

Do Not Remove

The Parish of St. Leonard, Hythe



AGENDA and REPORTS

For the

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Saturday 17th May 2025

At 6pm

St. Leonard's Church

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Copies of the full Audited Accounts are available separately

**Vestry Meeting
17th May 2025 at 6pm**

to be followed immediately by the APCM

A G E N D A

1. Election of Churchwardens
2. Date of Next Annual Parochial Church Meeting

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
17th May 2025**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of The Annual Parochial Church Meeting of 2024
3. Matters arising
4. Presentation of the Electoral Roll
5. Election of Members to the PCC
6. Brief Churchwarden's Report
7. Vicar's Report
8. Annual Reports – order as listed on the Contents page
9. Vision
10. Mission Partnership with MAF
11. Presentation of Accounts and Appointment of Auditors
12. Any other previously noted business and results of election of PCC members

Vicar's Report

We aim to be an ever-more welcoming, inclusive, and caring Christian community that reaches out to all, thankful to God who draws us together and gives us life in all its fullness.

Diocesan Three Bold Outcomes for 2030:

- Doubling the number of children and young disciples
- 200 New Christian communities
- Every parish, benefice and deanery showing signs of revitalisation

Friends, our vision, discerned together at a previous APCM, continues to shape our life together. It is a reflection of who we believe God calls our parish family to be, and so all that we do and are together should be a reflection of our vision. When we live our vision, we inhabit our Christian vocation. I have also included Canterbury Diocese's Three Bold Outcomes for 2030 at the top of this report because this is what every parish in our diocese is striving towards. Inspired by our vision, and driven by the Spirit, I believe that we've already begun contributing to these diocesan goals.

Worship is at the heart of our parochial life as it is the worship of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which brings us together, binds us as a family, and inspires us to reach out to the world. As always, we've had a rich worshipping life this past year, welcoming so many to our churches for regular services, the celebration of great Christian feasts, and several civic services.

Of the many services the year brought, two in particular were Berkeley's final Eucharist and Evensong services after 52 years as Director of Music. These saw St Leonard's filled with friends from across those years to give thanks for Hilarie's and Berkeley's many gifts shared with the parish. I would like to again thank Hilarie and Berkeley for their talents, all that they have given of themselves to the parish, and for their transformative ministry for so many.

As we give such thanks for what has come before, it's also been a year of renewal and welcome. One of my joys this year has been seeing a plethora of new faces joining our church family and becoming actively involved in the life of the parish. Among them, it has been a joy to welcome Aimee Babbs, our Youth Worker; and Anita Jones, our new Musical Director. Aimee is with us, thanks to generous funding from the Future Youth Scheme, and has thrown herself into our parish's youth ministry – both in church and in Hythe Bay CofE Primary School. Likewise Anita has also been quick to share her gifts and creativity in our parish's musical life. Drawing on helpful recommendations, we have sought to renew our parish's worshipping life by bringing the Boys' and Girls' choirs together and altering our regular pattern of worship (which you can see at the bottom of this report.) Of particular note is Pizza & Praise, an informal service at Hythe Bay which seeks to engage children and young families in our worship and community. Traditionally, it has been a challenge to welcome those connected with our church school to our churches, and so Pizza & Praise is a way of taking church to them! Much thanks is owed to Rebecca Prout, Headteacher of Hythe Bay, for her ongoing support of Pizza & Praise, and to the worship band for leading the music.

Outside of worship, our parish has continued to welcome, include and care for people as we've hosted several community events throughout the year. This year's Christmas Fair drew in many more people than last year, with our community providing not only an opportunity for Christmas shopping, but also a caring welcome to so many. Likewise, we've also been delighted to host two Board Games Days for the town, which drew in people from

every generation. And finally, our family served the community through our youth group's winter sleepout, raising an incredible £1,739.44 for the Folkestone Rainbow Centre.

None of these would be possible without you, our church family, so thank you for your ongoing care, prayer, and support. In particular, I would like to thank the Churchwardens, John and Helen; the PCC and everyone who sits on its various working groups; those who minister alongside me, be they lay or ordained; and Imogen, our Parish Administrator.

As we look ahead to next year, one prayer which has been on my heart this year is LYCiG's (Leading Your Church into Growth) prayer for growth:

God of Mission, who alone brings growth to your Church. Send your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness. Help our church to grow in numbers, in spiritual commitment to you, and in service to our local community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Although there are many good things which lay ahead this year, I think that there will be several challenges too. Sadly, our efforts to reignite worship at Holy Cross have not gone as we had hoped, and our church finances are a constant source of anxiety. But I know that we can navigate these challenges, develop our successes, and be the family God calls us to be if we pray all the more. Prayer is the most important thing we can do. So I would like to invite you to our Prayer & Vision Day at 10am on Saturday 7th June, as we pray and discern together how we can be ever-more welcoming, inclusive, and caring, in the year ahead.

Every Blessing,

Michael

St Leonard's				
Sunday of the month	Service			
1 st	8am BCP Holy Communion	9:30am Parish Eucharist	5pm Delving Deeper	
2 nd	8am BCP Holy Communion	9:30am Parish Eucharist	6:30pm Choral Evensong	
3 rd	8am BCP Holy Communion	9:30am Parish Eucharist	5pm Pizza & Praise @Hythe Bay	
4 th	8am BCP Holy Communion	9:30am Parish Eucharist	11am Wholeness & Healing Service	6:30pm Choral Evensong
5 th	8am BCP Holy Communion	9:30am Parish Eucharist	11:30am Eucharist @ Holy Cross	

St Michael's Anglican Services	
Day of the month	Service
Every Wednesday	11am Anglican/Methodist Communion
2 nd Sunday	11am Anglican Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	11am Local arrangement

PCC Secretary's Report for APCM 17th May 2025

There have been seven PCC meetings since the APCM last year. These took place in May, July, September and November, 2024 and January and March 2025 with an extra meeting in April to finalise APCM matters.

Five Standing committee meetings were also held. These were in July, August and November 2024 and January and March in 2025.

Mary Tyler will be standing down from the PCC this year as her three year term has come to an end.

The Standing Committee still consists of the Rev Michael as chair, John and Helen as Churchwardens, Brian as Treasurer, David Owen and the PCC Secretary.

