

PARISH OF FINDON, CLAPHAM AND  
PATCHING

# Reports to the 2025 APCM



Sunday 25th May 2025 – 10.45am  
St John the Baptist Church, Findon

<b>Vicar's Report:</b>	Reverend Helena Buqué
<b>Findon Church Warden's Report:</b> (St John the Baptist):	Simon Knights
<b>Clapham Church Wardens' Report</b> (St Mary the Virgin):	Sian Fletcher and Maggie Somerset
<b>Patching Church Warden's Report</b> (St John the Divine):	Kath Hutchinson
<b>Belfry Report:</b>	Adrian Riches
<b>Deanery Synod Report:</b>	John Haskey
<b>Electoral Roll Report:</b>	Maggie Somerset
<b>Home Group Report:</b>	Jean Burden
<b>Messy Church</b>	Hilary Langford
<b>Mission and Outreach Report</b> <b>Worship and Praise Services</b>	Graham Langford
<b>Safeguarding Report:</b> (Findon, Clapham and Patching):	Ann Hollyhomes
<b>Treasurer's / Finance Team Report:</b>	Ian Hollyhomes/Irene Adams

## VICAR'S REPORT

This report comes with very mixed emotions, as it is the last report I will write in the Parish for the APCM as your Vicar, as I will have retired by this time next year.

I start by thanking you all for all the support you have given me in my role over the 13 years I have been with you. Nobody knows what the future holds for us, individually or as a worshipping community, but my prayer for you all is that you continue to grow in faith as you serve God together in this place, trusting that he holds the past, present and future safe in his hands. Colin will continue in his ministry here and I know you will all support him from January 2026 as he continues the Parish ministry here single handed. Many of you have experienced a Parish Vacancy before, so you know how important it is for everyone to work together, offering your personal gifts with humility.

This has been a challenging year in many ways, with the loss of a number of our faithful worshippers or their family members, and my prayers are with everyone who has lost someone dear to them this past year. I cannot name everyone, but I must acknowledge the long and faithful support Pauline Prior gave to us as a Parish and particularly to Patching Church and the village community there up to her sudden death in January this year. As PCC member and Churchwarden, and with her great musical contribution to both Clapham and Patching churches, leading the choir for many years, as well as for her friendship, she is much missed. In June, Patching had already lost Mary Best, a stalwart of the choir, longstanding PCC member and a talented church flower arranger. In Findon, we lost our lovely Bell Captain, Barbara Harbut in June, then Anne Brooks in August, who like Pauline had served the Parish in many ways until her health deteriorated.

It has been a busy year, with 10 weddings, 13 baptisms, 20 funerals and interment of 10 people's ashes in one of our churchyards. We are here to support you all at every stage of life, the joys and the sorrows, and I couldn't do all this on my own. There are many people who deserve to be thanked for all they do, and I always hesitate to name any for fear of missing someone out, but this year I do feel I have several thanks to offer personally, with apologies for anyone I miss out, so here goes!

Thank you to Colin for all he does to support the ministry and mission of our Parish, for his patience with my very different style of working to his! Thank you to Rev. Nancy Ford for her support and willingness to stand in and cover services. Thanks also to Evelyn, our Sacristan and Verger. Despite ongoing health issues, as well as losing her husband Denis in May last year, Evelyn has continued to support the work of the Parish, always ensuring that consumable supplies are ordered in good time for all three churches. Many thanks to Wendy, our Administrator, for all her support in the Office and for helping me to stay organised - not an easy task! The number of weddings we hold produce sometimes seemingly endless emails and without Wendy's support, I'd spend most of my days online. Technology plays an increasing role in our work and I also thank Liz Henderson for maintaining the Parish Website so efficiently, and, along with Wendy, for the great slides we use in our worship at Findon most weeks.

