



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 19th April 2026 at 11.00am

These papers can also be read on our Church websites:

St. Mary's - www.stmaryshorsham.org.uk

St. Leonard's - www.stleonardshorsham.org.uk

Holy Trinity - 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 25th May 2025 – *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 2025 and the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2025, as adopted by the PCC on 23rd March 2026 – *(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 Hymn of the service.

A) Draft Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting and Parochial Church Meeting held in St. Mary's Church on Sunday 25th May 2025 at 11am

Present: Revd Sam Maginnis (in the Chair); Nigel Stalley (Hon. Secretary) Greg Andrews (Hon. Treasurer); Peter Fruin (Churchwarden), Morag Davies (Churchwarden), Cath Hatton (Churchwarden); 195 parishioners in the congregation.

1) Opening Worship (Parish All-together service)

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

2) Apologies

Apologies were received from 4 parishioners.

3) Minutes

The minutes of the APCM held on 28th April 2024 had been circulated. These were approved and signed by Sam. 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)**, **Sue Keegan (St Mary's)** and they had completed the necessary declarations. They were declared elected as Churchwardens. Sam thanked them for being willing to stand. A presentation was made to **Morag Davies** who was thanked for the 18 years she had served as a Churchwarden.

5) Election of Lay Representatives to the Deanery Synod

There were no new nominations received. We currently have 3 Lay representatives on Deanery Synod.

6) Election of Lay Representatives to the PCC

Morag Davies, Nick O'Riordan, Judie Finlay and Angie Hyde, who had nominated by their respective Churches and completed the necessary declarations, were duly elected. Bob Whittaker and Alistair Inglis-Taylor were thanked for their contributions to the PCC over many years as their terms of office ended this year.

7) Electoral Roll report (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)

The report was accepted. There was one correction in the table on page 5 - 2005 should be 2024 and 2026 should be 2025. It was pointed out that this year the full Electoral Roll had been renewed and this would explain the reduction total in numbers on our Roll.

8) Proceedings of the PCC (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)

The report was accepted.

9) Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 (*Copy attached in the Minute Book*)

The report was accepted.

10) Appointment of the Independent Examiner

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

11) Fabric Report *(Copy attached in the Minute Book)*

The report was accepted.

12) Horsham Deanery Synod report *(Copy attached in the Minute Book)*

The report was accepted.

13) Youth Report *(Copy attached in the Minute Book)*

The report was accepted.

14) Safeguarding report *(Copy attached in the Minute Book)*

The report was accepted.

15) Chairman' comments

Sam thanked everyone on the PCC and especially Greg and Nigel who had prepared the reports and accounts for the APCM. He also thanked everyone in the Parish for keeping things going whilst Lisa has been having cancer treatment and that we continue to pray for Lisa over the coming months.

Holy Trinity Church marks 125 years on ministry this year with a number of events and fundraising activities to equip the Church with the facilities it needs for the future. The campaign to raise funds for work to the Bell Tower has sought to raise awareness of the value of HTC as a landmark in the local community.

During the year St. Leonard's Church has stopped Sunday services and no longer has an independent congregation. There are still services on two Wednesdays every month. The PCC are looking at how SLC will be used in the future to spread God's mission and Gospel in that area of Horsham.

20) Closing Hymn of the service

Sam closed the meeting with a prayer before the final hymn.

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 2026	April 2025
St Mary's	319	293
Holy Trinity	84	85
St Leonard's	14	13
Horsham Parish	417	391

The Electoral Roll is completely renewed every six years in accordance with Church Representation Rules. The last renewal took place in 2025. In intervening years, a revision to the Roll takes place prior to the APCM when the Roll is brought up to date with changes since the previous revision. A revision is an opportunity for new members to join the Roll. The latest revision to the Roll was completed in the latter part of March 2026.

I would like to thank Alistair Inglis-Taylor at St. Mary's and Margaret Symonds at St. Leonard's, for their help in promoting the Roll in their respective churches and advising me of appropriate changes.

Keith Rayner *Parish Electoral Roll Officer*

C) Report on the proceedings of the Horsham PCC 2024 - 2025

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

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: Paul Goodwin, Reg Haydon, Nick O'Riordan(chair), Nigel Stalley, and Bob Whittaker. The team meets at 2 to 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 (QI) report was delivered in June 2024. Highest priority items revolved around gutter cleaning and maintenance; mortar erosion continues in several places.

