

PARISH OF FINDON, CLAPHAM AND
PATCHING

Reports to the 2026 APCM



Sunday 10th May 2026 – 11.00am
St John the Baptist Church, Findon

Findon Church Warden's Report: (St John the Baptist):	Simon Knights
Clapham Church Wardens' Report (St Mary the Virgin):	Sian Fletcher and Maggie Somerset
Patching Church Warden's Report (St John the Divine):	Kath Hutchinson
Belfry Report:	Adrian Riches
Deanery Synod Report:	John Haskey
Electoral Roll Report:	Maggie Somerset
Home Group Report:	Elizabeth Henderson
Messy Church	Dominic Timm
Mission and Outreach Report Worship and Praise Services	Graham Langford
Safeguarding Report: (Findon, Clapham and Patching):	Ann Hollyhomes
Treasurer's Report:	Ian Hollyhomes

FINDON CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT

This is my second report as churchwarden at St John the Baptist Findon. I think I have found my feet and have some idea what I am meant to be doing. If anyone in the church would like to assist me, I would appreciate it, whether you have done it before or not.

The Terrier this year is checked and complete. All items found and checked, although it does resemble an Easter egg hunt at times trying to find it all. I found three more items I didn't find last time. These are now photographed and catalogued as well, added to the list.

As always, all ex-churchwardens 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. 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 am in the process of sorting out two faculties: one finally for the water goods, and one for the Sanctus Bell. You will notice we now have scaffolding around the tower, waiting for work to commence which should start mid-May. We have been waiting for the faculty certificate to be given, and as I am writing, the formal Public Notice of Works item 4A is displayed on the church notice board and Lych Gate, along with a thick file of everything in the faculty application. The details of fabric repairs runs to 155 pages, hence the thickness. My printer was beginning to smoke at the end of printing it! Once the 28-day window has closed, I will fill in a Certificate of Publication, and we should finally have the faculty after a year of waiting. Works will take 10-12 weeks dependant on weather. With regard to the Sanctus Bell, it has cleared the hurdles of the Diocesan Advisory Committee in an incredibly short week. Unfortunately, there were a few points that came up in the DAC discussions that they would like us to bear in mind. At this point, Julian the architect and I, have no idea what these are. We are awaiting the meeting minutes to be made available, or even the bullet points of the meeting so they can be dealt with. Julian has telephoned Emma and chased her up with four emails to date. We are still awaiting to hear back after five weeks. When we finally hear back, we can then hopefully receive another 4A Form to be displayed and finally obtain the faculty. Once obtained, Whites who have the bell, will start making the new headstock for the bell and the frame. They will not start without the faculty. Once this work is carried out, we can have scaffolding in the church, and the bell can finally be displayed after being put back in a lower position. This may take some time to be agreed exactly where, and is likely to involve an archaeologist, to ensure there is no hidden wall painting where it is to be affixed. I am hopeful it will be affixed this year, and I feel we should have a service of re-dedication, with Michael Drakeford having first ring, with all the work he has done previously.

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 three years as walls dry out at the rate of an inch a month, and the tower is three feet plus thick. The main areas needing plastering and painting are the Sacristy, Vestry and Tower ringing area. This will of course have to be undertaken with consultation with the Architect and use appropriate materials like lime plaster and lime wash. I will worry about that in 2029 or thereabouts.

We have had the five yearly electrical testing carried out in February. I had our oil tank topped up in March, just before Donald had his little dust up, so we should - with careful use - be alright until

November. That saved us over £1500 by good luck. I have also had a fire risk assessment carried out for the church. This was done by Ken Wheeler at no cost, and I would like to thank him very much for his generosity. He has also agreed to carry out one for free for both Clapham and Patching churches. I have so far fitted smoke detectors in the Vestry and Sacristy, and a carbon monoxide detector in the boiler room. I need to get PAT testing organised and at some point, brief the sides persons on the evacuation plan and what to do in an emergency and have a practice fire evacuation from the church. I am still trying to find the time to sort this, hopefully in the near future.

I would lastly like to thank the Friends of St John's very much for all their help with our costs to date. They will be donating £50,000 to the cost of the work, which is in excess of £79,000 plus vat, which we are currently unlikely to be able to reclaim. I managed to get a grant of £6,000 from the Benefact Trust, which we have already received and will help defray our costs further. I would like to thank them very much for their generosity. 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 CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

Church Services and Use

Following Helena Buqué's retirement in January we continue to provide two services a month with visiting clergy covering the services which Colin Cox is unable to take. The fifth Sunday worship is shared on rotation with Findon and Patching.