The various working groups are still meeting regularly and issuing reports for the PCC meetings.

It has been a busy year with lots of events happening which are mentioned in the various reports.

Annie Anderson stepped down from organizing the Church Flowers, and Angela Sprinks has taken over from her and has got together a band of helpers, who are willing and ready to do arrangements whenever needed. This is working out very well.

Sadly this will be my last APCM as I am stepping down as PCC Secretary this year. I have held the position for twenty years now and have seen lots of changes during that time. There have been four incumbents, namely: Brian Barnes, Tony Windross, Andrew Sweeney and now Michael, all of which have been a great help and support to me during their time. I shall very much miss the meetings and discussions and all the people I have been on the PCC with for all these years, but possibly not typing out all the minutes! After twenty years though, I feel it is time to step down and let someone else take over with perhaps slightly more computer knowledge than I have now. I would like to thank Imogen for all the administrative work she does.

So thank you to all of you for your support over the years. For getting reports and documents to me on time for all the meetings, and for all the times you have come forward when I have needed help and stepping in to help with the minutes on the few times I have had to miss a meeting. It has meant a lot and always been very much appreciated. Many thanks to you all.

Christine Blackman

Churchwardens Report

It is incredible to think another year has gone by! A year of continued worship and fellowship. This year there has been a focus on growth in our church- not only numerical growth but also missional and spiritual growth.

Week on week it is a delight to meet so many people through our collective worship and to welcome new people into our church family. This year it was also an absolute joy to welcome baby Evie into our church and to watch her grow. With her father now officially 'Vicar of Hythe' we continue to be truly blessed to have Michael 'at the helm'. (I am sure the Youth Group recognise the sailing analogy!!).

With growth has also brought changes and this year saw two significant changes with Mike Cox and Berkeley Hill taking on Emeritus Roles. Their individual contributions to the 'life of St Leonard's' were significant both in longevity and in impact. This year we have welcomed Aimee Babbs as our Youth Worker and Anita Jones as our new Musical Director.

Our Partnership with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) was launched in 2024 and they have been part of our parish events and prayers throughout the year. We look forward to this partnership continuing and growing.

As with most things in life teamwork is essential to success and our church community is no different – this comes across in all the reports included in our APCM documents. We are always so very grateful to those who give of their time and talents.

When it comes to thanks, there are so many that help us wardens to carry out our duties, the PCC (including our Treasurer and Parish Secretary), our Sexton and Verger, music makers, flower arrangers, cleaners, ringers, crypt stewards, review editorial team, worship leaders, intercessors and readers, servers, friends of St Leonard's, stewards at our churches, 101 Open Door staff, and to all of those attending our churches, for your warmth and friendship.

We also give thanks for our retired clergy who support St Leonard's and St Michael's; Revd Pam Clark, Very Revd Dr Michael Chandler and Revd Canon David Russell. Amongst other things their support allows Revd Michael to take his leave in the sure knowledge that our church family are in safe hands.

A final thanks goes to Revd Michael for his continued support and guidance; for his commitment to leading our church community in growing in faith and for his kindness and compassion.

Helen & John

Report from Fabric Working Group

Holy Cross Church

Last year we reported that there was a steady growth in worship at Holy Cross unfortunately despite the efforts of the Vicar and worship team numbers did not increase and the Praise services were transferred to Hythe Bay School. The building has been used by two community groups free of charge in return for supporting of our church activities.

Following on from Andrew Walters survey gutters have been cleared and the external vestry door replaced. We have also redecorated the front entrance timber doors.

East Kent College volunteer group spent time cleaning the building and grounds organised by Ruth Batchelor, who along with her sister organised a quiz night.

However, a recent quotation of £40,000 for resurfacing the roof indicates serious consideration needs to be given to the viability of this much-loved resource.

Once again, our thanks go Gwyn Batchelor who keeps a keen eye on the building throughout the year, to Lee for maintaining the grounds and cutting the Grass and to those who assist in keeping it clean and tidy.

Vergers House and Gardens are still being maintained and kept in good order by the residents.

Cost for the regular Landlord certificates for gas and electrical inspection and the replacement parts for the boiler were the only necessary expenditure.

St Michael's This property continues to be maintained by the Methodist church with a regular financial contribution from St Leonard's PCC as part of the Joint council agreement.

St Leonard's Parish Church

Following our church Architect Robert George quinquennial inspection at the end of May 2023 he has now set out the schedule of works to be carried out, subject to faculty approval, throughout this current year. This involves considerable work to designated stain glass windows and the accompanying stonemasonry and building and plasterwork to various areas. The total cost of which will be circa £60,000, the PCC along with the friends of St Leonard's will work together to find way that this can be funded.

A faculty was sought for the upgrading of the servery area and work will commence in May 2025, subject to faculty approval. This project is being underwritten also by the friends.

Access to West door

Investigation to how improvement could be made to access the west door was carried out during 2019 and put on hold during the lockdown period. This remains on the Quinquennial report as a desired rather than necessary work.

Tower Clock

Smiths of Derby carried out the agreed work on the tower clock face, which is now restored to its former glory. They were very efficient and a delight to work with.

Our thanks go to Brin, all sponsors including the friends and PCC for financing this project.

Church External: Tower Lighting

Now the clock face has been restored we would like to restore the Tower external flood lighting, along with better lighting leading from Oak Walk to West Door The cost of the Tower lighting is around £5,000 and we hope to launch and appeal shortly to see if we can get public support for funding.

Crypt

During the past year we have replaced the alarm system to the crypt. The work carried out last year to eradicate mould seems to have been successful. By redirecting water from the East side of the roof to a more suitable gulley may also help prevent damp. This work is scheduled in the building work above. Thanks go to Brin and team for all they do to continue to make this a safe and tidy space for visitors.

Water Ingress

During periods of heavy rain, water has been coming into the church in several places. Most of this we now know has been caused by blocked rainwater outlets and we are quietly confident that there are no major issues, other than a few missing tiles on the main roof. However, the covering to the flat roof of the choir vestry, may need to be replaced during the quinquennium.

Defective Wall Paint inside the Church.

Denis Frisby has carried out decoration to the East wall of the south transept and a small area to the West of the north transept both these areas have blended in well with the existing

paintwork. Denis has also carried out decoration of the Parvis and paint work to various areas of metalwork identified in the quintennial.