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

We have implemented a twice-yearly gutter-clearing contract with Sussex Shine, for both St Mary's and St Leonard's churches.

We discovered severe rusting and leakage in the central heating pipework near the tower area and in August 2025 BSW replaced short lengths of piping: all now appears to be functioning well.

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. Installation of these thermostats has continued through 2025, producing benefits summarised in Section 6 below.

2.3 Churchyard

Again, through the Ecochurch/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. We worked with Horsham Green Gym who helped to clear some of the invasive laurel and bamboo.

WSCC has been repeatedly contacted to repair the paving around the church; temporary mortar-based repairs were undertaken in the Autumn and we anticipate more permanent repair in 2026.

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

3.1 QI architect Robin Nugent

We sadly report that Robin died unexpectedly in August 2025. A respected Conservation Architect with a local practice near Sedgewick Castle, Robin's work at the Church Centre in 2021 will be remembered for its sensitivity, appropriateness, economy and practical improvement of a complex set of spaces that has provided us with a springboard for the future.

3.2 Change of Use

A small but still significant part of the motivation for the 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. The process of obtaining Change of Use, necessitated by evolving planning legislation, took several years but eventually approval was gained in early September 2025. St Mary's Pre-School is planning to re-

open in the Church Centre at the beginning of September 2026. Refurbishment of the Manor Room and the exterior area is planned for early 2026.

3.3 Sound Transmission

Working with our party-wall neighbours at 31 Causeway, we successfully installed a trial acoustic panel in 2022. To fully discharge the planning conditions for the Change of Use, we obtained Listed Building Consent in November 2025 for the installation of permanent soundproofing by UK Soundproofing Ltd. The work will take place in early 2026 with the welcome agreement of our neighbours.

3.4 Barn room heating

The antiquated Ferroli gas boiler and Worcester instantaneous water heater were replaced in August by a 3-phase electrical supply serving a new 30 kW electric boiler in the kitchen. Despite some initial teething problems, the new boiler and old circulation system is bedding in well and will improve predictability of the heating of the Foyer and Barn areas, to the benefit of users.

4. Holy Trinity Church (QI Architect Richard Andrews, next report delayed till early 2026)

4.1 Church Fabric

The refurbishment works to the Bell Tower were completed in October 2025, during these works the shingles to the spire were replaced. We have launched a Sponsor a Shingle Campaign to raise funds to cover the overspend.

4.2 Removal of pews

The original pews have now been removed and replaced by 36 new chairs purchased from Alpha Chairs and 70 second hand chairs, kindly gifted by St. Marks.

4.3 Heating Controls

The church heating controls have been replaced with a controller that allows the settings to be controlled remotely.

4.4 Holy Trinity 125 Appeal

During 2025 we ran the Holy Trinity 125 Appeal and succeeded in raising £40k.

4.5 Car Park

The car park was partially resurfaced in July 2025.

4.6 Hall roof repairs

Repairs to the church hall roof will take place on 18th February 2026.

4.7 Hot water heater in Church Hall

A new hot water heater was installed in the church hall in August 2025.

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

5.1 Church Fabric

Following the recommendations arising from the QI report carried out last year, we have initiated twice yearly gutter and downpipe clearance with Sussex Shine Ltd. Likewise we have sealed access into the spire area that had been subject to pigeon ingress, and cleaned that area.

The gas boiler that serves the north side of the building (kitchen, toilets, vestry and Peter Apted Room) was equipped with a Nest Learning thermostat in August 2025.

5.2 Access

The smart key access at the West end door became fully operational in Autumn 2025 and hirers are being provided with time-dependent access codes. The system appears to be working well.

The tenancy of the former vicarage was terminated by the Diocese in early 2025. Access arrangements to enable usage of the garage, formerly used by the tenants, for storage by the Parish are being investigated.

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 again 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 2024 and 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. We qualified for a free energy audit of both St Mary's Church and Church Centre which was received from Inspired Efficiency (energy auditors) in September: their report is being evaluated. We are a leading participant in the Net Zero Community of Practice, managed by Steve Collins for Portsmouth, Chichester and Guildford Dioceses.