There have been 3 Baptisms, 2 weddings and 1 blessing and several interring of ashes. We are grateful for the additional help at our services, particularly from John Haskey, Kath Hutchinson 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 Parish youth worker Dom Timm is hoping to be more involved with the school.

The church is open between 10am and 5pm 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. 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. The organ needs a thorough clean; quotes are being obtained.

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

Bell Tower and North Roof up-date.

We have just received the Scope of Work from Julian Vallis and hope that he will put this out to tender soon. We know there are bats present and this will probably mean obtaining a licence. This is still a large, daunting ongoing project. It is hoped this will get underway this coming Autumn/Spring 2026/27.

Sian Fletcher and Maggie Somerset, Joint Church Wardens

PATCHING CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

Following the retirement of Revd. Helena Buqué there is a period of vacancy which continues until preparations can be made for the appointment of a new parish priest. Until that time the churchwardens are responsible for the continued running of the parish.

We are very fortunate to have Revd. Colin Cox continuing as Associate Vicar and leading services as previously. We appreciate the support of our Rural Dean Revd. Shirley Tupper, who has provided details of priests who we can invite to lead services. We are thankful for her support and that of our new Archdeacon Revd. Tom Carpenter. The work of our experienced parish administrator, the parish treasury team and all members of the PCC that continue their roles at this time is much valued.

The Friends of Clapham and Patching Churches ("The Friends") continue to assist with maintaining the fabric of the church. Their support includes the practical work of cleaning the church and maintenance of the churchyard. It also involves fundraising to provide donations toward the cost of church works. Following the recent electrical installation inspection substantial works have been found necessary.

Unfortunately, the water supply to the church standpipe, that until now has been provided by a former tenant farmer, has been turned off. There is a costly leak between the water source and the church which would be difficult to locate or repair. We are grateful for the donation of a free-standing water butt. Drinking water will be carried to the church.

Angmering Park Estates have approved the proposal by a local resident, of the restoration of the now damaged, land that is used for parking outside the church. Estimated costings for the repair of the collapsed church wall by volunteers, are awaited.

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.

We are pleased to host a number of Clapham and Patching school services each year; the nativity service is always very well attended and last December, included a sheep.

Kath Hutchinson

FINDON BELLRINGERS

The last year has been one of consolidation: particularly concentrating on encouraging new ringers and training them to a level where they are competent to ring at Sunday services and weddings.

Last summer we organised a 'Mobile Belfry' at the Findon Sheep Fair on Saturday 13th September. Despite dreadful weather, we gave 'I've Rung the Bells at the Fair' stickers to 170 members of the public, ranging from 5 to 85 years old. This was a particularly arduous experience for the people who were providing the training, including Simon Knights, Maggie Williams, Chris Blacker and Julia Wells.

I also extend my thanks to Simon, our Tower Captain, for his continuing efforts training the new recruits – he's even attending a series of courses called 'Train the Trainer' and had to undergo the rigours of being assessed while training a 12-year-old before gaining his Association of Ringing Teachers accreditation.

During 2025, we rang at nine weddings at Findon and one wedding at Clapham as well as every other Sunday at St John's. We hosted visiting teams of ringers from around West Sussex on several occasions during 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 severely limits accessibility. 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!

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. Other maintenance activities take place regularly, including the continual removal of significant quantities of dead insects from the upper levels of the tower. We're also looking forward to the imminent re-installation of the Sanctus Bell, which is the oldest bell in West Sussex, dating back to the 12th Century. The bell will be rung at the point in the Eucharist service of the Prayer of Consecration, so that labourers in the fields can stop and be silent for a few moments. The Ellacombe Frame will soon require the lower ends of its ropes to be replaced, and this work is now in hand.

The maintenance team at Findon are also asked to look after the bells at Clapham. Some minor repairs there are scheduled in the coming months.

We currently have three experienced ringers, four 'intermediate' ringers and three who are near the start of their bellringing career at Findon.

Adrian Riches

DEANERY SYNOD COMBINED REPORT

Worthing Deanery Synod meeting at St James the Less Church, North Lancing, Worthing, BN15 0EY on 7th May 2025

The meeting was opened with prayers by Father Ben Scott.

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

Two speakers were originally tabled to give a talk but Colin Perkins, the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, was unable to be present.