Thank you as always to the Churchwardens, Simon, Kath, Sian and Maggie, for their support and sterling work in maintaining the ancient buildings and their contents – an ongoing challenge, especially with our diminishing finances! Michael had to step down from his role as Treasurer due to health issues towards the end of 2024 and as well as thanking him for all he has done, I record here our thanks to Ian Hollyhomes, Irene Adams and Alan Holmes for all their hard work in taking on the preparation of the annual accounts for the auditor and making sure cash is banked and bills

paid promptly. David Peskett will be taking on the role of Treasurer after the APCM, with the support of what has become our Finance Team. Being a Church Treasurer is a vital but extensive role for a volunteer and as a PCC we decided that it was best to share some of the responsibility across a group of people (the Finance Team) rather than resting on one individual. Thanks also to Claire Kersley for her part in claiming the Gift Aid from donations; another time consuming but vital part of our finances as a whole. As always, heartfelt thanks to both the Friends of St John the Baptist and the Friends of Clapham and Patching without whose fun fundraising events we would really struggle with the maintenance of our buildings.

Thank you to those who keep our churches clean and tidy and to the talented flower arrangers, those working week in week out and those who support them at festival times through the year. Thanks to all who support the mission and outreach of our Parish, Irene for all she does in so many areas of Parish life and as our Authorised Lay Minister, Graham Langford for all his organisational skills and enthusiasm and Jean Burden for encouraging and organising a Home Group, now flourishing. A year ago, we appointed Dominic as our Families Worker, and I'd like to record our thanks to him for his steadily increased involvement with our outreach to younger families and our two village schools. His attendance at Lambstails had been much appreciated by the families there and the various events he's arranged in and around Findon Church have resulted in new families becoming more involved in our Parish worship.

It is a joy to be involved in the life of both St John the Baptist and Clapham and Patching Schools, supporting them both as a governor and leading and supporting Collective Worship through the year. It was a particular privilege to have the opportunity to join Clapham and Patching pupils in Clapham Woods for worship among the bluebells again this year, in addition to services led by pupils through the year in both Clapham and Patching churches. We are so lucky to have two excellent Church Primary schools helping to encourage Christian values in our young people in the Parish. Sadly, the pupils at Findon are still unable to come as a school to the church for Termly Services because of the ongoing issue with crossing the A24 and while it is a joy to share their worship at school, the pupils are missing out on our church setting. Their school choir has however led the worship for us twice through this year, as well as singing and providing Mary and Joseph for our annual Live Nativity in Findon Village. It is great to have pupils from both schools joining us for our monthly Messy Church sessions with their parents or grandparents in Findon Village Hall. I want to record my thanks to the team of volunteers who help run the crafts for Messy Church and to Anne Hollyhomes for doing the cooking. Just as Jesus shared meals with his followers and friends, it is so good to share a meal at the end of each Messy Church as we reflect on what we've learned about Jesus each month together.

I end as I began, by thanking you all for your support this year and assuring you of my ongoing prayers for you all.

With love in Christ,

*Helena*

**Helena Buqué**

## FINDON CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT

This is my first report as Churchwarden at St John the Baptist Findon. I took over the job last May from Michael Drakeford, and it was intended to be a double act, but unfortunately the other person got cold feet and withdrew. If anyone in the Church would like to assist me, I would appreciate it, whether you have done it before or not.

I would firstly like to thank Michael for his copious files that have allowed me to get up to speed and answering any queries I have had. I would also like to thank John Scadgell for his help with the boiler and oil tanks. The oil tanks especially have been checked and reviewed for safety, and I now have a printed and laminated list on the tanks, describing their foibles and how to ensure they are safely filled without leakage. There is an inspection panel so they can be watched when filled, and we also know that the float oil level is working and accurate. I would also like to thank Irene for her help ensuring I am doing what I am meant to do on Sundays, and with the Terrier, chasing down items and finding them. The Terrier this year is checked and complete. I have rewritten it so there is more space for notes, and also because we discovered there were two items not listed, which now are. The copper font bowl, and a small silver pot we found by accident in the sacristy, when chasing an elusive silver spoon which we did finally discover.

All ex-Church Wardens have been a fount of knowledge, and all provide help running the Church, with Tessa very ably creating the rota so everyone knows who is doing what every Sunday. I would like to thank Graham for running the Praise Service on the first Sunday of each month. I get far more help with the job here than I ever got when I was last Church Warden at St Richards in Aldwick. It makes everything so much easier and spreads the load. If I haven't thanked you individually, it is only because you are all too numerous to mention, and the report would be nothing but a list of names. Thank you all.