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

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
St Mary's Church	Gas (kWh)	262000 (95600 in Q4)	122000	168000	180000	196100 (69500 in Q4)	164300	184964
	Electricity (kWh)	16800	10500	10200	13000	13500	13000	12855
Church Centre	Gas (kWh)	100000	59000	50000	91200	59200	67900	54599
	Electricity (kWh)	10500	7500	7600	9200	8700	8800	26198
	Total Carbon footprint	73 tonnes	37.5 tonnes	44.5 tonnes	55.3 tonnes	52.3 tonnes	47.9 tonnes	49.3 tonnes

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Holy Trinity Church	Gas (kWh)	40500	34700	39200	35000	50100	52700	59413
	Electricity (kWh)	5500	4310	4800	4400	4700	5100	4855
Church Hall	Gas (kWh)	2300	4300	1000	1125	3742	2300	2033
	Electricity (kWh)	8100	5600	6400	7500	6500	5900	5163
	Total Carbon footprint	11 tonnes	9.5 tonnes	10 tonnes	9.3 tonnes	12.3 tonnes	12.1 tonnes	12.6 tonnes

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
St Leonard's Church	Gas (kWh)	30000	53000	28500	35000	38500	30100	37956
	Electricity (kWh)	10000	2900	3800	5025	4400	4600	4174
	Total Carbon footprint	8 tonnes	10.5 tonnes	6.5 tonnes	8.1 tonnes	8.6 tonnes	7.0 tonnes	7.5 tonnes

With increased venue hire in all three churches, there is a slight increase in energy use in 2025 that is almost balanced by the 14% decrease in UK carbon footprint conversion factors due to the increase in non-fossil fuel energy generation. In aggregate our carbon energy footprint has reduced over the past 6 years by nearly 30%, from 92 tonnes in 2019 to 69 tonnes in 2025.

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 & Bob Whitaker *Parish Fabric Team*

F) Report on the proceedings of the Horsham Deanery Synod 2025

The Deanery Synod met twice in 2025. In March we met at Holy Trinity Church in Horsham and heard from Dr. John Preston (Diocesan Secretary) about the Diocesan Strategy and the £12 million bid from Chichester Diocese for Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP) from the National Church. In October we met at St. Margaret's Church in Warnham and heard from Buff Stone about 'Care of God's Creation' and her work across the Diocese raising awareness Eco Church matters. We also heard from Ven. Philip Jones (Trustee of the Friends of Chichester Cathedral) about the work the 'Friends' do in supporting the work, life and mission of the Cathedral.

Nigel Stalley Member of Horsham Deanery Synod

G) Youth and Children's Reports

Youth Report

In the year of 2025, we saw a large amount of growth in our youth work from both across the Parish and at St. Mary's. Not only did we see an increase in numbers but also in new services and groups. We saw our youth take a step forward in their faith, we witnessed them praying for one another, receive words from God, lead worship, deliver sermons and lead our younger people in small discussions. This year we took 33 young people to **May Camp** (30 in 2024), 13 to **Satellites** (7 in 2024) and 31 young people on the **October Retreat** (20 in 2024). All of these events have allowed young people to explore, strengthen and display their faith.

At St. Mary's, we have continued to grow in our Sunday services. We are beginning to see a regular group attend **The Core** on Sunday mornings. They come together to build community and look at the Bible. We launched a new monthly **Informal evening service** at St Mary's, which is particularly for our young people, and offers an opportunity for them to build stronger relationships with one another and to deepen in their faith.

Across the wider Parish, we regularly go into Millais, Tanbridge House and now in Forest secondary schools. In Forest we have started a new Christian club offering a chance for young people from across the school to come together in faith and explore the bible. Our **Café Connect** service held once a month at Holy Trinity Church has become more youth led. On average about 17 young people attend the service where we worship, pray and discuss Christianity in a productive way. Our open-door youth group (**TGI**) has also started to have a Christian message delivered by Rev'd Scott, to those who want to hear more about Christianity. This has continued to be a staple of our outreach into the community. We finished another **Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award** group in 2025, with 14 young people participating and completing the award.

We had 2 super interns with us for most of 2025. One left us to go off to university in August where she has found a CU to join. Our other intern has supported the youth at May Camp, Satellites and the October retreat. While in her post she has successfully run a **Quiz night** to raise money for the camps/retreats. She been able to come alongside our youth and helped Bible studies at Café Connect and the Core.

We had a small group of older youth attend our young leaders' program. Teaching them how to behave, be a leader and offering them an opportunity to take the lead in our groups. Equipping our young people to become leaders with a Christian viewpoint and leading with love, is so important.

