



HORSHAM TEAM MINISTRY

## **Agenda and Papers for the**

# **Annual Parochial Church Meeting of the Parish of Horsham**

**To be held in St. Mary's Church, Causeway, Horsham**

**on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 11.00am**

These papers can also be read on our Church websites:

St. Mary's - [www.stmaryshorsham.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshorsham.org.uk)

St. Leonard's - [www.stleonardshorsham.org.uk](http://www.stleonardshorsham.org.uk)

Holy Trinity - [www.holytrinityhorsham.co.uk](http://www.holytrinityhorsham.co.uk)



## AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Vestry Meeting and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – *see attached (A)*
4. Joint meeting with the Vestry for the election of **three** Church Wardens
5. Election of lay representatives to Horsham Deanery Synod
6. Election of lay representatives to the Parochial Church Council
7. To receive the Electoral Roll Report - *see attached (B)*
8. To receive a report on the proceedings of the PCC - *(C) see separate PCC Annual Report*
9. To receive the PCC Annual Report for 2024 and the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, as adopted by the PCC on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 – *(D) see separate PCC Annual Report*
10. Appointment of Independent Examiner
11. To receive the Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the churches in the Parish - *see attached (E)*
12. To receive a report on the proceedings of Horsham Deanery Synod – *see attached (F)*
13. To receive the Youth and Children's reports – *see attached – see attached (G)*
14. To receive the report from Parish Safeguarding Officer - *see attached (H)*
15. To receive the report from the Mother's Union (MU) – *see attached (I)*
16. To receive the report from St. Mary's Primary School - *see attached (J)*
17. Chairman's Comments
18. Any other business, of which notice must be given before the commencement the meeting to the Chairman or Secretary.
19. Closing prayers

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**A) Draft Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**held in St. Mary's Church on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 11am**

Present: Revd Lisa Barnett (in the Chair); Nigel Stalley (Hon. Secretary); Peter Fruin (Churchwarden), Morag Davies (Churchwarden), Cath Hatton (Churchwarden); 178 parishioners;

**1) Opening Worship**

The meeting took place during the 'Notices' at the 10am service.

**2) Apologies**

Were received from 11 parishioners.

**3) Minutes**

The minutes of the APCM held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 had been circulated. These were approved and signed by Lisa. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**4) Joint meeting with the Vestry meeting to elect three Churchwardens**

Valid nomination forms had been received for Cath Hatton (St Mary's), Peter Fruin (St Mary's), Morag Davies (St Mary's) and they had completed the necessary declarations. They were declared elected as Churchwardens. Lisa thanked them for being willing to stand for a further year and thanked them for all they had done during the last year.

**5) Election of Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod**

There was one nomination for Deanery Synod and Nigel Stalley was elected to serve. We currently have 3 Lay representatives on Diocesan Synod who are also on Deanery Synod.

**6) Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC**

Greg Andrews and Linda Goodwin, whose nominations had been agreed by the St. Mary's Church AGM, and who had completed the necessary declarations, were duly elected. Di Whittaker and Keith Rayner, whose nominations had been agreed by the Holy Trinity and St. Leonard's joint Church Committee, and who had completed the necessary declarations, were duly elected.

Liz Lobb, who had completed the necessary declarations, was co-opted onto the PCC to be the new Safeguarding Officer.

Lisa said that in light of the new HTC/SLC Joint Church Committee, the PCC would be looking at the Church allocation of places on the PCC during the coming year.

**7) Electoral Roll report**

There was a copy attached in the Minute Book but this was revised at the meeting.

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Church	April 2024
St. Mary's	424
Holy Trinity	105
St. Leonard's	23
Total for Horsham Parish	552

**8) Proceedings of the PCC (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****9) Audited Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)**

Nikki Barber, on behalf of Greg Andrews who apologised that he was unable to be present at the meeting, presented a summary of the PCC Annual Audited accounts.

