

# **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 31<sup>st</sup> 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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22<sup>nd</sup> 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**

<b>Compton and Up Marden</b>	<b>East and North Marden</b>	<b>Forestside</b>	<b>Stoughton</b>	<b>Racton</b>
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**

<b>Compton</b>	<b>East Marden</b>	<b>North Marden</b>	<b>Forestside</b>	<b>Racton</b>	<b>Stoughton</b>	<b>Up Marden</b>
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:*

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

### *Numbers on electoral roll:*

<b>2020</b>	138
<b>2019</b>	139
<b>2018</b>	170
<b>2017</b>	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>	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	£	£
<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
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>115,467</b>	<b>110,648</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
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
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>95,296</b>	<b>90,206</b>
<b>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>20,171</b>	<b>20,442</b>
<b>ASSETS</b> 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
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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: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> 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**

*1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

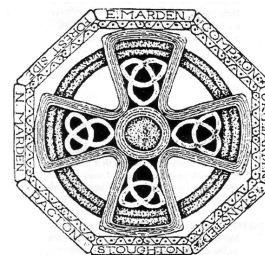
**Finance** At the end of 2020 the Treasurer reported that through considerable effort we had just about managed to meet our gross parish share and in 2021 will be a net contributor. This had been achieved by a sustained effort over several years to pay our way, an achievement for which he thanked parish 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](http://www.theoctagonparish.org.uk)  
The Vicarage, Compton, Chichester, PO18 9HD  
**Tel: 023 9263 1252**



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**Annual Meeting of Parishioners to be held at  
St Mary's Church Stoughton at 7:00pm on  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
OCTAGON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
Minutes of meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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

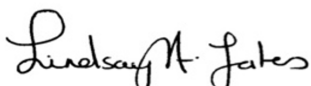
DP had announced that he would be stepping down as Local Warden for Christchurch Forestside, although he would continue to care for the church. A vacancy for Local Warden and PCC representative for the church remains to be filled. LY recorded her thanks to David for his many years for service.

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: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021



*The Octagon Parish – Open for All*