With regard to the fabric of the Church, I have made a start. Michael's file had a long list from the 2019 Quinquennial inspection, and some items categorised. Most of the major items hadn't yet been done. Luckily the 2024 Quinquennial hasn't been carried out yet and may well not be carried out by our Architect Julian Vallis for some time. Things are not being ignored as I have toured the Church with him at length, discussing matters that need doing, and inspecting items to get schedules of work drawn up so nothing is missed. The first work was getting the many holes in our Spire roof repaired by Wallbridge with new shingles, and getting the lightening conductor tested visually and then tested with a meter. This has stopped the ingress of water, causing puddles and damp in the bell tower, which is now drying out. Unfortunately the woodpeckers have knocked a hole in a shingle that was replaced, but there is 1mm of stainless steel behind it so no leak, but this will be an ongoing battle with the birds. The lightening conductor failed the test badly with a resistance of 26 Ohms when it should be 10 or less. We have subsequently had 2 x 7.2 metre pins placed in addition to the ones already present, with tape joining them into the system and a 4 metre gap between them, and we managed to get the reading down to 9.8, a pass. Hopefully this will get lower with time.

I am in the process of sorting out the 'Water Goods'. This is all the guttering, drains and valleys, all of which need work. A lot of the guttering is misaligned and leaking, most if not all the downpipes are blocked, the underground drains behind the kitchen are probably blocked and not working, and will need mapping and moling to free them up, as well as the grids in the drainage channels around the Church leading, we assume, to soakaways. The valley between the high altar and Lady Chapel will need re-leading as it has torn and been repaired, and the hopper is too small and blocks easily,

even with chicken wire, which may make it worse. We need a bigger hopper and pipes to carry away the leaves, or else this will be an ongoing problem. We also need to get guttering around the spire. There is no overhang from the shingles, so all the water pours down the side of the Church, soaking through the fabric. If nothing is done, the tower will deteriorate, not helped by cement mortar having been used for repair in the past, instead of lime mortar. We have had 5 quotes to date, and I hope to very soon apply for faculties and get the work done by late Summer. This will use up a lot of our Fabric Fund but will stop deterioration of the fabric of the Church and allow it to be as watertight as an 11th Century building can be. Redecoration will have to wait at least 18 months to allow the building to dry, and because redecoration will be more than we can currently afford. I have read the report. Unfortunately, materials like emulsion have been used in places, and we would need samples from many areas taken to see what has been done where, as has been advised in the report. Many areas may need remedial work to remove these layers and a breathable alternative like limewash used to allow the building to breathe and let the water vapour out. Modern alternatives lock in damp in old buildings without an air gap, especially in a Church with 2- to 3-foot-thick walls. As a Grade 1 listed building, we have to work with an Architect and use approved materials to prolong the life of the building. There is no quick fix alternative.

I have also taken over the Sanctus Bell from Michael, and I would like to thank him for all the work he has done to date. I am in the process of finding out where we are. I have obtained new costings to restore the bell and need to get the faculty we obtained from the Consistory Court extended, as it expired in January this year. Until it is extended, Whites cannot carry out the work required, nor put the bell back up. I hope I can get this sorted within the next year; hopefully much sooner, so we can get the oldest bell in Sussex - third oldest in the country - put back into use in our Church, making its contribution to our services for many more years to come.

I would lastly like to thank the Friends of St John's very much for all their help with our costs to date. It costs a lot of money to keep our Church in good condition, and without their tireless fundraising and contributions to our costs, our funds would be exhausted all the sooner. Many are not Church goers but recognise the importance of the building to our village community and are happy to help. If you are not a Friend of St John's, please consider helping. Please contact me or Ian Hollyhomes for further information.

**Simon Knights**

## **CLAPHAM CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT**

### Church Services and use

The clergy continue to provide two services a month and the fifth Sunday worship is shared with Patching on a rota basis.

There have been three baptisms, two weddings and one blessing, and several interring of ashes. We are grateful for the additional help at our services, particularly from John Haskey and Dan Banting. Thanks to Les for ringing the bells.