The General Fund had a £37k surplus which significantly exceeded our breakeven budget. This was as a result of increased income and lower than expected spending. The South Aisle work in St. Mary's had managed to be completed during 2023 with donations and legacies providing £108k for the work to be undertaken. Looking forward to 2024, the financial outlook is more challenging as costs have increased across the board in, particular with our energy suppliers. Thank you to all those in our Parish for their generous financial support which enables us to do all we do.

Thanks also to the Finance team, Church treasurers, our Stewardship and Gift Aid officers, and our counting teams who work hard throughout the year.

Lisa said that there would be a Money Sunday at St. Mary's next week.

**10) Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

On the proposal of Greg Andrews, seconded by Lisa Barnett, Galloways Accounting were elected unanimously to act as Independent Examiner for the Parish.

**11) Fabric Report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****12) Horsham Deanery Synod report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****13) Youth and Children's Reports (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****14) Safeguarding report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)**

Lisa thanked Linda Goodwin for her time as Safeguarding Officer over the last three years and said that Liz Lobb would now be taking over as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer.

**15) Mother's Union Report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****16) St. Mary's Primary School Report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)****17) Chairman' comments**

Lisa thanked everyone for their reports.

Lisa thanked everyone for all that they do to enable the Parish to flourish. She said that we have a good staff team who work well together. Looking forward she said that money is going to be tricky in the coming year.

**18) AOB**

In answer to a question, Lisa said, that there were no plans at the moment to employ a Verger at St. Mary's. Lisa said that operationally things have changed and that we now have Parish Premises Manager and a team of volunteer vergers.

**19) Closing Hymn of the service****B) Electoral Roll Report 2025**

The numbers on the Electoral Roll compared with those reported at the APCM last year are as follows:

Church	April 2025	April 2026
St Mary's	424	293
Holy Trinity	105	85
St Leonard's	23	13
<b>Horsham Parish</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>391</b>

The Electoral Roll has been renewed in accordance with Church Representation Rules. The numbers at April 2025 reflect applications received up to the closing date for the new roll. Members of the congregations are able to join the new Roll at any time.

I would like to thank Alistair Inglis-Taylor and Paula McCarthy, Electoral Roll Officers at St. Mary's and St. Leonard's for their help in promoting the Roll in their respective churches and advising me of appropriate changes. Particular thanks go to Nigel Stalley for his help and guidance in successfully compiling the new roll for the most part electronically.

**Keith Rayner** *Parish Electoral Roll Officer*

**C) Report on the proceedings of the Horsham PCC 2023 - 2024**

Please see separate PCC Annual Report (Trustees Report and Independent Examiner's Report)

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## D) Financial Statement

Please see separate PCC Annual Report (Trustees Report and Independent Examiner's Report)

## E) Fabric Report

1. This report covers the outcomes and plans for St Mary's Church, Church Centre, Holy Trinity Church and St Leonard's Church.

Team composition: Mike Watson (Premises Manager from mid-February 2025), and 5 volunteers: Ray Hambling (until September 2024), Paul Goodwin, Nick O'Riordan(chair), Nigel Stalley and Bob Whittaker. The team meets at 3 monthly intervals at which tasks are assigned appropriately and progressed.

To assist with coordination, Laura Fletcher, Cath Hatton and Peter Fruin have also attended Fabric team meetings.

Normal maintenance activities have been carried out by the team and term contractors throughout the year largely without incident and only exceptional items are reported below.

### 2. St Mary's Church (QI architect Simon Dyson, next report due April 2029)

#### 2.1 Church Fabric

The Quinquennial inspection report was delivered in June. Highest priority items revolved around gutter cleaning and maintenance; mortar erosion continues in several places.

The structural integrity of the Hoo Memorial canopied tomb has been evaluated and is now subject to visual monitoring.

Deterioration of the Horsham stone roof of the church, in the form of continual spalling and erosion of mortar, continues.

A Faculty was granted in July for a kitchenette in European Oak to be installed at the West end of the South Aisle; the kitchenette and mobile servery came into service successfully in early December. Last year's works to the South Aisle won an award from the Sussex Heritage Trust at their annual ceremony in July 2024.