Church Heating.

Throughout the winter months 2022/2023, 2023/2024 with the agreement of the treasurer and PCC we ran the heating 24/7 the thermostat set to a constant ambient temperature inside the Church building – 16°C as this was agreed the most economical and efficient way of using the boilers. Apart from creating a ‘warm Space’, Berkeley Hill has pointed out that many of the Church’s musical assets deteriorate quickly when lower temperatures cause condensation, which also adversely affects the archives of sheet music. He said the expensive cost of repairs etc to these assets alone far outweighed the extra cost of keeping the air temperature in the building constant.

However, the winter of 2024/2025 has been very expensive and although ideally we would like this warm space to continue, we will have to find alternative ways of funding as our financial forecast may not be able to sustain it.

101 High Street Hythe

The High Street property is in good repair with no major work carried out during 2024. The Garden landscaped and generously funded, looks splendid and was well cared for by refugee labour from Napier Barracks, and John Langman who ensure the lawn stays under control Thank you to the other many, many volunteers that make this resource viable.

There is always a however! If we can find funding, the garden can be put to far better use, if we have an outside toilet, a refurbished kitchen (maisonette), tables, chairs, temporary canopy and outside lighting.

Servicing of all properties

The routine checks and servicing of boilers, fire extinguishers, lightning conductors, alarm systems and clock were all carried at on the duly appointed dates. Some minor adjustments to meet new regulations and requirements by our insurers were undertaken.

We are blessed with having a strong team of experts on our working party and my thanks go once again to the members of the working group: Berkeley Hill, Brin Hughes, Roger Taylor, Derek Maynard, Graham Johnson, Andrew Waters, Very Revd Michael Chandler; along with Robert George and Revd Michael Darkins for their wise council.

John Wren

Churchwarden

Tower Captain’s Report for 2024 including Tower Keeper’s Report

We have managed to ring 6 bells for most 09-30 services and occasionally for Evensong. We rang for the Vicar’s Institution & Induction, and also for both services on the day of Berkeley’s retirement. I have to thank Arthur and Linda King, (now Lyminge), for their continued support at practices as without their help, we would not achieve much. There were 4 weddings to ring for and we rang 8 bells for all these with help from other towers.

The bell installation is in good order and no repairs were required last year. Some previous work mentioned still remains outstanding. As a matter of some urgency, the upper stairway

lighting is not working.

A brief report but it sums up the situation at present.

Brian Butcher.
Tower Captain.

APCM Safeguarding Report 2024-25

As the new Safeguarding Officer for the parish my first task must be to thank Marilyn Johnson, who filled this post until November 2024 for her continued support and guidance over the last few months. She is without doubt a very hard act to follow, her commitment to the role has been second to none and her inside knowledge cannot be underestimated. Luckily, she has agreed I can have a hotline to her whenever I need help and advice.

I have completed all the necessary training for this new role and have been in regular contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to ensure I am able to access any further training and support I may need. This will include the Parish Safeguarding officer induction which will be available later in the year and regular update sessions.

All the parish safeguarding information has now been transferred to the Parish One Drive so that it is more accessible for anyone who needs it. This includes all training records and DBS records for those in positions of responsibility in the Parish. We have updated the health and safety policy and the safeguarding policy so that any ambiguity or confusing procedures and practices are now aligned.

We have also accessed the parish safeguarding data base. This is a Church of England checklist that allows us to self-assess our safeguarding compliance. This will be an ongoing task, but initial assessment shows that we are well on our way to reaching the standards expected. Our main developmental point appears to be training and ensuring DBS 's are regularly updated and checked.

So, we continue to review the safeguarding training of church members who are responsible for children or vulnerable adults in the parish. We have run two safeguarding training opportunities this year and nine members have accessed these events. I am now able to access the DBS referral documentation and can process members who require DBS for the work they are doing within the parish.

Thankfully the number of referrals to the diocesan safeguarding officer has been very low both for children and vulnerable adults within the parish this year. The advice we received was sound and assured us we were doing all we could to support these individuals. The issues around vulnerable adults and their capacity to make their own life choices remains a challenge for many of us within the parish but we can only follow the advice we are given. They were also able to give us some advice on how parish visitors should keep themselves safe while going about their duties.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any concerns or worries about anyone in our community. Safeguarding remains huge priority within St Leonards and hopefully the message that everyone has a responsibility for protecting the more vulnerable amongst us is at the forefront of work within the parish.

Carolyn Chivers

Hythe Parish Review Report

The Review continues to maintain, and even slightly increase, its circulation: around 150 copies of each issue are printed and a further 120 emailed to readers who thus access it without charge. As confidence has grown among our small team of volunteers, we have taken the decision to increase the number of issues per year from four to six, beginning with the most recent Lent/Easter edition for March/April 2025. With this increased capacity we are consciously aiming to look outward to the community of Hythe, as evidenced by Steve Williams' initiative in interviewing our Mayor for his 'Community spotlight' piece in this edition.

Many thanks to Steve, Imogen, and all those who contribute in any way to the continuing success of our magazine: our writers, distributors, advertisers and readers. We always welcome your comments and suggestions for new material.

Joanne Hill (editor)

St Leonard's Parish and Hythe Methodist Church Joint Council Meeting Report

Background

A legal Sharing Agreement between the Trustees for Methodist Purposes and the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance Church of England came into effect on 1 August 2011 to cover matters such as ownership, rights of use, maintenance and other responsibilities associated with the St Michael's Methodist-Anglican Church Centre (StMMACC) premises. The Methodist Church retains full ownership of its premises but the common costs of management (e.g. heating, lighting, cleaning, redecoration, maintenance, minor repairs and insurance, together with the costs of any agreed improvements) are shared in the ratio one-third by the PCC and two-thirds by the Methodist Church Council, as this represented approximately the ratio of the sizes of the two congregations at the outset.

The Anglican-Methodist Joint Council (JC), constituted in accordance with the formal Sharing Agreement, was set up with equal Anglican and Methodist representation to manage the day-to-day activities of the two congregations. The Vicar, Churchwardens and Treasurer of the PCC are ex officio members of the JC; the PCC appoints two other persons to be additional members, Brinley Hughes, Secretary of the JC until recently, and Myra Gill as representative of the regular Anglican worshippers at StMMACC. Brin has since stood down as Secretary having fulfilled this role almost continuously since the inaugural joint service on 2 October 2011. Susanne Russell has now taken over as his successor in this capacity.