The church is used by Clapham & Patching School for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and end of Summer Term services and for visits as part of their R.E. curriculum. We continue to encourage liaison between the church and the school.

The church is open from 10.00am to 5.00pm and the visitors book provides evidence that the church receives many visitors each week.

### Support

We are grateful for the support from Clapham residents who contribute to the cleaning of the church inside and grass cutting outside. Andrew Merritt joined our team of volunteers this year. We are also appreciative of the group who provide and arrange flowers, Karen who updates our Book of Remembrance and several other residents who keep a regular eye on the church and parking area.

### Maintenance

Some members of The FoC&PC provided invaluable help at the twice yearly clear -up mornings. For minor repairs and maintenance, we continue to use the services of the Tester brothers on an ad hoc basis.

During the last year, checks have been made on the lightning conductor, organ and fire extinguishers.

Volunteers have made a major repair to the kissing gate.

The road to the church was repaired and potholes filled, with grateful thanks to Mr Kemp-Potter, Mrs Marigold Somerset, Mr Clem Somerset and the PCC.

The Churchwardens have checked the inventory and Terrier in April 2025; everything listed is present and correct.

### Bell tower & North roof up-date

We have decided to split this job into two parts and tackle the leak in the bell tower first. At the time of writing we have asked our architect, Julian Vallis, to put together a schedule of works and to obtain quotes for this work. This is a large, ongoing piece of work. We hope it will be done this coming autumn or next spring.

### Fund Raising Concert

In September 2024 a wonderful concert was organised by Maggie Somerset, to raise funds for the bell tower repair. Over 30 musicians participated, providing a varied and entertaining evening. The concert was very well supported by members of the Parish and the church was full with 101 performers and audience. Approx £1,500 was raised.

**Sian Fletcher and Maggie Somerset, Joint Church Wardens**

## **PATCHING CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT**

Thanks are extended to Revd. Helena Buqué, as she prepares for retirement, Revd. Colin Cox and Revd. Nancy Ford who continue to lead worship and to support the parish community.

We are thankful for the contribution that Sir Richard and Lady Best made to the Church, the Friends and the community during their lifetimes. Their memorial plaque has been placed inside the church on the north wall.

We remember and give thanks to Pauline Prior who died earlier this year. Pauline contributed much to the church as choir mistress and sacristan. She was a member of the Friends and other village

groups whose work she supported through her roles in fund raising events. Pauline also provided much for the community, being there for coffee and a chat if needed and providing practical support and encouragement to those who were ill. Pauline is greatly missed.

The Friends of Clapham and Patching Churches (The Friends) continue to assist with maintaining the fabric of the church. This year's contributions include, repair of the organ blower, funding the ongoing work of new gates, church cleaning and churchyard maintenance.

Cleaning and repairing of church gutters and investigation of water ingress is about to commence.

Interest has been expressed in the restoration of the collapsed wall. The cost of professional repair being too high, a project manager who might oversee a rebuild by volunteers, is being sought.

Thanks are extended to those who support the work of the church, visiting clergy, musicians, choir, readers, intercessors, flower arrangers, sacristans, lay ministers and sides-persons. Thank you to John Best and Bryan Sayers for mowing and strimming the churchyard and to John for maintaining the electrical installations.

Clapham and Patching School's church services for school leavers in July and the Nativity service were both well attended. School children also came to sing and join the harvest service and charity auction. There was great excitement at the Nativity service when we had three small ponies in attendance.

**Kath Hutchinson**

## **FINDON BELLRINGERS**

I have to report a rather tumultuous year for the Findon Bellringers! This was caused by two events: firstly, the sad passing of our beloved Tower Captain, Barbara Harbut on 11th June 2024. She had been Tower Captain at Findon for over 40 years and had been ringing the bells at St John's for nearly 70 years. She was the lynchpin who co-ordinated the ringers at Findon and Angmering because neither tower had enough ringers to be self-sufficient. A Service of Thanksgiving was held for her on Saturday 2nd November, attended by around 100 bellringers and friends from around the County. We are very grateful to Findon WI for helping with tea and cake in the village hall afterwards.