After Easter, an image from the V&A photo archives of the Last Supper and The Annunciation, Victorian overpainting of earlier Medieval murals that was whitewashed over in the late 1960's, was projected onto the West wall to raise awareness. We sought funding for scientific investigation of the paintings but our submission was not selected.

#### 2.2 Heating controls

In late 2023 we obtained a grant from HDC's Climate Change Fund for the installation of Nest learning thermostats across all buildings in the Parish. Thermostats have been installed and have been working well in the church and Church Centre over the past year, producing benefits summarised in Section 6 below.

#### 2.3 Churchyard

In early March a shallow brick vault, divided between two tombs collapsed. Human remains were recovered and reinterred. The process of infilling of the vault, which is located to the north-northwest of the tower was completed in November by Pilbeam Construction Ltd after a long period to obtain approval from Chichester Chancelry.

Again, through the Eco Church/Caring for God's Acre initiatives, we continue to meet with Horsham District Council (HDC) staff to improve enjoyment and use of the accessible spaces to the west of the churchyard area and to improve biodiversity.

### **3. Church Centre (QI architect Robin Nugent, next report due January 2026)**

#### **3.1 Change of Use**

A small but still significant part of the motivation in the minor improvements to the Church Centre made in 2021 was to enable the St Mary's Pre-School to use the Manor Room weekdays and the Barn on three weekdays, termly. This required a Planning Change of Use

and the process became stalled by the intervention of Natural England in requiring HDC to demonstrate water neutrality in non-domestic planning applications. The Change of Use application using new, metered data was submitted in January; a Noise Impact Assessment report was submitted.

#### **3.2 Signage and St Peter's Chapel**

After many months of discussion with HDC, approval was granted for new signage at the Church Centre that uses the St Mary's logo on a blue background. It was installed in October. Over the summer period, Crawley Carpet Warehouse installed a new latex floor overlain by carpeting made from recycled marine plastics.

#### **3.3 Roof, guttering and soffits**

Pilbeam Construction Ltd successfully carried out these works in September and October.

#### **3.3 Sound Transmission**

Working with our party-wall neighbours at 31 Causeway, we successfully installed a trial acoustic panel in 2022. This will enable a permanent installation to hopefully be installed in 2025, subject to agreement with HDC Conservation officers.

### **4. Holy Trinity Church (QI Architect David Swarbrick, next report due September 2025)**

#### **4.1 Church Fabric**

Progressive replacement of components of lighting and heating took place through the year and these will continue in 2024.

Works to repoint eroded mortar in the brickwork are planned for 2025; heating controls for the gas boilers have been a challenge. It has not been possible to fit a smart thermostat.

Comprehensive planning for the reordering of the church and hall commenced in mid 2024

involving the removal of pews and updating facilities within the two buildings. A change in the QI architect is underway at the time of writing this report, and David Swarbrick has been thanked for his diligent services over the years.

#### **4.2 Church Hall**

Roof tiles are deteriorating, and maintenance of kitchen, toilet and garden areas has continued through the year.

### **5. St Leonard's Church (QI Architect Simon Dyson, next report July 2029)**

5.1 We noted with sadness and regret the departure of Ray Hambling from the Team in August. We also noted the transition of the church towards greater use as a community facility through 2024.

#### **5.2 Church Fabric**

The Quinquennial Inspection report was delivered in July. Highest priority items are the clearing of growth in guttering

A BT Wi-Fi hub was installed in October and this has enabled the installation of a smart lock at the west end door, and a Nest thermostat was installed in early 2024. There have been some commissioning challenges but smart access for hirers is expected to be granted in 2025.

#### **5.3 Hall acoustics**

Following the success of installations in St John's Broadbridge Heath, that team made a comprehensive installation of acoustic panels in the Hall at the end of 2023. The effect of these acoustic controls has been to reduce echo and reverberation to more acceptable levels in that part of the building.