The JC has in the past pursued exploratory discussions concerning a possible more far-reaching agreement in the form of a Local Ecumenical Partnership between our two churches, but this has not been followed up since the Methodist Council voted against moving further in this direction.

Joint Council meetings

The JC has met four times since the last APCM – on 26 June 2024, 25 September 2024, 8 January 2025 and 2 April 2025 – under the alternating chairmanship of the Hythe Methodist Minister (Rev Adrian Roux) and Rev Michael Darkins.

Finance and building improvement projects

The Methodist Church and St Leonard's PCC pay in regular contributions to a joint bank account (in accordance with ratios agreed in the Sharing Agreement) to cover common costs

of maintenance of the building (which remains the property of the Methodist Church). The JC agreed that the annual budget for 2024-25 should be increased from £16,000 to £20,000, the contributing ratio would remain the same, and that St Leonard's would contribute £5,000 and the Methodists £15,000. All expenditures have been within budget.

The JC has received regular progress updates (from Alex Fitzgerald, Chair of the Methodist Property Committee) on building maintenance activities, which during the past year have included electrical repairs; further improvements to the audio and IT systems; installation of a fully automatic defibrillator on the outside of the School Room wall; provision of timber garden boxes at the rear and front of the building; miscellaneous routine repairs; consideration of possible options for improving the acoustics in the School Room; and exploration of further long-term options for specialist surface protection of the external Kentish ragstone walls.

Worship, ministry and shared facilities

The JC works harmoniously in the coordination and planning of combined worship and related events throughout the past year, including principal Church festivals. A good working relationship exists with our Methodist colleagues, whose cooperation, fellowship and friendship continue to be greatly valued and appreciated. Coordination with other local churches within the framework of Churches Together in Hythe and Saltwood continues.

Brin Hughes, (past) Joint Council Secretary

Elham Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod membership consists of the deanery clergy who are ex-officio plus lay members from each parish. Our current members are John Wren, David Owen and myself. A typical meeting consists of a talk by a visiting speaker followed by any deanery business and notices and details of any events parishes wish to promote. Since our last APCM the Deanery Synod has met four times.

In May at St Paul's Sandgate, Nigel Collins, Diocesan Lay Ministries Advisor gave a presentation covering the opportunities available including Reader Ministry, ALM's, Lay Funeral Ministry and Anna Chaplaincy. He is also responsible for the Deepening Discipleship courses. Several people present shared their experiences of these ministries.

In July at Lympne there was a presentation by Rev Joyce Addison, Diocesan Environment Officer who put forward the diocese response to climate change and suggested individual churches response to Net Zero 2030.

In November at Holy Trinity Folkestone the speaker was Rev Estella Last, outgoing Bishop's Advisor for Women's Ministry. She explained how women's ministry had evolved over the years and provided a personal testimony.

In February at St Peters, Folkestone there was a presentation by Rev Jo Richards, Chaplain to the homeless in Canterbury.

Brian Bishop

Churchyard Volunteers Report

For many years past the St Leonard's churchyard has been closed to further burials with responsibility for maintenance transferred to the local authority (currently Folkestone & Hythe District Council), which focuses mainly on mowing the grass in both the main and the extension sections. However, a small but dedicated team of volunteers from amongst the local community meets regularly for a work-in session on Wednesday mornings to ensure the churchyard is kept trim, tidy and an attractive green space within the Hythe conservation area. The volunteers' activities include trimming hedges, pruning shrubs, cutting back and disposal of foliage and other vegetation, raking leaves and mown grass, weeding around graves, re-erecting fallen grave kerbstones, planting bulbs (another glorious display of daffodils this spring!), and general gardening.

For the past four years the grass in selected areas of the main churchyard, especially on the central bank, has been left unmown to encourage the spread of wild flowers, which in turn help our bumblebees and other insect pollinators. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust has provided seasonal signage boards that are installed in the churchyard providing information on wild flowers that can be spotted locally.

A small Churchyard Improvements Fund is available to meet the cost of occasional tree works in the churchyard, purchase of new gardening tools and equipment, and purchase of plants. However, we are increasingly concerned about the dilapidating structure of the old mortuary building in the south-east corner of the extension churchyard where garden tools, wheelbarrows, flower stands, ladders and wooden crosses are stored. This matter has been brought to the attention of the Fabric Working Group and PCC, since the future of the building itself needs to be reviewed.

The churchyard work is satisfying and an enjoyable social activity. However, our current workforce is ageing, beginning to creak and would welcome younger able-bodied help. If anyone would like to join this small team of churchyard volunteers – if only on an occasional basis – contact Brin Hughe

Brin Hughes

Financial Review 2024

Our total current account income was £112,944 compared to £124,86 in 2023. Income has been falling considerably for both planned giving and money in the collections. This is largely due to the fact that the number of people giving regularly has fallen, some have passed away, others have had changes of circumstances. This of course has a knock-on effect to the amount we can reclaim through gift aid. A reduced number of weddings and funerals has meant that our fee income has also dropped.

Current account expenditure for 2024 was £146,979 down a little on £148,905 in 2023. The main reason for the slight reduction in expenditure is we paid less for the utilities, heating and lighting at cheaper rates than in 2023.

The PCC continues its wish to pay the Parish Share in full and the amount requested by the diocese was £88,439. This resulted in a current account deficit for the year of £34,035 which had to be met from our reserves, namely rent from Vergers and unrestricted legacies. The Parish Share requirement for 2025 is £92,854 and my financial forecast shows a deficit of £41,229.

The remaining historical Parish Share arrears of £40,000 was cleared in 2024 by the parish paying £20,000 from the reserves and the diocese writing off the remaining £20,000 so our Parish Share is completely up to date.

The running costs associated with 101 High Street are now mainly met by 101 Open Door Community Interest Company, so these do not appear in the PCC accounts, although the PCC contributed £2,085 of capital expenditure during the year.

One area of increased income was the crypt. An increase in the admission charge contributed to income for the year of £21,371.

In September we received a legacy of £50,000 from the late Dr Pat Chipping.