We have continued to run a year 6 group looking at faith and we finished the **Youth Alpha** course. In 2026 we are looking to continue to encounter God in a different way.

The one word that has sat with me the whole year is blessed. What a blessing our youth are to us and God. What a blessing I am in to be able to put things on for our youth. What a blessing to have a God that loves us more than we could fathom. What a blessing I have, to engage, encounter and journey with our young people as they come to love and know the Lord.

Matthew 5:7 You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full' you find yourselves cared for.

Lee Buck Parish Youth Worker

Families and Children's Report

The families and children whom we welcome into our Parish churches are met with an environment of learning immersed in God's Love. They do this through many different learning styles. They have the opportunity to grow and develop their Social, emotional, and spiritually knowledge, alongside their imagination's, communication & creative skills alongside singing and acting skills.

Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo! - two performances of Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo, were held in St Mary's Church in March. It was an outstanding performance from the small cast of years 3-6 Primary School children, who sang out beautifully and had learnt every word so proficiently. The children benefitted from the wealth of experience's of our Musical director Jeremy Weaver and Judie Finlay who had trained and directed them both musically and to act so incredibly well.

Mothering Sunday - it was wonderful to have Children helping in all aspects of the service, taking up the offertory, reading the prayers and doing the Bible readings. The children grow in confidence in taking on speaking roles within our all-age services, which is very brave for a 5-year-old in front of approximately 250 people!

Good Friday Children's Activities - many different activity stations around the church brought in many families and children, from our Church and the town's Community. One family even travelled by bus from the next town to come and take part too! There was an **Easter Egg Hunt, craft, prayer & gardening activities**. It was a social time for the families as well as a learning environment about the Easter story and with activities to help the children to think the events through and the meaning behind them.

Easter Sunday - we also welcomed a large number of children coming into St Mary's from the very young to the upper teens and they were made very welcome by Bishop Ruth. We had an Easter Egg Hunt for the children at the end of the service.

First Communion - several Children took classes, to increase their understanding of the Eucharistic Bread and Wine and the meaning behind it. We had a special service where the children took their first Communion and they were given a candle to mark this special occasion.

Children's Candlelit Service - both our services were full of families enjoying the nativity play, craft, carols and candles at our Christmas Eve services. It was wonderful to welcome 339 children and 699 adults into the church for the services. We were also very fortunate to have 30 children take part in the nativity. It was great to have Lisa back with us this year and Sarah taking part for the first time.



Sunday Club - has been learning all about for example Nebuchadnezzar/Belshazzar, Saul/Solomon etc comparing what they did to King Jesus whose birth we celebrate in December. Teaching the children about character's and the history and stories in the Old Testament, helps the children to understand the context of when Jesus was born and what sort of country and people he was born into.

The Baptism Team - play a vital role in welcoming new young families and also families already attending church. They guide the family through the process of having their child baptised and the importance and responsibilities that go alongside it, as well as introducing them to activities and new folk.

Open the Book Team - helped bring 'alive' Bible stories in St Mary's Primary School assemblies and encouraged children to dress up and play the part of characters in the Bible to help them to learn visually, aurally and verbally the stories and Parable's in the Bible and the important characters concerned.

Little Footprints St Leonard's - a Mum's and Toddler group run by our Children and family worker was very popular and many benefitted from it in the community around St. Leonard's during 2025. It had had to be paused at the end of December, due to our new Children and Families worker having shorter hours at present, however we are looking into how it can be opened again. Many of the carer's have found it such an important community place for them to meet and the children to play and socialise.

Monthly St Mary's Family Service - relaxed service and a shared tea providing some music songs and social time for parents and children in our Christian setting. One example of the Family's celebrating everyday heroes such as nurses, firemen, plumbers etc to tie in with All Saints (heroes). This then linked in with December and thinking about the birth of Jesus.

Children's Outreach - several groups of cubs, brownies, scouts, guides & schools were welcomed into the church during advent which was a wonderful opportunity to show them around the church, introduce them to why we come here, Christianity, church family, history and the very popular bell tower!

Our Families and children's worker Linda Baker went into Arunside Primary for a Nativity assembly and Revd. Sam Maginnis, from Holy Trinity, also visited Trafalgar infant school, who held their Nativity in Holy Trinity. The Play Group who meet at Holy Trinity held their Nativity in the church at Christmas.