### **6. Energy use and carbon footprint**

In 2021 the PCC endorsed the General Synod's aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. A particular challenge has been that the Parish has eight fossil fuel-based heating systems across its five buildings, of which only one can be considered modern and efficient.

Through the year all of our heating systems have required repair and careful attention, against a backdrop of changes to Faculty rules in mid 2022 that no longer permit a straightforward like-for-like replacement of fossil-fuel heating systems.

We renegotiated our electricity and gas supplies to a single supplier, Smartest Energy in September. Unit rates have fallen in line with market forces since last year and the cost of energy appears to have stabilised.

We have taken on board the Net Zero Action Plan that the Diocese published in the Autumn and are hoping to interact positively with those with expertise that is growing, so that we can continue to drive downwards our carbon footprint. We have been assessed to be one of the highest emitting parishes in the Diocese, partly due to the relatively high level of occupancy of some of our buildings, and we qualified for a free energy audit (carried out by Mondes in November 2024) together with modest funds to improve performance. We are a leading participant in the Net Zero Community of Practice, managed by Steve Collins for Chichester and Guildford Dioceses.



## Horsham APCM Supporting Papers - 2025

The table below shows our recorded energy consumption since 2019, together with the associated carbon footprint:

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>St Mary's Church</b>	Gas (kWh)	262000	122000	168000	180000	196100 (69500 in Q4)	164300
	Electricity (kWh)	16800	10500	10200	13000	13500	13000
<b>Church Centre</b>	Gas (kWh)	100000	59000	50000	91200	59200	67900
	Electricity (kWh)	10500	7500	7600	9200	8700	8800
	Total Carbon footprint	73 tonnes	37.5 tonnes	44.5 tonnes	55.3 tonnes	52.3 tonnes	47.9 tonnes

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Holy Trinity Church</b>	Gas (kWh)	40500	34700	39200	35000	50100	52700
	Electricity (kWh)	5500	4310	4800	4400	4700	5100
<b>Church Hall</b>	Gas (kWh)	2300	4300	1000	1125	3742	2300
	Electricity (kWh)	8100	5600	6400	7500	6500	5900
	Total Carbon footprint	11 tonnes	9.5 tonnes	10 tonnes	9.3 tonnes	12.3 tonnes	12.1 tonnes

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>St Leonard's Church</b>	Gas (kWh)	30000	53000	28500	35000	38500	30100
	Electricity (kWh)	10000	2900	3800	5025	4400	4600
	Total Carbon footprint	8 tonnes	10.5 tonnes	6.5 tonnes	8.1 tonnes	8.6 tonnes	7.0 tonnes

In aggregate our carbon energy footprint has reduced over the past 5 years by nearly 30%, from 92 tonnes in 2019 to 67 tonnes in 2024.

Through better, more mindful use of environmental controls and investment in more efficient heating and lighting systems, our aim is to reduce our carbon footprint to well below 2019 levels whilst increasing the level of use of our buildings.

The Fabric team is committed to drawing up a plan for the logical phasing out of as many of our fossil-fuel heating systems as possible over the next five years.

**Nick O’Riordan** *Chair of the Parish Fabric Team*

## **F) Report on the proceedings of the Horsham Deanery Synod 2024/2025**

The Deanery Synod met twice in 2024. In March we met in St. John’s Church Broadbridge and heard from Bishop Ruth reminding us that if we are not making disciples, we are not doing what Jesus calls us to do. In October we met in Holy Trinity Church Rudgwick where we debated ‘Should Deanery Synods be abolished’.

**Nigel Stalley** *Member of Horsham Deanery Synod*

## **G) Youth and Children’s Reports**

### **Youth Report**

**TGI’s** - In 2024 we had a good attendance at TGI’s seeing more than 40 young people each week. We were able to grow relations with those that attend and offer them the opportunity to get to know God via youth Alpha, Café Connect, May Camp and the retreat. We also had 2 events where we invited parents to help build on these relations as well. We did a Car Wash to raise money to start to sponsor a child’s education in a developing country. We hope to have a charity sorted in early 2025. We also enjoyed time outside doing combat archery, games in the woods and youth group till midnight. We have tried to create an environment to allow young people to feel safe and welcome.