The other speaker was The Revd Buff Stone, the Diocesan Environmental Officer, who gave a comprehensive presentation* with statistical analyses covering carbon, emissions, global warming, climate change, effects on weather, effects on human migration, carbon footprint, buildings emitting carbon, organisations investing in fossil fuels and green energy, etc. These subjects were viewed from the standpoint of recognising it is God's world and the associated theology of addressing these challenges, notably the command to "Love thy Neighbour".

Schools and certain church buildings have been found to be large emitters of carbon dioxide partly because of the large number of activities carried out there. The Diocese recommends following Eco Church - which provides support for churches to take practical action on caring for God's creation, including actions for buildings and energy. The Diocese has made some grants for minor repairs to buildings, including some connected with net zero projects, although the grant scheme is currently closed, but it is hoped it will reopen in the future.

Helena Buqué, the former Rural Dean, gave a vote of thanks to the Revd Felix Smith, the retiring Rural Dean, and The Revd Shirley Tupper was welcomed as the new Rural Dean. The new archdeacon will shortly be announced.

It was announced that there are opportunities for safeguarding training throughout the Diocese and also for lay training, including a new course on pastoral care.

The next Worthing Deanery Synod meeting will be on Wednesday 1st October and held at St Andrew's Church, Ferring.

*A PowerPoint file containing all the presented statistical information is available.

Deanery Synod Report

1st October 2025 at St Andrew's, Ferring

The Rural Dean, Rev'd Shirley Tupper welcomed everyone to the meeting then said a prayer. She introduced the first speaker, Gay Jacklin from Worthing 4 Refugees.

Gay spoke about the problems and worries refugees have when they arrive in this country and what her charity does to try and alleviate their problems. She started by asking if we had ever thought what we would do if something awful happened in our world. What would we hope for? Your home is lost, also family and friends. You have to flee your country and become a refugee. You hope for

safety but then lose hope. You hope for a school for your children, that you can learn another language. Your child has left a favourite toy behind and is crying for it. For older folk.....Where will I be buried?

As a Christian charity they aim to demonstrate the heart of God. They care, see and provide people centred support in a professional manner.

The second speaker was Su Pitcher from Mission Direct. Su talked about this small charity which has only 5 people on its staff. They organise and equip volunteers for two-week short-term mission trips abroad. They bring practical help to countries in need. Building projects, schools, houses etc and also helping street children. This is in many countries in the world, for example, the Dominican Republic, Cambodia, Africa and India.

What can we do? Tell others about this charity or donate; also most importantly, pray.

The Rural Dean's report:-

Bishop Will confirmed 22 candidates, a wonderful day. The Diocesan Clergy Conference 'The Mysteries of faith' based on the Creed and 'Year of Faith'. She gave thanks to all Parishes for their financial support. The Diocesan Autumn Finance meeting will be held jointly with the Arundel and Bognor Deanery on the 6th November 2025 Subject - Parish share. The Diocesan Harvest appeal will be supporting Palestinian need for emergency aid.

Liz gave a financial report:

The deficit was not as bad as feared. Any interested PCC members can attend the Finance meeting. 2026 Parish share pledges should be sent in by end of January.

A proposal to appoint a new Deanery Development officer for three years with a request for a voluntary donation from Parishes £100 pa for a parish of our size. It was agreed to move this forward by putting it to the Synod.

News from the Parishes :-

There was a flyer re a play at St Andrew the Apostle Church.

A trip to Walsingham next August with St Michael's Lancing.

A pet service and Harvest festival Evensong at St Andrews, Tarring.

A Big Band concert at St John the Baptist, Findon.

St George's, East Worthing reported an upturn in young people attending services.

There was a 24/7 prayer vigil for a week held at St Matthews with one room dedicated to prayer stations.

Reverend Andrew retiring on 26th October from All Saints, Findon Valley.

Christchurch confirmed they are in good heart going forward.

Brighton Welsh Male voice choir is holding a concert at St Andrews, Ferring on 15th November.

Next Deanery Synods will be held on 12th May and 30th September 2026

John Haskey

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

After the completion of the new roll last year, numbers have remained constant at:

Findon - 64

Clapham – 17

Patching - 18

Total - 99

This total allows us 3 reps on Deanery Synod.

