to rectify this and other less important defects found.

Christchurch, Forestside

During an early autumn storm, and following a neighbour reporting concern, a large tulip tree, growing some 20 feet from the South side of the nave, was inspected by a tree surgeon, who found it to be in danger of imminent collapse. In the prevailing and forecast conditions, it would fall on the church. Emergency approvals from the District Council Tree Officer, and from the Archdeacon to fell the tree were obtained, and the work done in a two-day window between periods of stormy weather. The quinquennial inspection was completed in September. The initial report confirmed the necessity of repair work to the chancel roof, which has been put in hand for a start early in 2021. The final report on the inspection has not yet been received.

St Peter, Racton

The last quinquennial inspection was completed in March 2016. Defects reported have been repaired. The hasp and staple of the South door was damaged in an unsuccessful attempted break in, and has been replaced. A hornbeam tree in the churchyard which had grown out to the extent that it was hazarding telephone lines to nearby houses was radically pruned to a more manageable size.

St Mary, Stoughton

The last quinquennial inspection was completed in March 2016. Repairs to defects reported have been completed. During the year the only lock to the church failed and an emergency repair was undertaken.

St Mary, Compton

A quinquennial inspection was completed December 2018. A programme of repairs of the items raised in this has been planned and repairs, delayed by the covid pandemic restrictions, will be put in hand during 2021.

St Michael, Up Marden

The latest quinquennial inspection took place in January 2019; a comprehensive programme of repairs of the items raised in this report has been planned and will be put in hand in 2021, having been delayed by the pandemic. This work will be funded by the Friends of St Michael.

In all cases, normal routine maintenance, cleaning and gardening by parishioners has continued in the year under report. All church buildings remain fundamentally safe, sound and fit for continued use.

There have been no significant changes to the chattels of the parish.

Patrick Balfour, Churchwarden

Safeguarding in The Octagon Parish

Fundamentally, safeguarding is about the use and misuse of power, and the exploitation or protection of the vulnerable. Given this, safeguarding is very much about how 'healthy' our church life is. In the Octagon Parish we work within a good safeguarding culture and follow sound safeguarding practice.

The Revd Lindsay Yates, Octagon Rector

This year The Octagon Parish gained our Diocesan 'Simple Quality Protects (SQP)' certificate in Level 1 Safeguarding. To gain this certificate we had to evidence our safe working practices to representatives from the safeguarding team at Chichester Diocese.

Several parish safeguarding policies have been updated and processes improved.

For the coming year we aim to keep safeguarding as a key area on our new community website and will continue to prioritise loneliness and isolation issues within our community

Tracey Hodkin, Octagon Safeguarding Officer

Westbourne Deanery Synod Annual Report



Our role: to promote the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical

Locally we aim to help parishes grow together, become a mutual resource and feel part of the wider church.

Our parishes: Southbourne with W Thorney; Bosham; Chidham, from 2020 jointly staffed and financed with Funtington with W Stoke & Sennicotts; The Octagon (Compton, North Marden, East Marden, Up Marden, Forestside, Racton and Stoughton churches), Valley (East Dean, West Dean and Singleton churches), and Westbourne with Woodmancote; 20 churches.

There are 3 full time stipendiary clergy at Chidham/Funtington, Westbourne and Southbourne, a 0.5 post in The Octagon parish and a new House for Duty post in The Valley Parish. We welcomed the Revd Sarah Manouch to The Valley Parish and the Revd Andrew Birks to the newly linked Chidham/Funtington parishes in autumn 2020 and are delighted they are here.

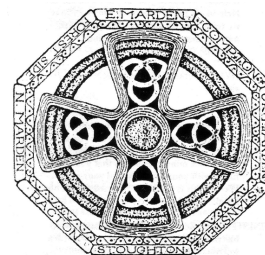
Finance At the end of 2020 the Treasurer reported that through considerable effort we had just about managed to meet our gross parish share and in 2021 will be a net contributor. This had been achieved by a sustained effort over several years to pay our way, an achievement for which he thanked parish treasurers and congregations. The parish share has to be the first call on parish funds before charitable giving and pays for our own clergy and parish costs, diocesan staff (administration, clergy, diocesan education department, legal fees, property, etc.), a 4% contribution to the national church and enables help to be given to parishes to meet clergy costs in poorer areas of the Chichester diocese. At the November synod meeting diocesan officers explained the proposed budget and how finances had taken a hit during the pandemic.