**Café Connect** - This year we have seen new young people join us in our youth service. We have regularly seen Warnham and St Johns’ youth join us. We have had guest speakers talking about prayer and being the salt and light. We have tried to create a space that offers a different style of worship and teaching than what is already on offer. We have food together and hope for it to be a place of fellowship and the Holy Spirit. We had numbers up 20+ however we do have a core group of about 8 that attend each month.

**Boys’ group** - In 2024 we started a boys’ group. This was to keep engagement with the year 9+ boys as they started to focus on school work and other commitments. We attended bowling, Airsoft and went for food. We hope to build a good supporting community for boys to open up and have a safe space to be who they are in the world. We are also starting to see this group have a bigger impact on our youth system. The boys seem to argue less and come together at TGI’s, May camp and the retreat.

**Girls’ group** - The girls’ group started for the same reason as the boys’ group. It was also to give them a space away from the boys, who regularly annoyed them at camp and youth group. It’s a lovely and well-established group of girls. However, with them getting older and studying more it has been hard to keep them engaged. As we move into 2025 we hope to find a way to keep them

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engaged with the youth work. This has seen us attend an escape room, mini golf, Christmas shopping and food out. We have had up to 13 attendees during some activities.

**The Core** - The Core is slowly growing and starting to create a community. As we are starting to see the same young people each week, this is allowing them to build a rapport with each other. We hope as they grow older and closer to each other we can create a thriving space for prayer and journeying through life together. We have also been able to introduce other people to lead which has allowed variety for the young people. On average we expect to see 5-6 young people joining each week in the Core.

**Millais** - I have continued to attend Millais Secondary offering a lunchtime club on Fridays. This has been good, engaging with 15-20 young people each week. Some we have in our youth system, some interested and some we are getting to know. This has built a good rapport with the school where they have asked me to help with the CU and help in the inclusion department.

**Duke of Edinburgh** - In 2024 we saw 4 Silvers complete their Silver DofE award. Our signups for 2024-2025 are at 12 young people for Bronze. We are super excited to engage with these young people and get to know them better. Some of the young people who have signed up haven't engaged in anything other than TGI's. This is a brilliant opportunity to show the spiritual side of DofE and build rapport with these young people.

**May Camp** - We saw 32 young people attend May camp in 2024 which was 13 more than 2023. We were able to get a good group of year 6's join us through the youth alpha course we ran. May camp was enjoyed by all and a few young people experiencing a different style of worship and Church. It allows us to invite those from TGI's to start a journey with God. This year we saw our youth get to the finals of the volleyball tournament, participation in the talent show and engaging with the main stage talk and events. We were also able to give our interns a big insight into how May Camp is run and organised. They had a big say in what happened and offered new ways to bring Jesus into their lives.

**Satellites** - We attended Satellites this year, for the second year in a row. We took 7 young people. 3 who weren't sure what to expect but fully loved being there and even got into the swing of praying for each other. We heard amazing testimonies from a leader in America who worked with gangsters and the transformation he saw in them through Jesus. We heard from the Archbishop who opened up about his faith. We attended seminars about how we hear God, how he meets us where we are and more. We didn't do so well in the volleyball tournament, dressed up and danced as Disney characters and had late night doughnuts.

**October retreat** - After two successful retreats we pushed the boat out to attend a bigger venue. This worked out really well. It was a blessing to be there with our youth. We had worship, prayer, seminars and all things God. We ate together, remembered the sacrifice Jesus made and created community. Words cannot describe how proud and emotional I was at seeing them come together on the retreat. We had one or two unsure about taking part in the talent show. Regardless, all the youth gave everyone a standing ovation. It was a safe place where no youth were judging each other. We had several guest speakers cover topics about hearing from God, Agapy, the Trinity and how we pray. We had 20 attendees this year, which once again included Warnham youth.

