

**Parochial Church Council of St. Stephen's Sparsholt and St. Peter's Lainston**  
**A charity Excepted from Registration with the Charity Commission**  
**Annual Report for 2022**

The Parish of St. Stephen's Sparsholt and St. Peter's Lainston lies within the  
Diocese of Winchester.

Correspondence should be addressed to; The Benefice Office, The Rectory, Church  
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**PCC Members during 2022**

<b>Incumbent</b>	Revd Jax Machin
<b>Churchwardens</b>	J Wesley and T Lans (previously Sales)
<b>Elected members</b>	S Wesley (Treasurer), A Barron, T Wilson
<b>Secretary</b>	K Simpson (stood down on 28/3/2023)
<b>Deanery Synod Representative</b>	A Barron

**1. PCC Membership**

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC. Our PCC is small and several new members would be very welcome.

**2. Aims and Purposes of the PCC**

- The aims and purposes of St Stephens remain as before and as below. As the Covid-19 restrictions have lifted, we continue to be mindful and careful of the ongoing issues surrounding it.
- Working with our Incumbent, the PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and be involved in its life as a part of our Christian community. We continue to build strong links with our village organisations such as our school, shop and post office, clubs, groups, and college.
- We maintain the fabric of the church of St Stephen's to facilitate the mission of the Church and we keep it open every day for private contemplation and prayer. All are welcome every day in this house of God. This is made achievable to a very large degree by the existence and financial support of the Friends of St Stephen's.

**The Life of the Church**

**3. Activities**

We organised some great activities during 2022 including :

- The Jubilee Fete was held immediately after the Street Party lunch, all part of the 4 day Platinum Jubilee weekend. This was the first Fete held since 2019, due to COVID and raised a reasonable amount of funds for the Church. The success of the whole Jubilee weekend enabled the Church to give financial support to several good causes within the Village.

- A Harvest Supper, followed by an Auction of Promises, was very well-supported on the night. Our considerable thanks go to Alastair Barron, Caroline Horrill and Janette Davies who organised a great meal and the auction. Our thanks also to all those who donated some amazing lots for the auction, and to those who so generously bid for them.
- To round off our APCM in 2022 we invited all those who volunteer to help the PCC to a 'thank you' event in the church following the APCM.
- Our Parish Paper is distributed bi-monthly to all the parishioners keeping them informed of the important matters affecting our church and articles that maintain the Christian message.

#### **4. Worship and Prayer**

We have maintained our new pattern of services – 2 regular services a month – 8.00am Holy Communion on the third Sunday and Morning Worship on the fourth Sunday of each month. However, it is amazing how many other Services we have held during the year: our Patronal Festival on the first Sunday after Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Day, Pet Service, Prayers for the Queen's Jubilee, Trinity Service in Northwood Park, School Leavers' Service, Harvest Festival, All Souls, Remembrance Sunday, School, Christingle, Carol Service, Crib Service, Christmas Eve Midnight Mass and Christmas Day Family Service.

We also have the opportunity to worship in other churches in the Benefice which gives us the chance to widen our circle of church friends – Littleton is only 5 minutes away and Crawley only 10 minutes away! Chilbolton and Wherwell are also well worth a visit.

#### **5. Messy Church**

Sadly, Messy Church still has not yet resumed since stopping due to the Covid-19 restrictions. Messy Church was a popular and well attended part of our church life in this Benefice and it is hoped this will be restarted at some point.

#### **6. Pastoral Care**

The Rector, the Benefice Office, and our own network of visitors have tried to stay current with anyone who may need some support.

Our Incumbent, Jax Machin, had an accident towards the end of the 2022 which sees her temporarily out of action, and as she continues to recover we thank everyone who has stepped in to help with services and pastoral care.

#### **7. Deanery and Diocesan Synods**

The Rector and our Deanery and Diocesan Synod representatives attended meetings in person – it was good to be able to sit with other Synod members after a very disrupted Zoom based year last year. There has been a common emphasis on increased communication for and within, both Synods and this has been positively received and commented on. The quality of our discussions and debates has improved, synod members have felt more involved and so more inclined to

contribute. Topics presented and discussed at Deanery synods have included our overseas links, lay ministry and leadership within the Diocese, exchanges of positive news from parishes, reports from General Synod, and the role of the Diocesan CEO. Topics presented and discussed at Diocesan Synod have included the implementation of the new Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Measure and the consequent establishment of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), the budget and supporting financial planning, the appointment of a new Archdeacon, clergy welfare and the work of the Office Review Group. The work of the Vacancy in See Committee in selecting our new Bishop was an important issue in both Synods. The House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod and the Deanery Lay Chairs are now meeting regularly.

## **8. Sparsholt Church of England School**

The PCC has maintained close links with Sparsholt Church of England School this year. The Worship Team, led by Jane Gwilliam, has produced some wonderful material reminding us all that God's love is very much part of the life of Sparsholt school and it's children and staff. Sally Wesley, the Church Foundation Governor, has helped maintain very high Christian values within the school and is much appreciated. As can be seen from the list of Services in section 4, the School has held several Services in the Church; also the Rector and Sally Wesley have been involved in many school worship events on the playground and in the Hall. The School also uses the Church as a resource for some of their lessons, be it Art or Religious Education.

