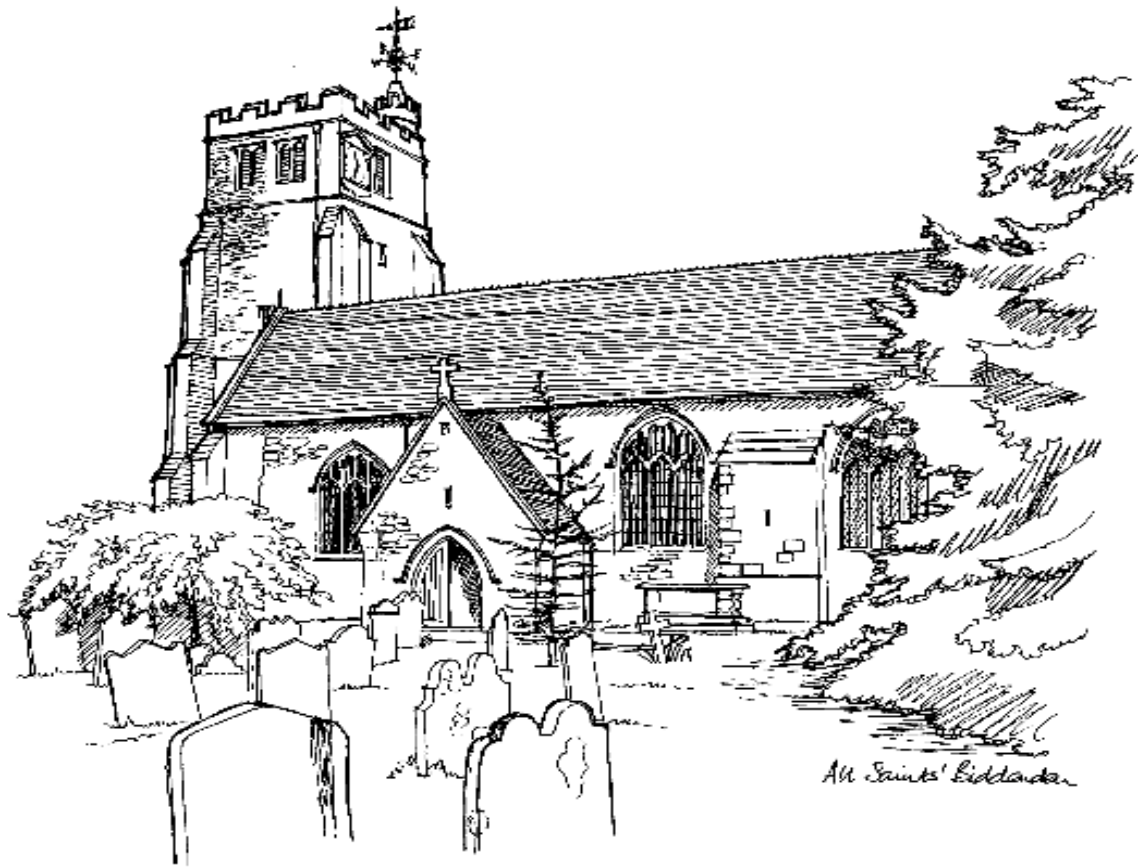


ALL SAINTS, BIDDENDEN



Annual Parochial Church Meeting

and the Vestry Meeting 2022

ALL SAINTS CHURCH BIDDENDEN

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETINGS

Thursday 20th April 2023 at All Saints Church
at 7:00pm for 7.30pm

Opening prayers

Vestry meeting Agenda

1. Appointment of Clerk
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of Vestry Meeting held on 3rd May 2022
4. Election of Churchwardens.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting Agenda

1. Minutes of APCM 2022 held on 3rd May 2022
2. Reports:
 1. Electoral Roll
 2. Churchwardens' reports
 3. PCC Members' Report
 4. Other reports
 5. Financial Review & Statement
3. Reading of Bequests
4. Election of:
 - Deanery Synod Representatives
 - PCC Members
 - Independent Examiner
5. Presentation of the Terrier
6. Priest in Charge remarks
7. AOB & Close of Meeting

Churchwardens' reports (inc. Fabric report)

From Martin Giles

We have now completed a full year with Tess as our new Priest in Charge. I wondered if the role might get easier!!!! We hope that Tess and Jane feel welcome and will be with us for a good number of years.

A big thank you to Ann Courtness, not just for the last year, but for the number of years she toiled as sole Churchwarden.

To all of the PCC, who have been a great support to both wardens and Tess. A special thank you to Julie Lupton, who stands down from the PCC this year, but hopefully will continue as our safeguarding officer and chairing the events committee. To Peter Cutts our treasurer, who gives us very detailed reports of our financial position at each and every meeting.