**Youth Alpha** - We ran a youth alpha course which saw eight Year 6's attend from St Mary's Primary. They first attended due to the pizza, games and their friends - however, by the end they loved the videos and enjoyed the group's atmosphere. During the course a girl mentioned how she loved praying for people but there is never time. We started to pray for one another. The young people

enjoyed praying for each other and became the main point of our time together. So much so that after the course we did a 24/7 prayer course with them. This also went well and this was able to transition into May camp.

**Lee Buck** *Parish Youth Worker*

### **Families and Children's Report**

We continue to celebrate children and families in our Churches in Horsham Parish. We look for different ways to make them as welcome as possible. To nurture them, help them know and learn about God's Love and learn more about our world with God's Love as a central part of it.

**Holy Trinity Toddler** club continues to meet on Thursday afternoons from 1.45 until 3.15 with a range of activities inside and outside, snacks and singing. The numbers attending varies from week to week but remains steady. We feel this is an important outreach not just for the children to socialise but also to support all carers and particularly single and lonely mums.

**Messy Church** continued to hold two full sessions in May and October last year plus assisting with activities and worship on Good Friday and the Christingle Service in December.

Diddy Disciples has now become **Young Explorers** and meets for a bible story, craft, prayer, singing and activities on the Fourth Sunday of the month. Numbers have risen lately, and we pray that they will continue to do so.

**Libby Risby**

**Sunday Club St Mary's** The club is an opportunity for young children from our church family to pray and play together, learning about faith through fun activities like acting out bible stories, games & craft. The aim is for them to have a positive experience of church, knowing they are loved and valued.

**Creche St Mary's** Having this as a permanent fixture enables parents to feel more able to bring little ones to church as it's a safe space where they can play, move around & make some noise.

**Fused St Mary's** Sessions with children & young people together build up relationships as they enjoy the morning singing, playing, making & chatting.

**Informal Family Service – 3.30pm St Mary's** A chance for families with very young children to come into church and feel at home due to the informal nature of the session. Children are free to enjoy activities, make some noise & move around the church. Parents and children get to know each other & chat over tea benefitting from the opportunity for support & togetherness.

**First Holy Communion St Mary's** Classes introduce children to the meaning of Holy Communion enabling them to grow within the church family and feel more a part of services.

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**Little Footprints Toddlers Group St Leonard's** Provides an opportunity for caregivers to get together for emotional and social support while their babies & toddlers develop social skills and interactions through playing together.

**Open the Book & Church Team Assemblies at St Mary's School** As much as possible children are involved in acting out bible stories alongside the team. Interactive elements throughout enable children to be part of the learning experience.

**School, Beavers & Cubs Visits** Providing opportunities for schools to worship together or pay an informal visit, building up relationships and educating children about faith and the history of our church.

**Good Friday Family Activity Morning St Mary's** A chance for families to get together and enjoy a variety of activities.

**Parish Summer Holiday Activities** Fun educational sessions which allow children to build up confidence and families to engage in creative activities.

**Christmas Nativity Services (2) St Mary's** Children have the chance to take part in telling the story, learning and growing in confidence. The church is full at both sessions with families coming together to celebrate.

**Linda Baker** *Children and Families Worker*

**Cath Hatton** *Children and Youth Officer*

## H) Safeguarding Report

The Parish Safeguarding Team consists of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), the St Mary's Safeguarding Officer, the St Mary's Safeguarding Training Officer, and the Holy Trinity Safeguarding Officer. The previous PSO (Lindo Goodwin) stepped down in 2024 and provided a detailed handover to the incoming PSO. This and all her hard work whilst in the role are greatly appreciated.

The safeguarding team met regularly during 2024. The meetings have enabled the team to share working practices, to update on information received from the Diocese and to highlight operational issues. This year, there has been an increased focus on the issue of domestic abuse within the Church and volunteers across the parish have been encouraged to complete this training to increase their knowledge and awareness.

