

ALL SAINTS' BIGHTON PCC REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/12/24

All Saints' Church is situated at the western end of the village next to the Manor House.

It is a member of the Winchester Diocese within the Alresford Deanery and part of the Arle Valley Benefice.

The correspondence address is:

The Secretary to the PCC,
Manor Farm House,
Bighton,
Alresford,
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SO24 9RD

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

Under new regulations all charity trustees are now required to be DBS checked and all members of the PCC have completed this.

PCC members who have served during the year are:

Revd. Heather Brearey, Chair
Ian Waring Green, Lay Minister and Focal Minister for All Saints Bighton
Mr Robert Ellis, PCC Vice Chairman (Churchwarden)
Mr Christopher James (Churchwarden) Website & GDPR administrator
Elected Members:
Mrs Sarah White, Secretary
Mrs Susan Gray, Treasurer
Mrs Elizabeth Prescott-Decie
Mrs Sally Ellis, Electoral Roll Secretary
Mr Simon McCowen
Mrs Alison Mayne, Deanery Synod Representative & Safeguarding Officer
Mrs Joanna Gray

Changes to the PCC during the year

There were no changes to the PCC during the year.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of the 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.

The Living

The Arle Valley Benefice living is held by the Revd. Heather Brearey.

Objectives and Activities

All Saints PCC, together with the Rector of the Arle Valley Benefice and the Focal Minister, has the responsibility of promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, within the Parish.

The PCC is responsible for the upkeep of the Church Building and the Churchyard.

Membership and attendance

The Electoral Roll comprises 33 members.

The average attendance was some 13 souls.

We are, as always, grateful to the Ministry Team for their important contribution to our Sunday services.

Our services are in the main accompanied by Dr. John Sargent on the organ, and we thank John for his musical talents.

Weekly Service Pattern

Our regular weekly service pattern remains at three Sundays per month. and comprises:

First Sunday of each month - No Service.

Second Sunday of each month – Service of Morning Prayer - Book of Common Prayer

Third Sunday of each month - Service of Morning Prayer - Common Worship

Fourth Sunday of each month – Service of Holy Communion – Common Worship

Morning Prayer is said in the Church on each Monday morning and Parishioners are invited to attend.

Festival Communion Services are led by our Focal Minister and we are permitted to offer Communion by Extension.

We are deeply indebted to our Rector and Focal Minister for leading these services.

Our Focal Minister, Ian Waring Green, is our main link with the Ministry team, and we are extremely grateful to him for his Ministry to us.

Review of the Year

The full PCC met face to face five times during the year; in addition to these meetings we held our APCM, with good attendance at each meeting.

There is also an emergency standing committee comprising the Churchwardens and PCC secretary; this committee did not meet during the year.

Clergy

Rector: Revd. Heather Brearey.

Focal Minister: Mr Ian Waring Green, Licensed Lay Minister

Bishop's Permission to Preach: Mrs Alison Mayne

Clergy Support A part-time parish assistant, Penny Forbes, has continued in her role of Benefice Administrator.

We are grateful to our Clergy Team and look forward to working with them to further the work of the Church in the Parish of All Saints, the Arle Valley Benefice and the wider Church.

Festival Services

Easter

Palm Sunday – A service of Holy Communion conducted by Revd. Heather Brearey - 16 people attended.

Good Friday – A quiet Tenebrae service was conducted by Ian Waring Green – 14 people attended.

The Easter Day service was one of Communion by Extension and was conducted by Ian Waring Green who also preached. It was attended by 42 adults and 10 children. There were 38 communicants.

The Harvest Festival was held on October 15th and was conducted by Ian Waring Green. It was attended by 36 adults and 2 children. The collection of £288.00 was donated to the Winchester Basics Bank, together with the tinned produce brought to the service.

The service was followed by the Harvest Lunch of Cottage Pie; it was attended by 25 guests and raised the sum of £219 for Church funds.

The Remembrance Day service was led by Ian Waring Green and was attended by 39 people; the sum of £376 was donated to the Royal British Legion.

A traditional Christmas service of Lessons and Carols was held on the evening of 15th December with a congregation of 46 adults and 6 children. The tradition of mulled wine and mince pies was observed after the service, and the collection amounting to £203.00 was donated to the "Farms for City Children" charity.

The Annual Carols around the Village event this year was held in the Village Hall due to the appalling weather. It was attended by some 30 adults and 12 children, the Christmas story was retold and Carols were sung to uphold the Christmas tradition. Gifts of Christmas Tree decorations, made in the Holy Land from Olive wood, were given to each child and finally the Children enjoyed a visit from Father Christmas, who distributed gifts to each child in the village.