In October we employed a Youth Pastoral Assistant, Aimee, on a twelve-month contract. Three quarters of the cost of this is being met by a grant from the diocese and the National Church.

The total of unrestricted reserves at the end of the year was £283,494 of which £79,130 is retained in cash and £204,364 is invested.

In conclusion I would like to thank the members of the Finance Working Group for their support, Steve Williams for his help with extracting money from our magazine advertisers and to Ken Clark for his advice and independent examination of the accounts.

Brian Bishop

Hythe Parish Churches - General Account

Income and Expenditure for the Year

Receipts	Actual 2023	Forecast 2024	Actual 2024	Forecast 2025
Church Boxes, Pricket Stand & Online	6,290	6,250	7,233	7,250
Collections: Holy Cross	354	1,000	150	100
Collections: St. Leonard's	7,398	7,500	6,047	6,500
Collections: St. Michaels	1,585	1,500	1,588	1,500
Collections: Occasional Offices	2,276	2,000	608	750
Gift Aid Tax Refund	11,221	10,000	9,387	9,500
Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS)	3,251	2,000	2,258	2,250
Planned giving	49,451	47,000	44,710	46,000
Crypt - see note 2, p17	14,885	20,000	21,371	21,000
Donations	3,735	4,000	2,534	3,000
Fees - see note 4, p17	16,576	12,000	11,751	11,000
Magazines/Books-see note 5, p18	2,237	2,250	1,760	2,000
Miscellaneous Income	446	500	1,424	1,000
Refunds	0	0	0	0
Heating Grant	2,406	0	0	0
Fund Raising Events	950	1,000	2,123	3,000
101 High Street	1,800	0	0	0
TOTAL INCOME FOR GENERAL A/C =	124,861	117,000	112,944	114,850
Expenditure				
Administration - see note 5, p18	2,183	2,250	1,618	1,750
Communion Wine, Wafers, Candles etc.	1,311	1,000	1,378	1,300
Crypt - see note 2, p17	838	500	30	100
Diocesan Quota	82,881	88,439	88,439	92,854
Fees Expenses - see note 4, p17	11,258	9,000	7,678	7,000
Miscellaneous	1,361	2,000	4,819	3,000
Organ/Piano Maintenance	0	0	343	800
Repairs & Maintenance	1,780	2,000	1,682	2,000
Staff costs - Music	6,719	6,900	7,043	11,400
Evangelism/Retreats/Spiritual Growth - see note 3 p17	243	400	216	300
St Michaels Church Centre Running Costs	4,000	4,000	4,500	5,000
Utilities/Insurance - see note 1, p17	32,597	28,000	26,505	27,000
Online Streaming Costs	420	450	477	475
Clergy Expenses	2,149	2,500	1,647	2,500
Charity Donations	595	0	0	0
Bank & Card Reader Charges	570	575	604	600
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR GENERAL A/C =	148,905	148,014	146,979	156,079
Excess of Income/-expenditure	-24,044	-31,014	-34,035	-41,229

Wholeness and Healing Ministry

As with the tradition held for many decades at St Leonard's parish we continue our regular monthly service of Healing and Wholeness.

Following the 09:30 service at St Leonard's there is a time to hear and feel God's message of healing through prayer, music, silence and anointing with oil.

A guided service booklet is provided, and sometimes there may be a prayer station to further aid personal prayer. There is freedom to observe, take part, or sit in silent prayer. This short confidential period of profound prayer can help to bring back balance and coping strategies to personal issues; give support through times of dis-ease; and help connect with God at a time of crisis or doubt and also times of gratitude and thanks.

Held in St Edmunds' chapel, near the candle stand, usually on the 4th Sunday of the month, it starts during coffee time after the service, around 11:00.

If you would like to know more, ask Penny Mattocks or Revd Michael.

Christ's love is for everybody.

Penny Mattocks

Report on Choirs and Music of St Leonard's - APCM 2025

I started my role as Musical Director at the beginning of March 2025. From 2024, I worked with the Worship band.

Pattern of services

The pattern of evening services has been revised. 1st Sunday, Band Worship (to be renamed Delving Deeper), 2nd Sunday, Evensong, 3rd Sunday, Pizza and Praise, 4th Sunday, Evensong.

The morning pattern of services remains the same.

Choirs

The boys and girls choir have been merged to form a Youth Choir, with rehearsals on a Wednesday evening. The Youth Choir will sing on the first Sunday of the month for the Family Service and the two Evensongs each month. The Adults mixed choir also rehearse on a Wednesday evening and will sing for the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sunday Eucharists, and the two Evensongs.

Both choirs will continue to support the additional services throughout the year.

New anthem books have been purchased for the choirs to give them the opportunity to explore some modern anthems.

Worship band

The worship band has had mixed success this year. It has been good to explore some modern worship songs with different instrumentation. Our biggest success has been Pizza and Praise

at Hythe Bay School. We have encouraged the young people to play instruments and to sing with the band in the service.

Hythe Bay Band Club

Since the start of January, I have been working with a group of children at Hythe Bay School to form a worship band. I have taught them to sing new worship songs and to develop instrumental skills on ukulele, drums, xylophone and keyboards. Recent rehearsals have been very positive, and I am hopeful that they will be able to support the morning worship at the school and our pizza and praise services.

Organ and Choral Scholars

Thomas, the organ scholar, has decided to stop at the start of April due to exam pressures. I understand that he has been a good support for music in the church and would like to thank him for all his hard work and wish him well for the future.

We currently have two Choral Scholars, Isaac and Emilia. They support the morning Eucharist Services with the mixed choir.

The Onward Charity will support further singers and organists. I plan to advertise this in due course.

Outgoing Director of Music

Finally, I would like to thank the outgoing Director of Music, Berkeley Hill for his long service to St Leonard's Church.

Anita Jones

Musical Director at St Leonard's

Crypt Committee Report

The Crypt Committee has met only once since the last APCM – on 17 March 2025 to review the past year's visitor season and to plan for the 2025 season. Its current membership comprises Rev Michael Darkins, Brin Hughes, Mike Pearson and Yvonne Morris. The Committee's main business is to establish visitor and stewarding arrangements, implement improvements to the display of information, and to promote and facilitate research and other academic activities.