Deanery synod members were elected at the 2020 APCMs for 3 years. However, due to the pandemic no face-to-face meetings have taken place since February 2020 (Christian Aid talk). Parish Lent courses open to all across the deanery in 2020 were largely cancelled after the first couple of weeks and lockdown. In 2021 these took place remotely. There were no joint deanery services, or confirmation (now rescheduled for July 2021.) Fortnightly peripatetic prayer meetings continued when possible, giving an insight into deanery parishes and growing together through prayer. The standing committee met 4 times and deanery synod met on Zoom in November (mainly finance), the May and September meetings having been cancelled. Bradley Smith, General Synod reporter, provided updates on General Synod. Clergy Chapter worked closely together.

Coping with the pandemic. We empathise with the strain on businesses, schools and front-line workers as well as all affected directly by Covid-19 or job insecurity. For the clergy managing family expectations with restrictions on weddings, baptisms and funerals has been particularly challenging. Martin Lane, Vicar of Bosham and Rural Dean, said a big thank you to parishes for their efforts over the last 15 months. Parishes had been creative in how they continued to make Jesus known. Those running services on line found occasional visitors from other parts of the country or abroad as well as new members from their own communities. A new mid week service in 1 parish drew people from several villages and will continue on Zoom. A new church and community web site was launched. Church members across the deanery were active in community support during lockdowns and continue to support those isolated or living alone: churches used local businesses where possible. Churches were open for private prayer when possible and services have restarted in most with careful management. Normal fundraising and community events have not taken place. However, technology skills developed greatly and good things have been happening.

Jennie Dolman, Deanery Secretary, May 2021

THE OCTAGON PARISH
Compton & Up Marden, East & North Marden
Forestside & Stansted
Stoughton, Racton
www.theoctagonparish.org.uk
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD
Tel: 023 9263 1252



Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held at
St Mary's Church Stoughton at 7:00pm on
Thursday 27th May 2021
AGENDA

The meeting will be chaired by Rachel Foister
Secretary of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon

1. To approve the minutes of the last meeting
2. To elect Mr Patrick Balfour and Mrs Sarah Lawton as Churchwardens of the Octagon Parish

followed by:

Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Thursday 27th May 2021 at 7:05pm
AGENDA

The meeting will be chaired by The Revd Lindsay Yates
Chair of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of The Octagon

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2020
4. Reports -
 - a) Annual report on the proceedings of the PCC and the activities of the Parish
 - b) Changes to the electoral roll since the last Annual Meeting
 - c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2020
 - d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish
 - e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
 - f) Safeguarding report
5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC
6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives
7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year
8. Notices

Closing prayer

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 22nd October 2020
via MS Teams online meeting platform at 5:50pm

Present:

- Sally Ablewhite (SA) Local Warden, Compton and Up Marden
- Patrick Balfour (PB) Parish Churchwarden
- Annie Barnes (AB) Local Warden, Racton
- Edward Cottrell (EC) Octagon Treasurer
- Jennie Dolman (JD) Deanery Synod Representative
- Sarah Lawton (SL) Parish Churchwarden
- Pamela Payne (PP) Deanery Synod Representative
- Maria Sadler (MS) Octagon Lay Reader
- Lindsay Yates (LY) Octagon Rector
- Rachel Foister (RDF) PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator

No members of the public were present.