Undertaking safeguarding training in combination with disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks are key to ensuring we have a safe & caring church. Guidance detailing the training required for a variety of volunteer roles has been widely circulated across the parish, and volunteers are encouraged to review their level of training. Our safeguarding and training officers continue to work to support volunteers in undertaking the necessary training and ensuring that safer recruitment procedures are followed.

The 2025 independent safeguarding audit carried out by INEQE concluded that a strong safeguarding culture and practice are now firmly embedded in the life of the Diocese and cathedral, acknowledging the work of the local Diocesan safeguarding teams whilst asserting that it is important to avoid

complacency and continue our journey of safeguarding improvement to ensure that our churches remain safe spaces for all.

An increase in the profile of safeguarding within the Church of England has resulted in closer collaboration between safeguarding staff, clergy and the congregation. A number of safeguarding issues have arisen since the previous APCM, several of which have been escalated to the Diocese. The team are grateful for the ongoing support of our Diocesan colleagues, clergy, operational staff and churchwardens, all of whom contribute to safeguarding across the parish.

**Liz Lobb** *Parish Safeguarding Officer*

## **I) Mother's Union (MU) Horsham Branch Report**

As members of the worldwide Mothers' Union, we are called upon to uphold Jesus' teaching on the nature of marriage and to promote its wider understanding; we are to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church; we are part of a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service; we try to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children; and we do our best to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

In 2024, the committee worked hard to put together a varied programme based on some of these aims. Our worship services this year have continued as usual. We joined, with other branches in the district, at St Barnabas, Pound Hill for the usual Shroving service. We all paraded our various banners, and it was good to feel part of a wider network of MU branches. We've continued to hold our monthly communion services at St Leonard's – thank you to Sam, Sarah and Alan for leading these. Sam also led our Lady Day service at Holy Trinity Church in March and Sarah led us in a meditation on Maundy Thursday. We are most grateful to all the clergy for their continued support and especially to Pat today for chairing our meeting.

During the year we had three talks which highlighted some of the problems of the world we live in, both here in the UK and further afield. Sue Keegan brought into focus the problems of the asylum seekers currently housed at Cisswood House and gave us a list of their needs including tablet computers, old mobile phones, bags and rucksacks and various items of clothing. Margaret Symonds gave us an illustrated talk about India and Becky Hawkins talked about Bangladesh. In both cases we were able to discern ways in which the MU might be able to help. We also had our usual collection of men's socks as Christmas presents for the detainees at Gatwick – a group of us spent a morning parcelling them up and attaching MU labels. Thank you to everyone who contributed these.

Two of our talks gave us new insights into specific areas of Christian worship. Marilyn Quail filled us in on the fascinating details of Quaker worship in Horsham and Mike Overend gave us an enthusiastic insight into Christian music and the workings of our wonderful Father Willis organ. Other talks about Scottish Lighthouses by Simon Quail and The History, Uses and Value of Domestic Silver by Andrew Glaysher, were equally informative and all four were very much enjoyed by all.

Our outing in July was to view the amazing Sistine Chapel ceiling at the Church of the English Martyrs in Goring, followed by lunch on the seafront – a great social occasion for the 13 members who came. Thank you to Win for organising this for us. Other, more social meetings have not only been most enjoyable but have been a great fund-raising opportunity for Mothers' Union projects in our diocese. We held our annual garden party in the garden of Holy Trinity Church on a rather cool day in August and, of course, our Christmas lunch in December. On both these occasions we were very



grateful to all the members who offered their help to the committee, not least the lovely husbands without whose help these wouldn't have been possible. And, thanks to your generosity, we managed to raise significant funds for our Away-from-it-All holiday caravans. Christine will be reporting on this shortly.