Past visitor season

Nineteen volunteers performed crypt steward duties regularly last year with 15 names on the standby list. Rostering of crypt stewards generally worked well, although some inevitable short notice changes occasionally had to be accommodated, which is why a list of standby volunteers has been so important.

The crypt/ossuary was opened to visitors at Easter weekend 2024 and then from 1 May onwards until the end of September. It was also occasionally opened to visitors at other times in response to specific requests, including from tour groups, and during special events such as Halloween, Christmas Fair and Board Games days in the church. The total income from admissions and souvenir sales during 2024 came to the splendid total of £21,371, comprising £11,263 cash, £9,642 card payments and £466 from group and miscellaneous visits. This was an increase of more than 40% on the previous year's comparable total of £14,799 and a significant and highly welcome contribution towards meeting the church's

running and maintenance costs. The increase was largely attributable to an increase in the admission charges to £5 for adults and £1 for each child (previously £3 and 50p respectively) with scarcely any visitors being deterred by the new charges. Grateful thanks once again to all who gave time and energy to being crypt stewards. Feedback from visitors has been generally very positive, many having expressed their warm appreciation for the experience of seeing and learning about our collection of skulls and bones from informative guides.

Crypt opening hours and stewarding arrangements

The crypt opened to visitors for the first time in 2025 at Easter weekend (on Saturday 19 April and Monday 21 April) and is now open regularly from 1 May through until the end of September. Opening times are again 11.00am–1.00pm and 2.00–4.00pm each day, except Sundays when the crypt will be open only during the afternoon. We also anticipate other occasions during the late autumn and winter seasons when the crypt/ossuary will be opened for special events. As in previous years, we depend on the availability of volunteer stewards to be able to maintain these opening times. Admission charges remain at £5 for adults, £1 for each child or £10 for family groups (two adults plus one or more children aged 16 or under). Visitors – especially those taking photographs – are encouraged to donate more generously.

Pre-season refresher training sessions for volunteer stewards took place this year on Saturday 12 and Monday 14 April. These were well attended and regarded as important reminders on procedural, money handling, security (a new alarm system has been installed), safety and safeguarding aspects, and to receive an update on research activities. All volunteers are also required to complete Basic Safeguarding Awareness training.

The loyalty and dedication of crypt stewards are greatly appreciated. Most have confirmed their willingness to continue in this role in 2025; a few newcomers have also been recruited to join the rota, which involves spending a morning or afternoon two-hour session once a fortnight (or more frequently!) helping in this way. Anyone wishing to learn more about what is involved should contact Brin Hughes.

Crypt fabric

Measures are planned to mitigate the recurring problem of damp in the undercroft chamber, including prevention of further water ingress from the passageway beneath the external buttresses by repointing between the wall and paving stones and ensuring the slope of the paving allows for rainwater to drain towards the roadway. Suitable preservative treatment of the wooden main doors is also being contemplated. We hope these works will get under way fairly soon.

Research activities

The collection of skulls and bones in the ossuary continues to attract academic and scientific interest, although no organised student groups from either the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church University have taken place during the past year (partly due to cutbacks in funding for relevant academic courses). We hope such visits will resume since we are always pleased to welcome such visitors whose feedback from subject specialists adds to the enhancement of our knowledge and understanding of the origins and living circumstances of the humans whose bones are preserved in the sanctuary of the St Leonard's Church ossuary. In each case, suitable donations are usually agreed beforehand.

My warmest thanks go to members of the Crypt Committee for their dedicated support in ensuring efficient, informative and friendly arrangements for visitors to our skulls and bones collection in the ossuary.

Brin Hughes
Crypt Committee Secretary

Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School and Children's Centre Nursery

Anchored by God, we strive to teach children to be confident, connected, and creative through outstanding teaching and care. We show our love, tolerance, forgiveness, and compassion, not just by talking about them but living them each day of our lives.

***"We should love people not only with words and talk but by actions and true caring."
1 John 3: 18***

Our vision is to be a Spirit- filled community where every individual flourishes and is respected.

Our Christian values allow us to be an inclusive school which, through our learning, strives to give everyone life in all its fullness.

Within our local and global culture of continuous learning and reflection, we aim to deliver a broad and ambitious curriculum to all children in our care.

This year, the relationship between Hythe Bay and St Leonard's Church continues to grow. A key highlight has been the monthly Sunday afternoon 'Pizza and Praise' worship that the school have supported Michael with offering to our community, hosted in the school hall. This uplifting and joyful worship opportunity would not happen without the hard work of Michael, Anita and Aimee and we are truly grateful.

Led by the new youth worker, Aimee Babbs, our Worship Club on a Wednesday lunchtime continues to grow. At Christmas, they led a whole-school Christingle Service, which everyone enjoyed and they will be leading a whole school worship for Easter. Children continue to lead parts of the daily worship enthusiastically, especially lighting the candles and offering prayers. Aimee also supports the school by leading a whole school worship once a week, which the children love!

Anita and Aimee have started a well-attended music club to support our children with learning to play a variety of instruments and to learn new worship songs. We look forward to incorporating the band into our daily act of whole school worship in the future.

Hythe Bay has had several services at the church this year. Our Harvest Festival was a joyful celebration, and our Carol Service saw St Leonard's Church packed with children and their families. The Y6 Leavers Service and barbecue last July was a huge success, with each leaver receiving a bible from the Church.

Religious Education in the school continues to inspire children to explore and learn more about religion. While the focus is mainly on Christianity, the children also get the chance to learn about other world faiths. Church members help with RE teaching by visiting the school, talking with the children, and organizing Church School Days, which are always a big hit with both the kids and staff.

Michael is a blessing to our school community. He regularly leads worship, supports RE lessons, and runs interactive sessions at the church. He is always there to help the children develop a deeper understanding of the Christian faith in action.

Thank you to all the members of St Leonard's who support us here at Hythe Bay.

Rebecca Prout

Youth Ministry Report

Firstly, I apologise for the length of my report, I aim to keep it short and sweet.

I have read the report from last year and I am pleased to say we have continued to have some incredible experiences over the last year, and I hope we have continued to grow and flourish together.

Our youth nights have continued to enjoy new things together including making pizzas and for the first time ever cooking pizzas in the church. We have enjoyed making biblically accurate angels in both pumpkin form and paper form. All the youth nights have been full of fun, laughter and friendship.