The Christmas Midnight Eucharist was conducted by Ian Waring Green using the permitted Communion by Extension at Festivals rule. The Church was beautifully decorated for this joyful occasion and the congregation numbered 39, with 26 communicants.

Social Functions

The main social aspects of Church life are very closely linked with village life; the Churchwardens and members of the PCC are responsible for producing the village newsletter, serve on the Village Hall committee and lead the village fete committee which in turn is responsible for the fete, village carols and other social events.

Weddings

None this year.

Funerals

Sadly the funeral was held on 25th October for Anthea Mayne, a long-standing member of the All Saints congregation. The service was attended by 59 people.

Baptisms

There was one baptism during the year, when we welcomed Finley White into the Church.

Churchyard

Mike and Sarah Routledge have continued to undertake the task of maintaining the Churchyard throughout the year and we are grateful to them for keeping the area neat and tidy at all times.

Church Flowers

We are as always grateful to Mrs Philly Sargent and her band of flower arrangers for the beautiful Altar flowers and wonderful festival decorations.

Family Events

Mothering Sunday - a special service was held to mark the day and was attended by 18 adults. Bunches of spring flowers and cakes were distributed to members of the congregation and the mums in the village community.

Easter Day - we held an Easter Egg hunt in the Churchyard for the younger members of the congregation.

Advent Tea Party – On Sunday 1st December we held a tea party in the village hall to celebrate the start of Advent and to which all members of the village were invited for a cup of tea, cake and a chat. The children made Advent Candle Rings and participated in other activities and Ian Waring Green explained the significance of each candle in the countdown to Christmas. Donations to Church funds amounted to £80.00.

Advent calendars with a simple religious theme were given to each family in the village as part of our outreach initiative. In all some 32 were distributed, the cost being borne by the Arle Valley Benefice Education Trust.

Dessert Island Discs

The Church held a further social event; “Dessert Island Discs” was held in the Church on 23rd March. Eight local celebrities were interviewed by the host, Joanna Gray, and invited to choose a piece of music with special meaning to them. During the interval delicious Desserts and wine were served. Our thanks go to the organisers and generous supporters for a successful evening raising £270 for church funds.

Church Finance

The Financial life of our Church has now stabilised in regard to our day-to-day banking and, as mentioned in our previous report, we now have banking facilities with Lloyds Bank.

The PCC is grateful to our treasurer Sue Gray for her work in this respect and to our insurers for maintaining our Church Cover during this time.

The treasurer's report attached gives examined accounts for the last year.

We are, as always, grateful for generous financial donations and for the supply of heating oil and other consumable items used in Church life.

We were also fortunate that there were community events in the village this year and members of the PCC play a significant role in the organisation of such events. The village was also able to hold the traditional Village Fete on 15th September which was a great success, and the sum of £3577 was added to Church funds.

As always, the major part of our Church expenditure goes to the Winchester Diocese to cover the cost of Clergy and Diocese expenses. Largely thanks to the funds from the village Fete, our fund-raising efforts and some generous donations from village members, we were able to pay our full share in 2024.

We hope to be able to meet our Common Mission Fund target for 2025, but with the increase in the amount we are asked to pay and the work required over the next two years for maintenance to the Church building, this will prove to be challenging. The PCC is working on ways to engage the Parishioners to join the Parish Giving Scheme to bolster our funds, and on grant applications to help with the repair costs.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of the PCC to hold minimum funds in our current account with Lloyds Bank whilst investing our reserves with CBF Church of England Deposit Fund.

The PCC also maintains a Fabric reserve fund which is held with CBF but kept separate from our general expenditure.

Church Website

Our Church website www.allsaintsbighton.com is administered by our webmaster, Chris James. This is linked to the Bighton village website and the Arle Valley website, and provides details of our services and forthcoming events, Church personnel and various policies we have adopted. The site provides an email contact page so that the outside world can contact us. It also posts pictures of the Church and a potted history of the Church in Bighton.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Our policy is in place and our administrator is Chris James. Details of the policy can be found on our website and the church noticeboard.

Safeguarding Policy

Under Church of England regulations we are required to adopt a safeguarding policy of Children and Vulnerable adults. It has been decided that all churches within the Arle Valley Benefice will adopt the same policy and have the same safeguarding officers. Under the terms of the C of E policy all PCC members, in addition to being DBS checked, will be required to complete a short safeguarding awareness course online.