You may remember that, in 2023, Lisa joined our September meeting to talk about raising the profile of the MU in our churches. To this end some MU members have been getting involved in church services and helping with various activities. We have led intercessions at All Age services, helped with children's craft activities and provided tea after the monthly children's service. We've prayed for and given out the cards for the children taking their first communion and helped to make 150 Christingles! A group of us also provided one of the Lent lunches and two of us helped on an MU cake stall at the Ardingly show. Joyce looks after any baptism families and Janet is involved with the pre-school. Both will give reports shortly. Our members are now mentioned more often at the 10am service and Lisa has agreed to enrol some new members at **this** service instead of at our service at St Leonard's. She will also be handing out long-service certificates to various members.

On that note, the good news is that we'll be enrolling two new members this year. Sadly, we've also lost some much-loved members – Joan Goode, Wendy Priddle and Mary Gilbert – we miss them dearly. Our numbers now stand at 34 with about 15 to 18 members attending our monthly meetings.

Finally, a big "Thank-you" to all our current committee members who work so hard to organise everything for us. There are now six of us but, if anyone would like to join us, we'd be more than happy!

We look forward to another successful year.

**Karen Ind**

## **J) St. Mary's Primary School Report**

### **Introduction**

Since my last report, St Mary's has had a busy but successful year, with good progress towards our objectives in all areas. On the first day of this term, we had the dreaded 'phone call' from OfSTED, and underwent our first inspection since 2019 (meaning it was already more than a year overdue.) Happily, it was a very positive experience and we are awaiting the official report any day now.



### **School Development**

We continue to work towards the strategic objectives I shared with you last year, with a particular and increased focus on the way we integrate children from different cultures, nationalities and religions into our Church of England School. This has become an important piece of work, as the demographic of Horsham and therefore St Mary's has changed rapidly in recent years. Now, nearly a third of pupils speak a second language, and we have an increasing number of pupils joining us as refugees or asylum seekers, with trauma or pastoral needs.

This September we began a 2-year OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Project, which is about developing high-quality play experiences. This is in response to increasing mental health difficulties in young children, and a growing concern that today's children don't spend enough time playing - especially outdoors and away from screens. We are fundraising to develop the site and resources available to facilitate high quality outdoor play, in all its forms.

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**Curriculum and Outcomes**

Last summer, we were delighted to get the best SATs results we've had in a long time, exceeding the national standard in almost all areas. We were especially pleased to see an improvement in writing attainment, as this has been an 'area of improvement' for the school for at least the last 5 years.

Our curriculum focus for this year is science and technology, which we are developing term by term.

**Church and community**

In the last year, I have worked with Rev. Lisa to revise our programme of church experiences, with a focus on getting children more involved in worship. We now have a school Worship Council, who contribute to planning and developing worship in school, and a team of Worship Leaders who assist with the services we hold in church. We are delighted to be 'officially' supporting an All Age Service on one Sunday each term, with the first taking place last term and the next planned for the 9th March.

We know that a lot of the children who attend St Mary's School worship in other churches around the diocese, or indeed in buildings for other faiths. Our RE leader, Jamie Ellis, worked hard last year to diversify the church experiences children have at St Mary's so they grow their awareness of different denominations, styles of worship and their knowledge of other faiths. This is an important part of our work to help children understand differences and develop attitudes of tolerance and inclusion. We have welcomed Christian speakers from six different Horsham churches to our assemblies, and our programme of school trips now includes visits to a range of churches and places of worship in our local community.

Last summer, we took our Year 6 class to The Life of Christ at Wintershall in Surrey, and this year we started a Scripture Union 'SUPA Club' which allows children to explore their Christian faith in school with friends. Both of these were possible thanks to the generous grant provided by St Mary's Church.

**Premises**

We have benefited this year from a beautiful new library, funded by a generous anonymous donation to the school for this purpose (though unfortunately have also had to carry out a lot of reparative work due to a flood in the Autumn Term.) Our next priority is to improve perimeter fencing which is collapsing at the back of the school.

**Emma McLaughlin** *Headteacher*