Maggie Somerset

HOME GROUP

I would like start by recording our thanks to Jean and John Burden for all they have contributed to the development and organisation of this group since its inception in 2023. Jean has been an inspiration, and we value her continued participation. One positive outcome of Jean's 'retirement' is that other members of the group have had to play a more active role. In the latter months of 2025, individual members facilitated one-off meetings, leading discussion on, for example, a particular painting or poem which had inspired them.

Following a break for the winter months, during which group members discussed how they see the group going forward, meetings re-started after Easter and continue fortnightly on Monday evenings at the Rectory. Currently the group is basing its discussions on the Chichester Diocese Lent Course. This focuses on the Gospel of Matthew, so is appropriate for study at any time of the year. Each session provides an introduction, a Bible reading, and guidance for further discussion. The session lasts an hour and afterwards we share refreshments together.

There are eleven core members of the group; meetings are informal and very friendly. New members are always welcome.

Elizabeth Henderson

MESSY CHURCH

Messy Church

Since our lovely Vicar Helena has retired and the huge impact that has had on our Messy Church, I've become more involved with leading the events which have grown in numbers on the last few occasions. This is mostly driven by extra advertising in the local areas including posters in shops, schools, social media and word of mouth through the parents and WhatsApp groups.

Messy Church is a wonderful, fun and faith filled time with our amazing volunteers who keep coming up with innovative ideas. Bible stories, painting, creating, lots of sticking, cutting and cardboard is used, plus teaching and singing songs to keep the children entertained and learning about faith and the importance of God.

The afternoon activities finish and then it's time to gather round for a prayer, a sing song and story. Our thanks go to the volunteers and our amazing chef, Ann, who cooks the most delicious meals normally followed by a scrummy pudding.

We recently sung the wonderful song 'My Lighthouse' and all the children, parents and volunteers joined in with the actions.

The themes vary each month, and the most recent one was temptation, and we discussed what the children were tempted by; mostly cookies and sweets were mentioned!

We've recently created Mother's Day cards, cakes, an Easter garden, and much more.

These sessions are a joyous time, and I'm truly blessed to be part of something so special with an amazing team projecting faith to the youngsters in our community.

Dominic Timm

MISSION AND OUTREACH (WORSHIP AND PRAISE) REPORT

This last year has been very interesting and rewarding as we have moved forward in Mission and Outreach.

We have met at various months throughout the year as a committee to plan and learn from what has been successful and events that have not gone so well. The 2025 Christmas Tree Festival was again very successful with over 25 trees, over 1000 people attending and making a profit of £6,500 for church funds. A real community event with over 75 prayers added to the prayer tree.

Messy Church is seeing more children coming from schools other than St John the Baptist at Findon. Since Helena has left the parish, Dom has stepped forward to organise the mini service before the meal and this has gone well. Although the number of helpers is steady, more people in the team would help to cover holidays and illness. Can you give a couple of hours a month on the first Tuesday in Findon Village Hall?

The Home Group has restarted after Jean Burden had run the meetings for two years or more and decided to stand down. These are held fortnightly on Monday evenings at the Rectory.

The Family Worker position has attracted further grants from Green Hills Trust, The Findon Sheep Fair and also the Diocese, which have helped in funding musical Instruments for our church band, Cornerstone. Dom Timm has been into St John the Baptist church school on a weekly basis helping with reading and making a Peace Garden for the children to enjoy. He has also helped at Clapham and Patching school for their Christmas service, but we hope his visits can be of a more weekly support in the future. Film afternoons and games events have had various attendance figures and we must thank the events team from the church who have supported these programmes with refreshments. If you would like to join the events team do let Liz Henderson or Dom know.

We have planned most of the first in the month services for 2026 and so far, the congregation numbers have been very good with well over 100 for Helena's leaving service and over 90 when the Findon school choir came. We are inviting various people in to lead the talk, and these have been much thought provoking, in line with each Sunday's theme. Palm Sunday was organised at Clapham on the 5th Sunday in March and the church was almost full after many people had processed from the village school. If you play an instrument or would like to join the Cornerstone singers, please do let us know.

We have had Ron Green's Big Band playing at two concerts and these have been enjoyed by a lot of people from the parish; two really enjoyable evenings.

On Sat 28th November, we have JB Gill coming to Findon church; you will have seen him on Songs of Praise, Strictly Come Dancing, The One show and Winter on the Farm. Oh yes, he still sings with the band JLS! He will talk about his life touring with the band, being on these shows and how his faith has helped him through his journey to date. Tickets are £10, and are on sale at the Findon Village shop and from Dom. Please support this event.