The second issue was that Angmering bellringers decided they wanted to disassociate from Findon, and ring every Sunday morning in Angmering, rather than just on the 1st and 3rd Sundays every month. This has meant that Findon bellringers needed to work hard to ensure we have 6 bellringers available on the 2nd and 4th Sundays; but unfortunately, this isn't always possible. We currently only have 4 'competent' ringers at Findon, so we always need to encourage friends over from Angmering to help us out. Last summer we foresaw this situation arising, so we organised two events: An Open morning at St John's on 22nd June, so that people could 'have a try' and a stand at the Findon Sheep Fair on 14th September with a display organised between ourselves and the Sussex County Association of Change Ringers. We also used our contacts within the village at Monday Coffee mornings and The Fabulous Findon Ladies club. This proved to be the most successful method of recruitment. We currently have 3 trainees, who will soon be capable of ringing on Sundays and Weddings. I extend my thanks to Simon, our new Tower Captain, for his continuing



efforts training the new recruits – he’s even attending a series of courses called ‘Train the Trainer’. In our new situation, operating independently from Angmering, we have created our own Constitution, Risk Assessments and Maintenance Schedule. Our first AGM was held on 15th April this year.

Repairs to the steeple at St John’s were carried out in September 2024 and this has significantly reduced water ingress into the steeple. We’re looking forward to the installation of new guttering which will allow the tower walls to dry-out, eventually enabling redecoration to be carried out.

We hosted visiting teams of ringers from around West Sussex on 5 occasions across the year. They have all been very appreciative of the facilities at St John’s – a Church with bell ropes at ground floor is a huge luxury as the narrow stone spiral staircases that are found in most other Churches aren’t everyone’s cup of tea. We’re also fortunate at St John’s because we only have one next-door-neighbour, who is very tolerant of the noise we make on practice evenings!

During 2024, we rang at 10 Weddings at Findon and 3 Weddings at Clapham as well as every other Sunday at St John’s. We’re already looking forward to ringing for 7 Weddings at Findon in 2025.

**Adrian Riches**

## **DEANERY SYNOD COMBINED REPORT**

The Deanery held a Celebration Service on 4th February at St Mary’s Broadwater to mark 950 years since the Diocese was founded; Bishop Ruth led the service. Local schools and other groups were closely involved, and the service drew clergy and parishioners from across the Deanery.

A poem on the Nicene Creed by Revd Laura Darrall celebrating the 950 years’ Celebrations was recited.

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What do you believe? As we stand in our pews or rows of chairs, and recite the Nicene creed, I wonder, what do you believe?

As we sit in a meeting about whether we should use pews or rows of chairs, I wonder, what do you believe?

As we put out the tables and make the coffee, and put out the rota for making the coffee and put out the rota for putting out the tables, what do you believe?

As we sit with a stranger who was looking for quiet, as we hand them a candle to light and remember, as we clear up the crumbs from a mum’s giddy toddler, what do you believe?

As we stretch out our hands to share Peace and for bread, as we lift up our voices and bow down our heads, as we love one another just like Jesus said - what do you believe?

Do you believe in the Father who flung stars into space, whose benevolent image can be found in your face, who traced lines of eternity into every embrace, do you believe?

Do you believe in the Son, the second person of the Trinity, the three in one, the one who would come and renew us all with a promise to be with us until the Kingdom will dawn- do you believe?

Do you believe in the Spirit? The giver of life?

The teacher of Love and the Queller of strife, who pours out its gifts at our baptismal start, and makes us one body, one faith, one heart. Do you believe?

Do you believe in the church? The vessel for God's mission, who is called to stay humble and accept the commission to be beacons of hope and children of light until that day comes when we resurrect and reunite with the one who made us. Do you believe?

We stand with the Saints, and join with their praise, in our pews and our chairs all our voices we raise, to proclaim our faith, our Creed, our Way On this 1700th anniversary we say: We believe.

*Rev Laura Darrall (Priest-in-Charge, St Mary and St Nicholas, Lavant)*

The next Deanery Synod will be held at St James the Less, Lancing on 7th May, and the next social gathering of the Deanery Synod will be held on Saturday 26 July.

