

PARISH OF HAMSEY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
17TH MAY 2023
PCC REPORT

1. Rector's Report

Thank you for maintaining the worship at St Peter, Offham and Hamsey over the past year. There is much to be grateful for and ongoing looks positive.

This was a year without any churchwardens which puts an extra responsibility on all of us to be vigilant with regard to the church maintenance. My thanks to those of you who tirelessly help keep the buildings clean and well maintained, thanks to Jane Stent for organising this. My thanks to Sharon and Derek Samson for cutting the grass and Jane Stent and her team of flower arrangers.

Our services have been maintained throughout the year and as before, we are grateful to Susan Bain and John Leggett for playing the organ. My thanks to Michael and Pamela Conlon for organising Songs of Praise and the Nine Lessons and Carols.

The highlight of last year was, of course, the late Queen's Jubilee celebrations. Both Parishes joined together to host a Flower Trail around the five churches and provide refreshments. My thanks to Chris and Dave Glover for looking after the refreshments at St Peter during the Jubilee Flower Trail, and, of course for the team decorating the church so well – in my opinion it was the best of the five churches! Both Hamsey and St Peter Offham were open places for focus when the Queen died with Books of Remembrance. The PCC agreed the planting of a 'Jubilee Tree' in the grounds of St Peter as a commemoration and this has been done. My thanks to Jane Stent, Alice Renton, Roland Gough and Sharon Samson for overseeing this.

A number of times during the year we have been able to combine our services with the Parish of Plumpton with good effect. Pentecost falling on the weekend of the Jubilee was very special coming together of the Parishes, and this has link has been repeated at Easter Harvest and Christmas. I would encourage the members of St Peter to join the Plumpton congregation whenever opportunity arises as joint services will ultimately be the way forward when the uniting of the Parishes takes place.

I continue to maintain nightly Compline services on ZOOM. As a Foundation Governor at the Skylark Federation of schools I have taken part in the inspections at Hamsey and Plumpton and Barcombe. I attended the Church of England significant initiative, 'Living in Love and Faith' discussion, over six weeks (in and attendance and on ZOOM) on behalf of the church who were also invited to attend.

You will see from the financial report that we contributed to the RBL, Ripple (Send a Cow), Christian Aid and MACS (solar power for a school in Malawi). My thanks to Diane Costall who continues to maintain the Foodbank.

During the year we maintained the May to September Hamsey services 8.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. The numbers remained constant for the summer services this year. My thanks to Diane Costall and others who cleaned and put in flower displays during this time.

At Hamsey Churchyard the new post and rail fence is installed however the stock fencing was not completed despite attempts to have this done. The College at Plumpton have offered to help with this.

The management of the churchyard will continue to be regular total strims with the exception of two small areas allowed to grow until June, cut and allowed to grow until September. Unfortunately now we are no longer wilding we have lost the support of others who were behind the scheme. We are now reliant on the professional strimming and any volunteer work from the church.

In November I was present at St Peter for our Remembrance which I alternate with Plumpton and my thanks to the Rev Colin Prichard who covers for us.

Simultaneous Administration of the Holy Communion (the intinction of individual host by the priest immediately before reception) is still maintained.

My thanks to Andrew Featherstone, Diane Costall for holding the office of Treasurer, Secretary and Rachael Brown and Chris Glover for the office of Parish Safeguarding Officer and Electoral Roll Officer respectively. My thanks to Brenda and Roland Gough for attending Deanery Synod.

This last year has been more positive with some new people joining our services regularly and thank you for making them welcome. We do face challenges being such a small congregation, especially financially. This year we adopted a Mission Statement – to maintain the Christian witness in this time and place - and this we will do with the help of God. We must each work constructively, with vision and faith to rebuild the church community so that there is a strong, cohesive base going forward. There is no one answer, or a quick fix – only a fresh commitment to faith, prayer, vision and action.