Graham Langford

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

- The Parish is working in line with the policy requirements laid down by the Diocese and our safeguarding policy statement is up to date and placed on our church notice boards. There is a photo of the current safeguarding officer and emergency contact details should someone wish to contact her in confidence. Although compliance with our standard safeguarding practices were favourably audited last year by confirming our SQP (Simple Quality Protects) file was in order, practices have changed following the findings of the Makin Review. The Parish Safeguarding Dashboard has become the gateway for the Parish's safeguarding practices to be checked.
- There have been no safeguarding incidents this year.
- Upgrades in practical training exercises via the Diocese have been completed by the safeguarding officers, churchwardens, Irene Adams and Colin Cox. Most training levels can be completed online, but there is also a range of training available at Church House.
- The Diocese requirement to report to the Charities Commission any 'serious incidents' which may have occurred in our churches is ongoing. There have been no reports this year, but the emergency team still exist, and any incidents deemed worthy of a 'police incident' should be reported to the safeguarding officer who in turn reports the issue to the Commission (online). The team are Kath Hutchinson, Irene Adams, Jean Burden and Ann Hollyhomes.
- The family liaison officer, Dominic Timm, has become fully immersed in the Parish community and has arranged activities which are proving to be very successful. The knock-on effect has increased 'Messy Church' attendance considerably. A WhatsApp group has been formed, requesting regular help with fund raising and other activities, involving children and families. Film showings encourage children to Saturday viewing in St John the Baptist, familiarising young families with church. Care has been taken to ensure 'safer activities' are in place with the compliance risk assessments of internal spaces and of the use of permission slips for photographic purposes. Parents accompany children at all times, but there is an area of concern regarding risk assessment of outdoor spaces and areas for training identified.
- The Parish safeguarding officer has agreed to remain in post until a new officer has been recruited. Vicky Riches has agreed to take over this role, and currently two references have been sought. The issues faced by every parish at present is the full extent of the work involved in carrying out this time-consuming role effectively. Up and coming changes are in place to ensure all parishes are fully trained to cope with safeguarding issues 'at the coalface' but more importantly administrative changes have become more involved. Although a useful tool, the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard has been introduced and any new recruit to the position would have to attend training and learn procedures and compliance.
- ACTION PLAN: DBS individual self-renewals. Risk assessments and outdoor events. Training Parish Safeguarding Dashboard.

Ann Hollyhomes

TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for 2025 have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis as in previous years. The full accounts have been available for inspection on the church notice boards for the requisite period in advance of the APCM in accordance with C of E requirements.

In summary:

- Our income for the year was £89,108 (£94,523) and outgoings £79,651 (£118,461) leaving a surplus of £9,457 (-£23,938). These figures reflect monies received during the period and are therefore subject to timing differences. Subject to this caveat, the trustees were able to reverse the deficit from 2024 - albeit by significantly reducing the Parish Share from £55,000 to £27,000. Unfortunately, as matters presently stand, we are unable to increase our commitment from the present rate of roughly 50% of allocated costs, therefore continuing with the annual payment of £27,000 for 2026. In 2024 it was necessary to drawdown £40,000 from our investments held with CCLA with no further funds being withdrawn in 2025.
- The above has resulted in our total funds increasing from £201,788 to £211,245 comprising £194,938 in restricted funds and £16,307 in unrestricted funds. Within the restricted funds the bulk of deposits are held in the Findon and Clapham fabric funds - £157,880 and £10,495 respectively.
- Donations in the year were £42,159 (£45,979) and Gift Aid £9,749 (£13,426) with grants of £12,925 (£10,000) predominately linked to our Family Worker employee.

This year will see substantial remedial work to St. John the Baptist Church Findon and possibly St Mary's Clapham involving considerable financial outlays. In both cases the works are fabric related – rainwater goods in Findon and tower/roof repairs in Clapham. All three churches are supported by Friends' charities where hopefully donations will be received to help defray the costs.

The Parish is currently in vacancy following the retirement of our vicar Helena Buqué at the end of 2025. Discussions are shortly to take place between our Parish and the Parish of Findon Valley with a view to possibly merging. Whilst this is still some way off, one of the questions that will inevitably need answering is whether to combine our respective finances or merge the parishes - leaving the finances separate as currently. The general feeling is that we will have a better chance of welcoming a new incumbent sooner with an enlarged parish.

Ian Hollyhomes
Finance Committee Member