A huge thank you to everyone who plays their part in the smooth running of All Saints in any way. We are all valuable in whatever role we fulfil and necessary for the Church to function in Biddenden. Finally, and by no means least, a big thank you to Sally, for without her help and support, you might be looking for two Churchwardens.

A very warm welcome to our new PCC's members, which at the time of writing this report, I hope will be four.

So, what have we done in the last year: -

Vlad Pawlik's grandson, Alistair, built a newly constructed notice board using the blueprint from the original.

The Quinquennial report, thankfully, did not show any major works necessary. However, it did highlight the need to replace a number of missing or slipped tiles. This was made far worse by a storm which left us with holes in the roof. This has now been repaired and our grateful thanks to FAB for their financial contribution.

We have now had the reports on the North wall and are instructing the architect to get a specification together so we can get a target amount for the repair.

There has been a subsidence issue with one of our neighbours and it has been deemed that our hedges and a Silver Birch tree are the culprits. We will therefore be seeking planning permission to remove the hedge and fell the tree.

We had an issue with the Church lights, which fortunately turned out to be a transformer problem and sorted fairly quickly.

The boundary wall to Church Cottages has fallen down and we are awaiting news from the Diocese as to who owns the wall.

The PCC have agreed to make alterations to the Lady Chapel and the Remembrance area and we hope to do this in the very near future.

With the help of Linda Webb, I am in the process of updating our Terrier. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a digital version of the original and only had the hard copy. I am hoping that by the APCM it might be nearly complete.

We welcomed Cherry Cornelius as our new Health and Safety officer and by the APCM we hope to have a new policy document in place.

On the worship front, we were honoured to be invited to host the Archdeacons visitation service.

We are also now at the 6-month stage of our new worship pattern and the Biddenden PCC have voted to continue with this pattern.

The Village Community Library has now gained charitable status and continues to grow.

The Thursday morning coffee call in has grown significantly in the last year and has outgrown the space in front of the kitchen. The PCC are investigating ways of increasing this space.

The takeaway pantry was set up by a number of our parishioners and has been serving a need to our village. A big thank you to everyone for their generous donations, to the volunteers that run the Pantry and to Elizabeth Shapiro who has applied for and received a number of sizeable grants. This will enable the Pantry to continue to offer this service to the Biddenden community.

Finally, a big thank you to you all for entrusting me to serve you as Churchwarden for another year.

If we fail to get another Churchwarden to replace Ann, I am sure that I will be able to prevail on the members of the PCC to take some of the workload.

Yours, serving in the name of Christ.

Martin Giles, churchwarden

From Ann Courtness

This will be my last report as Churchwarden as I am stepping down after ten years!

It has been an eventful time, with the saying goodbye to Alex, an interregnum, a pandemic, and a new Priest, Tess, to name a few.

The position of churchwarden has been joyful, hectic, chaotic, busy, responsible, and wonderful, all mixed up together, and I hope that in some small way I have contributed to the worship community of All Saints Church in a positive way.

In these times of economic difficulties, I am proud that we have continued to pay our quota and provide a place for all to worship on Sundays, at weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

It is wonderful that we now have the church fully opened and used by the community library, the pantry and a coffee morning, as well as the concerts and events that we hold every year.

I know that Martin will carry on the work we have done in the last year and know that everyone will support him and the PCC going forward.

Lastly, I need to thank Peter, Abi and Emma for the love and support that they have given me.

Thank you.

Ann Courtness, churchwarden

From the Priest in Charge

In 2022 there have been many things to celebrate in the life of the two churches of All Saints Biddenden and St Michael the Archangel. This was my first year as priest in charge and I have been thrilled with the continued welcome that Jane and I have received in both villages and church communities. We are very grateful for the new friendships we have made, and the wonderful way that the communities care for their neighbours and show support for all the activities of the churches.

Worship Pattern
Throughout last year we continued with the pattern of worship that had been in place prior to the pandemic with a service in each church every Sunday morning, though the timings of these services (9:15am in one church and 11am in the other) were not ideal, and the choir were either split between the churches or only available for one service and not the other. Further, it was difficult for me to stay behind and chat with the congregations over refreshments when I needed to rush to the other church for the second service. Therefore, after a two month consultation with the whole church community we opted for a new service pattern of alternating Sunday services between the two churches at 10am, followed by refreshments. This new pattern began in January 2023 and, in my opinion, it has been working very well so far. The PCCs agreed to review the service pattern after six months in June 2023.