The meeting was chaired by Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

Apologies were received from:

- Pamela Harry (PH) Local Warden, Stoughton Church
- Tracey Hodkin (TH) Octagon Safeguarding Officer
- David Parker (DP) Local Warden, Forestside
- Penny Walder (PW) PLC Representative, East Marden Church

1. The minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on the 3rd April 2019 were approved unanimously.

2. Election of Churchwardens of The Octagon Parish:

Patrick Balfour and Sara Lawton were re-elected by unanimous vote

The meeting closed at 5:54pm

Approved by:



Rachel Foister, PCC Secretary

Date: 27th May 2021

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
Minutes of meeting held on 22nd October 2020
via online meeting platform Microsoft Teams**

Present:

- Sally Ablewhite (SA) Local Warden, Compton and Up Marden
- Patrick Balfour (PB) Parish Churchwarden
- Edward Cottrell (EC) Octagon Treasurer
- Jennie Dolman (JD) Deanery Synod Representative
- Sarah Lawton (SL) Parish Churchwarden
- Tom Maier (TM) Vice Chair of the PCC
- Pamela Payne (PP) Deanery Synod Representative
- Maria Sadler (MS) Octagon Lay Reader
- Lindsay Yates (LY) Octagon Rector
- Rachel Foister (RDF) PCC Secretary and Octagon Administrator

3 members of the public were also present

The meeting was chaired by The Revd Lindsay Yates, Rector of the Octagon

1. The meeting was opened at 6:02pm with a prayer.

2. Apologies for absence were received by

- Pamela Harry (PH) Local Warden, Stoughton Church
- Tracey Hodkin (TH) Octagon Safeguarding Officer
- David Parker (DP) Local Warden, Forestside
- Robert Sawers (RS) Compton and Up Marden PLC Representative
- Penny Walder (PW) PLC Representative, East Marden Church
- Edward Mynors (EM) Lay Reader

3. To approve the minutes of The Octagon Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2019

PB proposed and SL seconded – all voted unanimously to accept the minutes

4.a) Annual Report on the Proceedings of the PCC and the Activities of the Parish.

LY gave an overview of activities across the parish both pre and during the Covid emergency.

She noted that Maria Sadler had now commenced training for ordained ministry

She expressed thanks to Will Adam for rapidly establishing an online offering from The Octagon, such that we were able to provide online services to parishioners from the first day all churches were closed, initially on YouTube and subsequently Facebook Live. She noted that this has extended our reach within the community and many individuals who would not normally go to church have been engaging with this. The Zoom services of morning prayer have also been very successful offering worship and an additional line of contact for those that have been in isolation. LY suggested that the Zoom morning prayer continue after lockdown as it works very well in such a rural and spread-out community especially in winter. She stressed the importance of technology in combatting loneliness and the need for readily available training and support.

SL reported on projects across the parish set up to provide support and help to those affected by the pandemic. These included phone calls to those living alone, establishing contact and neighbour support networks. Online groups and plans for Christmas.

RDF reported on the new website which will be ready to launch imminently.

4.b) Changes to the Electoral Roll

Numbers now stood at 138, reduced from 139 reported at the last APCM due to one death.

4.c) The independently examined financial statements of the PCC for the year ending the 31st December 2019

EC expressed thanks to all those who had helped him throughout the year especially the local treasurers and auditors. He noted a surplus of £20,000 in 2019 raised thanks to increases in planned giving and the fact that very little was spent on church maintenance.

He noted also that Forestside Vicarage remained vacant and therefore no rental income had been forthcoming.

He thanked all donors, planned givers and those that had given of their time to hold fundraising events in 2019. He also thanked Joan Langmeade who was stepping down in her role as Treasurer to Stoughton PLC and expressed a warm welcome to Steve Barrett who will replace her.

EC went on to outline how 2020 has been a very different year and how he would be expecting a deficit of around £20,000 by year end.

On the positive side, as a result of the pandemic some costs have gone down including music and licencing costs and rector's expenses and travel. The annual subscription fee for The Octagon Magazine will increase to £10 in January 2021. He also noted that the Stansted Foundation has donated £6,000 to The Octagon to make up for the shortfall in rental from the Forestside Vicarage. A vote of thanks was expressed by the PCC to the Foundation. LY noted that she is in negotiations with the Foundation regarding a longer-term arrangement.

As a result by year-end he expects that Octagon Central income will be sufficient to cover all Octagon Central costs and churches will only be expected to pay PMC costs, an effective reduction of 12% on the previous year.