Our Tea and Theology group has continued to ask and answer some interesting questions. We have explored advent, lent, why God allows suffering and other topics. We have had some of our youth go forward for confirmation and it was a blessing to have this happen.

2 of the highlights we have had so far this year are our winter sleepout for the Rainbow Centre and our sailing weekend with the Morning Star Trust.

The winter sleepout was a success with over £1,700 raised for the Rainbow centre. The young people enjoyed time around the fire pit and making bridges showing how easily things can fall apart, then spending the night in the rather cold church enjoying the sounds it offers including people snoring.

Thank you to everyone who sponsored our young people and for all those who helped on the night.

The sailing weekend saw 15 of us (4 adults and 11 young people) set off from Hythe Bay and set a course for Hayling Island in Hampshire. Once again, the young people had to surrender their phones to minimal complaints (except about loss of Duolingo and snap chat streaks). We bedded down on our 3 boats and then set sail the following morning to the Isle of Wight. Our young people once again helped hoist the sails, did the cooking and steered the ships. Luckily this time the Vicar was not worse for wear, but the Youth Worker was (although the vicar was still teased about last time, while the youth worker received sympathy.) We enjoyed morning prayer and a sunrise Eucharist on the crisp mornings which was an absolute blessing.

There was much joy, laughter and fellowship shared on the weekend where we learnt about loving service and what this means to us and in the bible. We did this through bible study and sharing dance battles across the boats (debates about which boat won that are ongoing)

This year has seen my arrival as the Youth Worker, a role that I am enjoying very much, and I have been made to feel very welcome at St Leonards. So, thank you so much for welcoming me.

It has also seen the start of Pizza and Praise, our monthly relaxed service at Hythe Bay which has been a wonderful success and something we hope to continue to grow. Finally we have reinstated the Children's Area at the back of the church and hope that this is put to regular use by children of all ages, not just on a Sunday but other times as well.

Over the next year we hope to grow the number of young people attending our Sunday morning services and other events and constantly look at ways we can do this.

Thank you so much to everyone who has supported our youth ministry over the past year, through helping with all we've done to keeping us in your prayers. It is a joy to see the young people of St Leonard's grow in their faith and understanding of Jesus and we can all help to allow even more growth in the years to come.

Aimee
Youth Worker

101 High Street /Open Door Project

Overview

Following its opening by the Bishop of Dover; the Open-Door project has grown in stature and viability. 101 the High Street was purchased by The Parish of St. Leonard Hythe as a major part of its mission and outreach to all who live within the parish and beyond. By agreement the day to day running of the facility was delegated to the 101 Open Door CIC (Open Door) via a memorandum of understanding. The property comprises: of a double fronted shop onto the High Street which is staffed by volunteers selling local arts and crafts, an inner office complete with Wi-Fi for the use of voluntary, support organisations. A larger meeting area with seating for up to 24 people which can be adapted for use as a conference/social or exhibition space with both Toilet and small kitchen. Above the shop is a Maisonette providing 3 offices on the upper floor (currently used by a Charitable Care facility) a large meeting office space and kitchen on the lower floor. There is approximately 80 M2 garden area maintained for social and fund-raising events.

The second full year of opening as a community hub has seen continued awareness in the community of what the 'Open Door Project' is trying to achieve. The volunteers working as our ambassadors and sales personnel have been fantastic in their support to one another and making the shop viable. With 2 staff volunteers working either the morning or afternoon shift we can remain open six days a week. There is always a steady supply of arts and craft to sell and there is always a good display of this in the retail window. Stephen Mills has been fantastic in keeping our stock control and retail finances up to date from the outset. Gill Cox manages to keep the staffing Rota up to date but will always look forward to welcoming new volunteers, and with Nettie Wren (as well as making marmalade) ensure we have someone on hand to open and close

Community Hub continues to attract some 10 volunteer organisations with a wide range of expertise and care. We are grateful to Sue Sleet and Hythe Probus club who donated £1000 to Open Door Project as part of her presidential challenge.

This money will be used to fund community wellbeing and life skills training events at 101 Open Door have also built up a good working relationship with Environmental groups, Refugee support, police community liaison etc.

The Church/Community window space is also being well used, if you have skills in window dressing or artistic skills, please ask about joining the team.

The success of this enterprise is credited to the tremendous volunteer group with shared leadership by some of these volunteers who have gained experience in various fields of administration and retail throughout their working lives.

However, the success of all of these activities are made possible through the fantastic organisational skills of Laura Taylor who has been a great support to the directors and staff.

Thank you also to the PCC

John Wren
On behalf of Open Door CIC

Electoral Roll Report

Every six years a new Church Electoral Roll is prepared for each parish; this has taken place this year. All members of the congregations of St. Leonard's, St. Michael's and Holy Cross, including those who attend online, were invited to reapply to be on the Electoral Roll.

As of 1st April 2025 the total on the Electoral Roll stands at 137.

Imogen Taylor

The Parish of St. Leonard, Hythe

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting held at St. Leonard's Church at 11.30am
On Sunday 14th April 2024

PRESENT : Rev'd Michael Darkins
John Wren and Helen Waymouth (Churchwardens)
Brian Bishop (Treasurer)

Penny Mattocks	Scott Mattocks	Shirley Bates
John Howard	Jane Spencer	Janette Wren
Maureen Howard	Jan Galbraith	Jan Mathews
Roger Taylor	Imogen Taylor	Elizabeth Wright
Pamela Clark	Alison Brett	Annabel Syring
Christopher Cooper	Joan Devenney	Judith Alderton
James Bond	Janet Writer	Gillian Vine
Geoff German	Rosemary Walls	Mike Cox
Gill Cox	Gillian Jones	Christine Smith
Patrick Clark	Linda Langman	John Langman
Jan Limb	Audrey Mattock	Ruth Hickey
Roger Tyson	Christine White	Joanne Hill
Carol Carden	Mary Tyler	Steve Jones
Brian Bishop		

Total Present : 41

APOLOGIES

Dudley Shipton	Judith Paul	Jenny Brandon
Brin Hughes	Derek Maynard	Sue Bethel
Elizabeth Epps	Marilyn Johnson	Gwyn Batchelor
June le Maitre	Myra Gill	Isolde Swinfin
Valerie Cullen	Linda Writer	Cat Allen
Isaac Jones	Christine Blackman	

Total Apologies 17

Michael opened the meeting with Prayer at 11.45am

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK FOR THE MEETING

As the PCC Secretary could not attend, Imogen Taylor was appointed as clerk for the Vestry Meeting and following APCM.