Linda Baker sadly left us at Christmas, having given so much of herself so wonderfully to our Children's and Families Ministry, for which we are very grateful. However, we have appointed an excellent new Family and Children's worker, Sarah Dart, who is herself a teacher of primary school children. Therefore, we are very blessed to have her as part of our staff team.

Holy Trinity Young Explorers - continues to take place on the 4th Sunday each month apart from summer holidays. Generally, the numbers seem to be increasing, 4-10 children plus parents or grandparents. All the sessions have been enjoyable for the children and adults. We start with a welcome song, then story and an activity and a prayer. Frequently we do Parables to tie in with the theme in church, e.g. Harvest festival we did the parable of the yeast and then made bread and a harvest loaf to go into church. This teaches the children about the different festivals we celebrate in the church.

There is still a strong **Mother and Toddler** weekly group for Toddlers with the grandparent's, parents or carers which is a wonderful social time for both children and carers, for conversations experiences, advice, problem sharing etc in a safe environment, as well as having refreshments and new toys to explore and play with.

Messy Church - which usually runs twice a year unfortunately was cancelled on both occasions. However, it is now going ahead in February half term 2026.

Libby Risby & Lynn Roberts *Holy Trinity team*

Sarah Dart *Children and Families Worker*

Cath Hatton *Children and Youth Officer*

H) Safeguarding Report

The Parish Safeguarding Team includes the Parish Safeguarding Officer, the St Mary's and Holy Trinity Safeguarding Officers and a Safeguarding Training Officer. The team continues to meet regularly and work closely with the Clergy, Churchwardens, staff, and congregations to foster a healthy church culture and to prioritise safeguarding within our parish.

Our team continues to offer support to those who reach out to our churches. This includes those experiencing severe financial hardship, struggling with threatened homelessness, debt, poor physical or mental health, isolation or family difficulties or breakdown. We provide a compassionate, listening ear, support from our church resources and signpost to a network of local charities and voluntary organisations. When necessary, we also make referrals to statutory agencies.

Raising awareness of domestic abuse continues to be a focus within the parish, with more of our network of volunteers (and members of the congregations) now undertaking the training. This year, to support our volunteers to continue their work, whether with children and young people, vulnerable adults or those seeking asylum, we have offered in-person safeguarding and domestic abuse training, and going forward, plan to deliver more face-to-face sessions. The team is also available to provide support and guidance when safeguarding concerns are raised.

2025 saw the introduction of the Safeguarding Dashboard, an interactive, online tool to enable us to monitor our compliance with safeguarding policies and training. The dashboard helps evidence our good practice, identifies outstanding tasks and provides an action plan that is reviewed at every Parochial Church Council meeting. It simplifies safeguarding administration, links to national Church

of England guidance and templates, supports governance and evidences our ongoing commitment to robust safeguarding.

The team are grateful for the ongoing support of our Diocesan Safeguarding colleagues, Clergy, operational staff, Churchwardens and volunteers, all of whom contribute to safeguarding across the parish.

Liz Lobb *Parish Safeguarding Officer*

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

At the beginning of each year, we look back on the activities of our branch over the past 12 months. As always, we try to bear in mind the reasons for our existence and aim to put together a programme of events and meetings which reflect the aims of the Mothers' Union, supporting Christian family life in all its ups and downs both here and across the world.

During 2025 the emphasis of our meetings and activities has been more on the practical and prayerful side of our organisation than about learning more about the general work of the MU, although we did have a very informative talk by Scilla Page about the MU's work in prisons.

Our worship services have continued as usual. We hold our regular monthly communion service at St Leonard's with about 15 members attending. Many thanks to Sarah, Sam and Alan for leading these. Sarah also led our Lady Day service in March and we joined with other branches in Crawley District at St Barnabas Church in Pound Hill for the usual Shrivings service in February. We paraded our various banners and it was good to feel part of a wider network of MU branches. Several of our members played a part in the World Day of Prayer service at Holy Trinity Church in March which joined us together with the people of the Cook Islands who had prepared the service. Once again it was good to join in the worship of a wider network. Our talks by the clergy during the year included one by Scott and one by Sarah who both spoke to us about their life and journey in Christ. We are most grateful to all the clergy for their continued support and especially to Scott for chairing our AGM.