Despite this deficit, we should still be able to pay our PMC costs. These will be held under review throughout 2021.

TM noted that our reserves have increased and that this would be able to cover the deficit.

To summarise, EC said that he continued optimistic, but aware that there have been major holes in our income recently especially due to the absence of major fundraising events. He hopes to encourage more planned giving to both the Octagon Parish and the Friends Societies.

d) A report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the churches of The Parish

PB presented his report.

Compton St Mary - had its last quinquennial inspection in 2019. We are still awaiting approvals from the DAC to get the necessary work done. The total costs for List A and B works would be £8889 + VAT, although the VAT may still yet be refundable.

Up Marden, St Michael – last quinquennial in 2019 and a decision from the DAC is expected imminently. Costs for repairs will be around £21,000 and The Friends of Up Marden Church will cover the costs entirely.

Christchurch Forestside – new architects completed an inspection in September 2020 and a report is expected imminently. The roof is in a poor state and fundraising for its repair has already started.

Emergency felling of the tulip tree in the churchyard took place recently when a tree surveyor noted that there was immediate danger. The tree is now regenerating from the stump.

Racton St Peter – a local appeal covered the costs for a total refurbishment of the harmonium which is now reinstalled. Approval has been sought for trimming of the large hornbeam tree at the front of the church.

Stoughton St Mary – a new architect has been chosen but planned quinquennial inspections have been delayed due to Covid restrictions. No other immediate concerns

East Marden St Peter – Closed due to a fallen roof beam. The repair is being funded by a trust fund for repairs to East and North Marden churches as well as local donations and grants from the Historic Churches Trust. PB encouraged Octagon involvement in the Annual Ride and Stride fundraising event held in the autumn by the Historic Churches Trust.

North Marden St Mary – Results of the latest quinquennial inspection have just been received. Some issues with the bell chamber have been noted.

Record keeping – PB stressed the importance of effective record keeping at local level.

LY thanked PB for all his hard work in the past year and a half.

e) A report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

JD noted that due to Covid restrictions the Deanery Synod have been unable to maintain their regular quarterly meeting schedule and that their last meeting had been held in February 2020. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2020 on Zoom.

JD encouraged parishioners to partake in the Living Faith Course offered by the Diocese. PP noted that Deanery Prayer groups have continued when permitted and with appropriate safeguards in place. The last group was held at Racton which went very well.

LY thanked the Deanery Synod members

f) Safeguarding update.

LY presented a report on behalf of TH where it was noted that we had passed our SQP inspection in February 2020. LY observed the need for a transformation in culture when it comes to Safeguarding across the Diocese and at a local level. She and the Churchwardens will be attending Diocesan C2 training shortly. She encouraged all members of the PCC to attend C0 and C1 training courses.

Completion certificates to be forwarded to RDF.

She noted how community connections were very important. TH has been able to provide ongoing advice regarding our online activity. Combatting isolation in the community due to the pandemic has also been important and The Octagon has been able to form part of a wider co-ordinated response across the area.

A lone working policy is being prepared and will be available for approval imminently

LY thanked TH for all her help and expertise.

5. Elections of parochial representatives of the laity to the PCC

Election of Annie Barnes to the PCC as Local Warden and PLC rep for Racton Church. Stuart Robertson proposed and Maria Sadler seconded. All voted in favour.

6. Elections of Deanery Synod representatives – all voted in favour of re-electing the current Deanery Synod members. It was noted that the position for a 4th representative remained vacant.

7. To appoint the independent examiner of accounts for next year

All voted in favour of re-electing Charles Lawton

8. Notices

DP had announced that he would be stepping down as Local Warden for Christchurch Forestside, although he would continue to care for the church. A vacancy for Local Warden and PCC representative for the church remains to be filled. LY recorded her thanks to David for his many years for service.

RS also stepped down from the PCC as PCC Rep for Compton St Mary

9. Closing prayer

LY thanked all for attending.

The meeting ended at 07:17pm

Signed: 

Date: 27th May 2021

The Octagon Parish – Open for All