Mission & Ministry Committee

In 2022 I constituted a PCC subcommittee for each church called the 'Mission & Ministry Committee' with a wide remit to consider every aspect of church ministry from Sunday worship to community groups, outreach, faith enquiry, and ministry in the schools. The groups met several times last year and brainstormed ideas around church welcome, family worship, and church reordering among others. They were also key in developing the new service pattern discussed above. The membership of these committees includes all PCC members 'ex-officio' as well as additional participants who have indicated an interest in the ministry and spirituality offered by the church without wishing to take on the full responsibility of the PCC.

Lent Course

During Lent 2022, I ran a Lent course ('Godspeed', by Matt and Julie Canlis) in both Biddenden and Smarden. Despite Covid outbreaks, both sessions were well-attended, especially in Biddenden where there is an established study/home group. It had been my hope that the Lent course would lead to a similar ongoing group in Smarden but sadly has yet to occur. In 2023 we are running a Lent course based on the 'Prayer Course' written by Pete Grieg with around 18 participants at the rectory each week over two sessions.

2023 Enquirer's course – 'Being With'

Over the summer of 2023 I intend to run a new reflective study course for those interested in an experience of what it means to be a Christian, which will be suitable for those who aren't regular churchgoers but are interested in exploring the faith, as well as those who would like to explore their faith afresh in an experiential way. We will be using a new course called "Being With" created by Revds Sam Wells and Sally Hitchiner of St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. The course describes itself as "an introduction to Christianity with a difference. Rather than being a Bible study or a series of arguments to try to convince you that God exists, it starts with the conviction that you already have a wealth of understanding of truth, beauty and goodness that will help you, in the company of others, to recognise God's presence in your life and your everyday experiences".

This course will be followed by Confirmation Classes in the autumn, with Bishop Rose due to perform confirmations in November in Bethersden.

Assemblies & Collective Worship

Since Easter 2022 I have been offering assemblies/collective worship twice a month in John Mayne school in Biddenden, and once a month in Smarden School. Julie Lupton is also leading collective

worship once per month in John Mayne. The Diocese of Canterbury helpfully provides a framework for collective worship for every school day of the year, so this offers good consistency and structure for the children's participation in the Christian liturgical year.

In both schools I have also been invited on several occasions to lead class discussions around various faith topics, such as considering 'what would Jesus do' in the context of various modern ethical situations (e.g. homeless, immigration, poverty, loneliness etc), as well as discussing what it means as a Christian to have faith in a personal God who wants to have a relationship with us.

I still hope that eventually it will be possible to start an 'Open the Book' group to go into the schools once per month to bring the bible stories to life through short acted sketches and narration. Time limitations for both myself and potential volunteers are the biggest hindrance here, but I still hope to start this in due course.

Active Church & Breakfast Church

Active Church has continued to meet once per month at 10:30am on the third Sunday of each month in Smarden. Throughout 2022 we have continued to follow the pattern whereby I suggest a theme, bible story, and possible activities based on Messy Church resources, and the leading families choose which craft activity they would like to bring to share with everyone else. Each activity has associated 'ideas for discussion' which the families can use to launch interesting conversations about faith with the children who attend. Active Church always concludes with a bible story, a song, a prayer, a blessing and drinks and snacks. Over the summer of 2022 the Active Church team hosted a stall at the Jubilee fair on the Minnis and we gave out many contact cards which led to several new families joining Active Church in the autumn. Active Church is co-led by several committed families who are very generous with their time, and Stu Tucker has taken on a significant coordinating role throughout 2022, especially when I have been unable to attend. There remain challenges in how to sustain Active Church as the children grow up and 'move on', and we do not currently as a church offer any intergenerational worship which might bring the younger families, teenagers and the older generations together. I am however having ongoing discussions around what we might be able to offer young adults in particular in terms of opportunities for worship and authentic discussions about life and faith.

In All Saints Biddenden, the informal and friendly Breakfast Church continued to share food and worship together on a monthly basis, led by a team of lay people who shared the tasks of putting together the service sheets, leading the worship, giving the reflective talk, and of course providing the all-important breakfast! Breakfast Church is important in the life of All Saints church being entirely developed and led by a lay team of worship leaders. It has a different character to the more formal Eucharistic services and attracts some people who might not otherwise wish to come to a church service.

Occasional Offices

In 2022 I conducted three weddings, nine funerals, ten burials of ashes, and eleven christenings, across the two churches. Five weddings have been booked for our churches so far this year. Often, these events are the only contact that the church has with many local families, and the service we offer can have a lasting impact on people's lives, their faith, and their sense of belonging and connection to the church community. Quite often, recipients of these services are profoundly grateful for them, and make a point of expressing their gratitude. Some have become regular participants in church services (including Active Church) as a result. I am grateful to the vergers, organist, choir, flower arrangers, and bellringers who combine to offer such special services for those as ask for them.