The report of the last Deanery Synod attended by PCC representatives was as follows:

Worthing Deanery Synod meeting at St Andrew's Church, Worthing BN13 1HQ  
on 19th September 2024

There was one main presentation besides the usual business of the Deanery Synod.

The Revd Earl Collins spoke on "Year of 2025 of the Nicene Creed".

The Deanery Celebrations will be held on 4th February 2025 - various events are planned

He introduced the subject by noting that the immediately preceding years had been designated as Year of the Old Testament, and Year of the New Testament. Next year, 2025, has been designated as The Year of Faith of the Nicene Creed to emphasise that it summarises the mystery of faith, as in St Paul's letter to Timothy. The "mystery of faith" includes the final atonement through Jesus' death and resurrection which is part of the Nicene Creed. The Creed shows how God has revealed the mystery of his life and how God prepared the world for the scriptures which are crucial to understanding the life and teaching of Christ. It must be remembered that the scriptures in Christ's time were Jewish scriptures; Christian scriptures would come much later. In those Christian scriptures, the four gospel writers, the evangelists, each wrote from a different perspective of Christ. The New Testament was written after the event of Christ's death and resurrection, whereas the Old Testament was written long before.

The Year of Faith, as inspired by the Nicene Creed marks the development from the apostolic era to the spreading of the Gospel throughout the wider Roman world. With that growth, the Church had to be formed which brought the necessity of organisation and inevitably the bureaucracy involving bishops, priests and deacons. At this time the Church needed a Creed, for example at baptism the

godparents are asked to affirm key parts of the Creed. Several creeds were already in existence, including the Apostles' Creed, but these primarily served as a means of identification of Christians.

The First Council of Nicaea was a council of Christian bishops convened in 325AD. It was convened by the emperor Constantine to resolve various theological problems, especially the controversy of Arianism, a heresy\* first proposed by Arius of Alexandria that held that Christ was not divine but was a created being. The Council formulated the Nicene Creed, a statement of faith which affirmed the equality of the Father with the Son – by adding the 'filioque' clause\*\*. The Council settled the divine nature of God the Son, and his relationship to God the Father; that Jesus's existence did not start at Nazareth, though his human form did; as the Son of God he is eternal – the coeternity of the Son with the Father.

Following the formulation of the Nicene Creed, the Church did not just develop canon law and various dogmas, but proclaimed, promulgated, and treasured the mysteries of faith.

J.C.H. 21/09/24

\*Arius asserted that the Father alone was eternal, and that the Son was created or begotten by the Father, and thus had a defined point of origin and was therefore subordinate to the Father.

\*\*The Eastern churches have always rejected it because they consider it a theological error and an unauthorized addition to a venerable document.

**John Haskey**

## **ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT**

### **The Electoral Roll of the Parish of Findon, Clapham and Patching:**

Members of the Findon Part of the Roll	112
Members of the Clapham Part of the Roll	17
Members of the Patching Part of the Roll	17

**Maggie Somerset**

## **HOME GROUP**

Homegroup meets fortnightly in a member's home on a Monday evening. Meetings last about 1 1/2 hours, during which time we look at a Bible passage or theme together and then share refreshments together. We have fourteen members, and meetings are very informal. Last year we focused on an overview of 'The Bible', based on a Bible Society course, using a video to stimulate discussion. We began this year by reflecting on Rembrandt's painting, 'The Return of the Prodigal Son', using Henri Nouwen's book of the same name as stimulus, and have now widened the topic to explore other creative approaches to Bible stories, using music, paintings, psalms or songs.

**Jean Burden**

## MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church meets on the first Tuesday of each month, except when the schools are closed. There is a theme to each session, generally taken from the Bible. The session begins at 3.30pm after school with refreshments and crafts. There are usually about 8 different activities connected to the chosen theme. After the craft session Helena leads a short quiet time service with a story, song and prayer, whilst the hall is prepared for the meal.