Details of the policy can be found on the Church website and the notice board.

Health & Safety Policy

The Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessments and Fire Risk Assessments have been revised and are awaiting final approval by the PCC at its next meeting in January.

Church Maintenance

The long-awaited Quinquennial report has been received from our Architect, The Radley House Partnership. The main points are summarized in the following extract

Overall, All Saints' remains in fair condition being well cared for by a conscientious team.

Running repairs within the last quinquennium have seen minor roof defects and included the replacement of the oil boiler and repair of the heating system. Lighting has continued to be upgraded.

Matters requiring attention in the short term include checking the integrity of a dropped ceiling to the South Aisle chapel, which has notably deteriorated, and other longstanding repairs to the ceiling of the Vestry. A further aspect which would benefit from early attention would be the expert consolidation of repointing of friable historic masonry to quoins and buttresses by a conservator mason.

The Church Wardens are seeking advice from the Architect as to suitable contractors to carry out the necessary works.

In addition to this there is considerable damage to the boundary wall at the west end of the Church Yard caused by a tree in the grounds of the Manor and also the possible danger from tree roots passing under the Church Tower. Advice has been sought from a specialist engineer on these problems and the PCC is in discussion with the owners of the Manor on necessary repairs.

A report on the condition of the trees was commissioned and the recommendations are being actioned by a local tree surgeon.

The Future

We are indebted to Ian Waring Green and Revd. Heather Brearey for their leadership and support to us to enable the Church to continue in this Parish.

Following the Bishop's Review we remain part of the Arle Valley Benefice which comprises the four parishes of St. John's, St. Mary's, St Peter's and ourselves.

The future of our Parish looks more secure and we look forward to working with Ian and Heather to promote the mission of the Church in Bighton. We should however remember that our Church is facing ever-increasing financial demands, and it is important that we continue to find ways of increasing our income to strengthen our financial position.

Rector's APCM Report 2025

The APCM is a time to look back and reflect on the year, giving thanks to God for all that has happened and also a time to look to the future and what we would like to see happening in the coming year.

The various reports contained in the APCM report, reveal that it's been a good year in the parish. We have grown. New people have joined and are finding faith.

You the people of the Arle Valley Benefice all deserve a massive well done, and a big thank you. I want to say a particular thank you to all the church wardens and PCC members who give generously of their time as your representatives - to meet with me and help to discern God's will for the parish as we go forward. It's not an easy job and they do it diligently and well and they deserve our thanks. Also due our thanks is Penny our administrator.

As I've reflected on the past year or so ahead of the meeting today, I'm reminded that church is what we make it. We are the people of God, an outpost of his kingdom in our parish. In Christ, we have everything we need, to be the people God is calling us to be and everything we need, to do the things that God is calling us to do.

You might agree that it feels like the Church of England that we thought we knew is passing away, and a new one is being born - but no-one is quite sure what that will look like yet. This is a liminal moment. A time of rapid change. I wonder if the same might be true of our country too. Society seems to be becoming more secular and yet there's a growing interest in Christianity among the young. All promises much and threatens more. Old certainties are being shaken.

We begin this new year looking forward to what the future holds. Our PCC's and I are spending time looking at our future vision, our ministry for the next 5, 10 or 20yrs, we need everyone to help with this.

Let us know about your good ideas your thoughts for the future. And Pray, pray, pray.

Let's listen for the whispers of God beckoning us out with him into the new. Let's learn together - so if something doesn't work as well as we hope it will then let's try again - never giving up, never giving in to despair

Our priority must be to build up the worshipping community and reach out beyond it to draw new people to Jesus, by building on the good things that are going on now, and the many seeds that have been planted over the years. As Rector here I stand as the latest in a long line of predecessors with the graves of some of my predecessors in our churches and a couple of my predecessors still very much alive, I see often to chat to or have coffee with! That all reminds me that I'm just a steward here passing through. And it reminds me too that it's not about me and it's not all up to me. You are the church of God in Alresford, Old Alresford, Bighton, Ovington and Itchen Stoke. The people around you need you, and they especially need you to point them to Jesus.

St Paul reminds us that with Jesus the worst thing is never the last thing. There's always hope. My prayer for us today and for the year ahead is that we would grab hold of that once again and dare to dream about the bright future that God has for us as we walk hand-in-hand together with him.

God Bless you

Reverend Heather Brearey. Rector.