

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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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 Veltom	
			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.

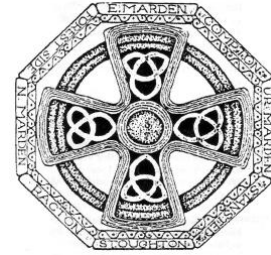
We welcomed Fiona Mullett, to the role of Safeguarding Officer in early 2023.

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



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