Since last October, when Messy Church reopened after the summer break, we have been blessed with a strong team of helpers and attendance by families has been steady with numbers high, reaching over 30 children on occasions. All present, team, parents and children, appear to enjoy the afternoon and after about 15 years we are still going strong. Children from both our parish schools attend, plus some from outside the parish. All are welcome but they must come with an adult. A donation is invited to help towards costs, but it is voluntary.

The team meet several days prior to the sessions in order to plan the afternoon and if anyone would like to join us as part of the team, or come along and observe they would be very welcome. Please contact Helena at the Rectory for more details. 01903 873601.

**Hilary Langford**

## MISSION AND OUTREACH (WORSHIP AND PRAISE) REPORT

The Mission and Outreach group continue to meet on a monthly basis.

The following have been held or achieved in the last year:

### May 2024

Dominic Timm was appointed the Parish Family Worker, and some church open mornings were held inviting young people to join in with graffiti painting and face painting.

### June 2024

A Parish BBQ was held at the home of Mike and Rachel Hartnett.

Graham Kendrick concert with 140 tickets sold, produced a wonderful evening. The new 2nd A/V screen was in place for the concert.

A Rounders game was held at Wild Heart Hill after a morning service for families.

### August 2024

A farm visit was held at East Clayton Farm, and over 20 children attended.

### October 2024

The film 'Elf' was run at Findon Church. 56 people and 18 families enjoyed the film.

### November 2024

A book and jigsaw sale morning with face painting was held in the church.

A poem and folk concert by 'Cotillion' was held in Findon church of "The seasons through the year".

#### December 2024

We had the most people ever attending the Live Nativity in Findon.

Over 100 people went to the Patching carols around the coals.

110 people attended the Findon afternoon Nativity in the church with 8 young people taking part.

We had 155 people for the Christingle service on Christmas Eve.

#### February 2025

A games afternoon was held in Findon Church during half term with table tennis, pool, drum lessons and face painting. It was well attended.

#### March 2025

The film 'Paddington' was shown on Saturday 22nd March in Findon Church.

#### April 2025

Palm Sunday Walk took place on the 13th from the Rectory through the village to the Church.

Messy Church since September 2024 has had very good numbers attending, and some children now are coming from Clapham and Patching School.

Several families have attended the First Sunday service in the month and several children have taken part in the readings and prayers. Also, a number of these children have been baptised in the last year

We now have a rota for the A/V system and young Jake Timm and Mike Hartnett have both been trained.

We are hoping some youngsters will start to play in one of the bands.

Other things covered at our meetings:-

- Reporting on the Monthly Home Group.
- Discussions have started on Lay Ministries for when Helena retires.
- Funding for the Family Worker has also been addressed.
- We have Gemma helping Colin on the Church Facebook page.
- Dominic has held a meeting with the head of Findon school to help being a volunteer at the school.
- Dominic will assist in the breakfast club at the Clapham and Patching School starting early June.
- Sunday school has started again and is being run by Rachel Hartnett.
- There is a concern that more families need to attend Lambs Tails starting in September.
- Pastoral Care has been discussed.
- A big thank you to the members of the congregation who have helped at events throughout the year.