## **9. Financial Review for 2022**

### **Receipts**

- Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £32.4K of which £14.2K came from unrestricted voluntary donations.
- Planned Giving through standing orders decreased by 2.6%.
- Due to the generosity of the congregation, collections at Services increased by 40%. This does not include the collection on Remembrance Sunday which was donated directly to the Winchester Branch of SSAFA The Armed Forces Charity.
- £3K was raised through the FOSS/PCC 100 Club.
- Fee income from weddings, baptisms & funerals increased by 20%.
- Income on investments yielded 2.9%.
- Total income, including tax recovered, was £41.6K, an increase of £16.2K on the previous year, mainly due to the Jubilee Fete, Harvest Supper and Auction of Promises.

### **Payments**

- £34.4K (£26.8K in 2021) was spent from unrestricted funds to provide the Christian ministry from St. Stephen's Church. The contribution to the Common Mission Fund of £21.7K is included in that figure; there were insufficient funds to pay the total requested by the Diocese of £25.2K, resulting in a shortfall of £3.5K (previous year's shortfall was £6K).

- Sparsholt's share of benefice expenses was in line with those in 2020 (2021 was an exceptional year as Littleton paid part of Sparsholt's share). £1.2K of the benefice expenses was paid out of Investment income on Restricted Funds.
- Donations of £625 each were made to 4 village organisations (Sparsholt Primary School, Sparsholt Memorial Hall, Woodman Close Playground, Ham Green Conservation Group), using the profit made from the non-fete Jubilee events and 20% of the Jubilee fete profits. In addition, £375 was donated to charities outside the village [Winchester Hospice, Karis Kids, Winchester Nightshelter].
- Overall expenditure of £44.4K was £14.5K more than last year. There was a minimal spend on the outstanding structural repairs and maintenance to the Church as firms were still unprepared to provide quotes.
- The net result for the year was a shortfall of payments over receipts of £2.8K (£4.5K in 2021). The bank balance carried forward as at 31st December 2022 on Unrestricted funds totalled £5,000 of which £880 relates to the Bell Fund (a designated fund).
- The PCC Trustees have confirmed that a review of the charity's internal financial controls in the year reported has been carried out; there has been no change to the policy whereby approval in the form of authorisation by email or signing the relevant invoice is given by a Trustee who is an authorised signatory and who is not John Wesley (as he is married to the Treasurer), to provide dual control on all expenditure.
- The PCC Trustees have also confirmed that they expect the PCC to be able to settle outstanding invoices, bills and commitments as and when they fall due (except possibly for our Common Mission Fund).

## **Reserves Policy**

- PCC policy is to maintain a balance on Unrestricted funds and investments (currently £26.2K) which equates to at least 12 months' unrestricted expenditure. This unrestricted expenditure in 2022 was £35K so the Reserves policy target in 2022 was not met. The balance on Unrestricted funds and investments at the end of the financial year in question equated to 9 months' unrestricted expenditure. However, the Church of England has revised its ideas on Reserves policies for Parish Churches, and considers an equivalent to 6 months' unrestricted expenditure to be adequate. The PCC will undertake to review its Reserves policy in 2023.
- Unrestricted Reserves are held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet emergencies. Members of the PCC are regularly advised of the amount held in Reserves.
- As at 31st December 2022, £104K was held as cash and investments (an investment valuation decrease of 12%). £77.4K of this total was held as Restricted Funds, of which £58.9K are Endowments held in the name of the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Stephen's Church and cannot be disposed of in any way.

## **10. Building and Infrastructure**

A crack in the lead roof led to a leak in the church which has now been repaired. The unsightly patch from a previous damp patch has now dried out but is yet to be repaired. We are grateful for the support of FOSS in these matters.

The pieces of oak trefoil to the belfry louvre have been fixed.

There has been discussion about renewing the existing pathway that leads through the church yard. An old broken bench has been removed and a new one has been put in place by a different family.

## **11. Music**

Although it was wonderful to listen to the organ playing during services last year, it has been a pleasure to be able to sing again this year.

St Stephen's has a ring of six bells which are rung for every Sunday 10.00am Service with practices on Monday evenings. Our bells are much admired and we continue to receive regular requests from visiting teams to ring.

## **12. The Friends of St Stephen's**

FoSS continues to thrive and to contribute to our beautiful church being the centre of our worship and church life in Sparsholt. The main area of support this year has been the repair to the lead roof. FoSS also continues to work with the PCC and the 100 Club which raises approximately £6000 for both the FoSS and the PCC in an average year – a valuable addition to funds.

## **13. GDPR**

St Stephen's works with the Benefice to ensure we are GDPR compliant. No breaches or potential breaches have been brought to the PCC's attention.

## **14. Safeguarding**

No safeguarding issues have been brought to the PCC's attention.

## **15. Volunteers**

We would like to thank all the volunteers who have contributed to the life of St Stephen's throughout this year. They work so hard to support the church within the community of Sparsholt. We thank those involved in the finance management, cleaning, flower arranging, bell ringers, key rota volunteers, sidesmen, organists, fete committee members, FoSS, 100 Club, school service organisers, magazine distributors – all have contributed. THANK YOU!!