Two speakers last year focussed on local interests. Sally Sanderson from "Friends of Horsham Park" told us about the development of the park and two of our members were able to help her with some of the details she needed for a book she was writing. Also, Francis Novillo, chaplain to Sussex and Surrey police gave us some valuable insights into her work. Both were very well received as was a fascinating and well-illustrated talk on Christianity in Art by Janet Palmart. On all three occasions we invited members of the congregation to join us.

Our social and fund-raising meetings last year included a couple of "Bring and Buy" sales, a Beetle Drive in aid of our "Away from it All" holiday caravans, a very enjoyable outing to Nyman's Gardens and, of course, our annual garden party and Christmas lunch, both of which raised significant funds for our AFIA holidays as you will hear in our Treasurer's report.

Our other activities have included collecting and packing 150 pairs of socks as Christmas gifts for the detainees at Gatwick- huge thanks to everyone who contributed so generously! We also helped to make 250 Christingles for our service at St Mary's and prepared first communion cards for some of our young people.

Our membership now stands at 31. Two people decided not to re-join this year and, very sadly, we lost Veronica Kidd, a long-standing member – we miss her dearly. The good news is that we recruited one new member, Hazel Berry who transferred from another branch on her move to Horsham. We hope that all our members will do their best to persuade friends and family to join, as our theme for this year is “join us and join in”. We would also be most grateful if a few more members would volunteer for our reading, coffee and intercessions rotas.

In 2026 MU will be celebrating 150 years since its foundation in 1876. Several of us will be attending a service at St Paul’s Cathedral in June to mark the occasion.

Finally, a big “thank you” to all our current committee members who work so hard to organise everything for us. We are six at the moment – hopefully they will all agree to stay on for another year but, if anyone would like to join us, we’d be more than happy!

We look forward to another year of fellowship, learning and fund-raising.

Karen Ind

J) St. Mary’s Primary School Report

Introduction

At the time of last year’s PCC report we were eagerly awaiting the outcomes of last year’s OFSTED inspection. I am delighted to report it went very well, and the school maintained its ‘Good’ status. This year, we are due our SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) which focuses more on the school’s Christian character and vision.



School Development

We continue to work on developing curriculum and embedding recent changes. The school is part of two new projects in this respect:

- The Write Way Forward which involves working with other local schools to identify and address barriers to progress in writing;
- Maths Mastery which provides professional development for teachers on delivering a mastery approach to teaching maths with the aim of raising attainment especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Curriculum and Outcomes

Last year’s SATS results raised the bar once again and saw children achieving significantly above the National Average in maths and reading, and on par with national results in writing (hence the Write Way Forward focus.) Most significantly, there was a big improvement in the number of children reaching the highest “Greater Depth” standard, which was previously a focus area for us.

That said, we are seeing a decline in standards on-entry, meaning early indications suggest younger cohorts may struggle to do as well. This is largely due to a significant increase in the number of children joining St Mary’s with additional needs, or with English as a second language. Many of these pupils do not speak English when they join. Currently, approximately a third of the school has English as a second language.

Challenges

We are increasingly impacted by lack of SEND provision at a county and national level. The national 'SEND crisis' means there is simply not enough funding to meet the needs of all SEND pupils and delays to support have a significant impact. Pupils requiring highly specialist provision are unable to access it, so remain in a mainstream school where we struggle to meet need. The waiting list to be assessed for autism or ADHD, for example, can be 2-3 years. The cost to the school of providing for high-needs children without funding from the LA due to these delays is tens of thousands.

Church and community

Happily, our work and partnership with the church is flourishing and continues to provide us with many opportunities to enrich the children's education and spiritual development. Our revised school vision highlights our priorities in this respect: ***A school where all can learn and grow in mind, body and spirit.*** With our increasingly diverse demographic, we have focussed on ensuring our Christian ethos is welcoming of all and respects difference of belief whilst teaching Christian values. We welcome a range of visitors from different churches to introduce children to different styles of Christian worship. We also now visit churches of different denominations as well as places of worship for other world religions, to discover the ways they are similar and different, and to promote understanding.

This year, we have also explored the accessibility of liturgy in our church services, and worked with Rev. Lisa to develop the language used in a way that makes it as accessible as possible to children with different needs, languages and abilities. The children have, of course, been instrumental in advising on this. It's been wonderful helping our partnership with the church go from strength to strength, and we look forward to another year of working together.

Emma McLaughlin *Headteacher*