**Graham Langford**

## SAFEGUARDING REPORT

1. The Parish is working in line with safeguarding policy laid down by the Diocese and our mission statement is placed on the church notice boards in each of the churches. This is in line with Diocese requirement, and a copy is held by them. An emergency e-mail address is displayed for all to use who may have a safeguarding concern. All cases are treated with confidentiality, and there is a direct line to the safeguarding officer. There is little take-up of this service, with only one contact throughout the year.
2. The safeguarding officer retains the role of DBS Recruiter, and the application process via Thirtyoneeight and processes are now slightly less bulky with the applicant taking a role in the whole process. The safeguarding officer is currently in the process of renewing DBS checks through the 'bulk' system now available through the agency. The process of updating DBS checks is ongoing.
3. In line with Diocese Safeguarding policy, the SQP (Simple Quality Protects) files and policy documents are available as guidance to all those working within the parish. It was deemed unnecessary by the Diocese to audit the master file this year, as the previous year's audit did reflect that we are keeping prescribed paperwork.
4. Safeguarding training upgrades have been completed to 'Safeguarding Leadership' level by Colin Cox, Nancy Ford, Helena Buque, Simon Knights, Dominic Timm, Irene Adams and Ann Hollyhomes as Lead Recruiter.
5. A role within the safeguarding remit is the reporting of serious incidents to the Charities Commission. This process involves having a number of officers of each of our churches ready to contact and report any incident within the church or church grounds to a special team within the Charities Commission. A team of four formed a group of individuals who would work to contact the safeguarding officer immediately a suspected 'serious incident' had happened. Irene Adams, Kath Hutchinson, Jean Burden and Ann Hollyhomes form the basis of this emergency team. Records of incidents are held by the Commission, and also in the SQP file. There was one incident throughout the year which involved contacting the police and referring the case to the Commission.
6. Various activities throughout the year have been instigated by the Family Liaison Officer, Dominic Timm, which has involved inviting children and families to church events. These have largely been in St John the Baptist in Findon or in the grounds of the church. There were two film events for children in the church and outdoor events. These have proved popular and safeguarding policies (SQP) has been put into practice, ensuring safer activities, spaces and permission slips for photographic use on our website. Risk assessments have been carried out and advice given in this respect.
7. Following on from earlier discussions raised by a church warden regarding church security when opening and locking up church, contact with Ecclesiastical Insurance was made and a Church Guidance Note issued. This offers practical advice and copies of the note containing a risk advice line is available in the SQP file. Copies were circulated to church wardens.

**Ann Hollyhomes**  
**Safeguarding Officer**

## TREASURER'S / FINANCE TEAM REPORT

The accounts for the financial year ending 31st December 2024 have been approved by the newly appointed Examiner, Brian Surridge. This changeover from the previous Examiner, Ken Elliott, coincided with the resignation of Michael Drakeford, as treasurer, after fulfilling this role for some eight years. It is appropriate at this stage to formally record the thanks of the PCC to Michael and Ken for their dedication and commitment during their terms of office. We are also very pleased to confirm the appointment of a new treasurer, David Peskett, joint owner of the very well-known Findon Manor. David will be supported by a finance team as we migrate the accounts onto a bespoke Church finance software programme - ExpensesPlus.

Receipts in the year were £94,522 (2023 £83,182) against payments of £118,460 (£107,829) resulting in a further reduction in our year end reserves to £201,787 (£225,726). By far the largest outgoing is the monthly payment to the Chichester Diocese (our Parish Share) which was £55,000 for the year. This sum comprises an assessed sum towards centralised costs – stipends, housing and pension costs for clergy, Ordinand training and a 4% contribution towards national church obligations. Also included is a discretionary element, in part to defray the parish share of other churches unable to meet their prescribed sums. Whilst the PCC has slightly overpaid in the past couple of years unfortunately our parish finances no longer permit this and, conversely, we have had to substantially reduce our commitment this year to minimise any shortfall of receipts vs. payments. Accordingly, the PCC decided to reduce the annual amount for 2025 to £27,000 which it is hoped will address our faltering finances with the proviso to review the position at year end to establish whether a top up payment is feasible. These comments relate principally to our normal running expenses and do not take account of capital/fabric outlays where there is no option other than to utilise our remaining reserves for these purposes. At the time of this report the PCC is aware of substantial forthcoming expenditure required for both Clapham & Findon churches.

In summary, our parish finances will continue to be stretched notwithstanding the relative success of the Parish Giving Scheme (“PGS”) which we adopted a number of years ago. This enables the collection of regular sums by way of direct debit - which are passed to the parish monthly, including the gift aid element where the donors pay income and or capital gains tax. This is an exceptionally efficient payment process and considerably helps our cash flow and administration. If you would like to help, and are not yet using the PGS, please contact Ian Hollyhomes 07774-643548 or any member of the PCC.

In past years we have benefited from legacies and bequests which constitute our present dwindling reserves. Please consider our parish alongside so many other very deserving causes when making a will. Our three magnificent churches have supported their communities for almost a millennium; we need to ensure their existence for generations to come – and to keep the lights and heating on!

**Irene Adams, Ian Hollyhomes**  
**Finance Team Members**