Rev Anne Dunlop
APCM 2023

2. Electoral Roll Report. (Chris Glover - Electoral Roll Officer)

A review of the Electoral Register has been carried out resulting in 11 people being removed due to their deaths and 5 due to moving from our church. In 2025 the five yearly complete revision requiring everyone to re-register will be due.

3. Safeguarding (Rachel Brown, Parish Safeguarding Officer)

There have been no incidents requiring safeguarding attention during the year.

4. Treasurer's Report (Andrew Featherstone, Treasurer) Papers supplied.

Last year saw the completion of the stonework repairs at Offham at a cost of some £29,000 which was funded from reserves. Despite declining income, due principally to a smaller congregation, other, routine, expenditure at some £29,500 was almost exactly in balance with income – the position being helped by sharing our Parish Share with Plumpton. Reserves, held in CBF funds, reduced by some £40,000 over the year, to £90,000 due to both the stonework repairs and poor investment performance.

This year income continues to reduce, and this, combined with increased electricity costs, the funding of the Offham quinquennial inspection and some essential repairs, leads us to expect a significant deficit at year end. This is despite the fact that we have agreed with Plumpton to pay 40% of our joint Parish Share (£26,400), with Plumpton paying the other 60%.

5. Churchwarden's Report (Vacancy)

In the absence of churchwardens matters pertaining to the maintenance of the church have been dealt with by the PCC.

6. Health and Safety Report (Dave Glover, Health and Safety Officer)

The five yearly inspection of the Offham church lightning conductor has been carried out which identified the earth as inadequate resulting in a fail. Subsequently a new upgraded earth was installed resulting in a pass which will now last for the next five years. The scheduled inspections of the hall fire alarm and the fire extinguishers have been completed successfully. Several risk assessments have been submitted for events and activities at both churches and the hall.

7. Deanery Synod Report (Brenda and Roland Gough, Deanery Synod Representatives)

During the year the Deanery Synod updated members on Diocesan finance and addressed a number of interesting initiatives. There is a positive rise in finance post Covid back to more normal levels although responses are variable between churches. Presentations were given about the Family Support Work, eco-care of churchyards, and the General Synod response to 'Living in Love and Faith'. The Synod also discussed and commended new work with young people and the appointment of Youth Workers whose expertise is available to the Deanery. The recent introduction of Warm Spaces was also welcomed and supported.

8. Church Hall report (Rev Anne)

David Powell stepped down from this responsibility during the year. This is now managed between Andrew Featherstone and Rev Anne and the co-operation of those hiring the hall. The cost heating of the hall is an ongoing issue.

9. Friends of Hamsey Report (Andrew Featherstone, Chair FOH)

Last year the Friends's fund raising and informative activities included a very successful open day and a performance of Beowulf, and the Friends continue to ensure that the church is open at least at weekends. This year already we have had a quiz night at the Blacksmiths and another open day is planned, together with a theatrical evening with the Lewes Little Theatre and, in the Autumn, a substantial sale of pictures by the local artist Moira Hoddell, all for the benefit of the Restoration Fund. We must thank Marion Hughes and her committee for organising the events and Alice Renton for putting together the upcoming paintings sale.

After completion of reglazing work last year, the fund now sits at some £20,000. Depending on how well the walls dry out, the next work to be carried out is expected to be internal redecoration. Nick Lear has resigned as chairman after fulfilling the role since the Friends' inception and we thank him for his guidance and efficiency in running our meetings, as well as his many years of support to the church. Andrew Featherstone has taken his place.

10. Website (Rev Anne)

Our thanks to Racheal Brown who funds the site. There is a moderate amount of 'traffic' but its presence is necessary as landing site for the church. A number of requests for Christenings come via the site. The website and A Church Near You are the most used reference points for enquirers. The overall response to this regular contact has been positive and people on the fringes of the church community have been kept aware of church activities. Articles about the life of the church have also been placed in the Hamsey News which reaches the wider Parish.