ELECTION OF CHURCHWARDENS

Both John Wren and Helen Waymouth were nominated by Geoff German and seconded by Alison Brett . They both agreed to stand and there being no other nominees, were elected for the forthcoming term.

DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

This would be held on Saturday 17th May in St. Leonard's Church at 6pm

The Parish of St. Leonard, Hythe
Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held at St. Michael's Church
On Sunday 14th April 2024 at 11am

Present

As listed in Vestry Minutes

Apologies for Absence

As listed in Vestry Minutes

2.Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 30th April 2023

Jan Galbraith proposed that the above minutes be recorded as a true and accurate copy. This was seconded by Carol Carden and voted unanimously.

3. Matters Arising - There were no matters arising.

4. Presentation of Electoral Roll

Every six years a new Church Electoral Roll has to be prepared for each Parish. All members of the congregations of St. Leonard's, St. Michael's and Holy Cross were invited to reapply to be on the Electoral Roll. As at 15th March 2024 the total on the electoral roll stood at 127. Imogen reported that next year in 2025, all members will need to reapply.

5. Election of Members to the PCC

Berkeley Hill, Penny Mattocks, Brinley Hughes, Steve Jones and Roger Taylor were standing down from the PCC this year having served their three year term, and were thanked by Michael.

There were five nominations for the PCC for the coming year, namely:

Alison Brett, Gillian Jones, Gwyn Batchelor, Christine White and Ali Chambers

All five nominees were approved and elected unanimously onto the PCC

6. Brief Churchwardens' Report

John thanked everyone for their support during the year and volunteered support for Rev Michael and Cat, as we all welcome the new addition to the Vicarage and Church family.

7. Priest in Charge's Report

Thanks were extended to the Churchwardens for their work and support during the past year. Rev Michael stated that he was inspired by the number of new faces in the church community which is growing and welcoming, making new friends, brothers and sisters in Christ. He extended his thanks to all for contributing to being a welcoming community.

The next Vision Day will be on June 15th and the theme will be "Welcome". It will start with breakfast at 09.30 and the meeting will be held between 10.00 and 12.00.

8. Annual Reports – order as listed on Contents page

The below reports had been submitted to the APCM

Priest in Charge		Rev'd Michael Darkins
PCC Secretary	-	Christine Blackman
Churchwardens	-	John Wren/Helen Waymouth
Property and Fabric	-	John Wren
Ringers	-	Brian Butcher
Safeguarding	-	Marilyn Johnson
Hythe Parish Review	-	Joanne Hill
St. Leonard's & Methodist Joint Council		Brin Hughes
Elham Deanery Synod	-	Brian Bishop
Churchyard Volunteers	-	Brin Hughes
Financial Review	-	Brian Bishop
Parish General Account	-	Brian Bishop
Healing & Wholeness	-	Penny Mattocks
Choirs & Music of St. Leonard's	-	Berkeley Hill
Crypt	-	Brin Hughes
Hythe Bay School	-	Carolyn Chivers/ Luke Haisell
Youth Ministry	-	Rev'd Michael Darkins
101 High Street	-	John Wren
101 Play Reading Group	-	Michael Hale
Electoral Roll	-	Imogen Taylor

There were no questions arising from the reports

9. Vision

Rev Michael referred to the Vision Day held last year where the mission statement for the church was created and which is being lived up to; namely “ We aim to be an ever-more welcoming, inclusive and caring Christian community that reaches out to all, thankful to God who draws us together and gives us life in all its fullness.” The statement was discerned together and is for review.

How have we lived our vision?

- The Pastoral group have visited care homes and held tea for residents. (Mary Tyler)
- Inspired by the services at Holy Cross and developing different forms of worship services. (Penny Mattock)
- Worshipping together in the different Churches and online – being open to all.

Does the vision still reflect our mission statement? Annabel Syring proposed and Penny Mattock seconded that it did. Audrey Mattocks proposed that a social event should be held at Holy Cross to raise awareness with the community in the Palmarsh area.

The 15th and 16th June would be a Welcome weekend with the Vision Day on Saturday and a different form of worship on Sunday 16th.

Rev Michael also suggested that Safeguarding training for all would be encouraged to ensure that all our activities were safe.

10. Partnership with MAF (Helen Waymouth).

There would be a 12 month partnership in conjunction with Hythe Bay School. on the weekend of 12th -14th July. MAF will bring one of their aircraft to the school site and they and the school would lead the service on the Sunday. The aim is to share information and raise the profile of MAF in the community.

11.Presentation of Accounts and Appointment of Auditors

Brian noted that the accounts were available in print in the Churches and online on our website.

He said Income was £124,000 and expenditure £142,000 with the balance being met from reserves. Income is falling but expenditure was under control. The inflationary lift through the Parish giving scheme was proving helpful. The debt in the Parish share is £102,000, 50% of this was being written off by the Diocese and the balance was on course to be paid off.

Admission charges in the crypt have increased and £700 was taken over the Easter weekend which is promising.

An anonymous donation of £30,000 has been received of which £10,000 has been allocated to youth work and the balance to mission.

There were no questions.

Appointment of Auditor. Mr Ken Clark was proposed as independent examiner and seconded by John Howard.

12. AOB

The Deanery Synod representatives were elected as follows:

David Owen – Proposed by John Wren and seconded by Gillian Cox

Brian Bishop – Proposed by John Wren and seconded by Gillian Cox

John Wren - Proposed by Gillian Cox and seconded by Helen Waymouth

Geoff German informed the meeting of the Ride and Stride event to take place on 14th September this year. He asked for volunteers at the 3 churches to welcome participants and also suggested that people may like to take part in this fundraising event.

John Wren referred to Rev Michael's appointment as Priest in Charge and the great contribution Rev Michael has made to our Church life, for which he received thanks and applause. Helen Waymouth referred to Rev Michael's approaching annual leave and paternity leave, assuring him of the Church community's support.

Imogen Taylor was thanked for her contribution as Parish Administrator and for taking the minutes today.

The church community was thanked for their contributions and support.

The meeting closed at 12.30.