Pastoral Visiting

Despite the busyness of my organisational and liturgical roles, I always relish the opportunity to visit those who have expressed a desire that I should do so. Such visits are always a highlight of my week and invariably a great joy. Because of other commitments, I am not always able to visit people as often as I would like, but over the course of the year, the Revd Jane Horton has also begun making pastoral visits to those who have requested them, and she is also delighted to continue with

this in 2023. The Revd Pearl Anderson, who had been intending to assist with pastoral visiting with older people, decided to step down from active ministry in 2022 and we are grateful for her long service in our parishes over the years. Many lay people continue to visit their neighbours and friends on a regular basis to ensure that they are well and to support them in whatever needs they may have, and this is a beautiful heartfelt ministry that I continue to be grateful for and pray for.

Takeaway Pantry & Coffee Mornings

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the new Takeaway Pantry that has been set up to run out of All Saints Church in Biddenden. Set up by an initial team of three, the pantry gives away substantial numbers of food and toiletry items every month, with no need for 'vouchers' or other means testing. Even when the church is locked due to the scaffolding inside, pantry items are still made available for free from the porch. Over the course of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, around £4000 has been raised to support the pantry's work from various funders including the Biddenden Consolidated Charity, Tadah Theatre Company, Tractorfest, and the Kent Community Foundation, as well as many personal donations of food and cash support. A team of half a dozen volunteers now run the pantry and it has been a terrific support for the community during this period of rising costs of living. Because the pantry runs at the same time as the coffee morning and the community library within All Saints church, this has led to a significant interaction and 'cross-fertilisation' of friendships and ideas between these groups, and the coffee morning community has grown in particular from around half-a-dozen regulars at the beginning of 2022, to around 20 at the end of the year, to the extent that we are now running short on space! This has been wonderful to see, and I look forward to these communities flourishing in 2023.

At St Michael's in Smarden, we have also restarted the coffee mornings that used to meet in the church building pre-pandemic. This group of volunteers (coordinated by Alex Demery) and participants gathers on Friday mornings in the church for 'proper' coffee and a catchup and has already reached around a dozen regulars. I continue to believe in the importance of forging greater links between the churches and communities at every opportunity, and I will seek to encourage anyone who feels drawn to use our church buildings in this inclusive and community-minded way. The only difficulty is the rapidly increasing cost of heating our buildings for these community purposes during the winter. In 2022 both churches received significant grants towards heating bills, but it is uncertain whether this will be repeated in 2023.

As always, I want to acknowledge the multitude of people who offer their time and resources to the church in hidden or humble ways and express my deep gratitude for all the work that you do.

With every blessing,

Revd Tess Lowe

Priest in Charge, All Saints Biddenden and St Michael the Archangel, Smarden.

Annual report and financial statements

All Saints Biddenden Parochial Church Council 2022

Administrative Information

Address: All Saints Church, Biddenden, High Street, Biddenden TN27 8AH. The parish is a joint benefice with St. Michael the Archangel Smarden. As of 1st February 2012, it became formally part of a Group Ministry with the parishes of Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch, within the Diocese of Canterbury, Church of England.

All Saints Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the Incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of All Saints Church, Biddenden. From March 2021 to January 2022, All Saints church was in interregnum after Rev'd Alex Bienfait left. The vacancy was successfully filled in February 2022 with Rev'd Tess Lowe.

Objectives and Activities

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

The PCC objectives and activities are guided by our Church plan.

We want our Church first and foremost to be a community of Christian Action.

Our Vision

- We will grow a Church that is open to all
- We will develop and display confidence as Christians
- We will seek to serve the community

Our Mission

- To provide a warm welcome
- To support each other in our spiritual growth
- To be visible, capable and available as Christian helpers in our community
- To encourage the spiritual development of young people

PCC Membership:

PCC members who have served from 1st January 2022 to the date on which this report was approved are:

Incumbent:

Filled in February 2022 by Rev'd Tess Lowe

Churchwardens:

Ann Courtness

Martin Giles

(Note that at the APCM in October 2020, Biddenden PCC opted out of the 6-Year Term limit for Churchwardens)

Representative to Deanery Synod:

Ann Courtness- appointed in May 2022

PCC Members:

Judy Grey (June 2021 to May 2022, 1st term 1st year)

Peter Cutts (co-opted December 2016, elected March 2017, re-elected June 2021 2nd term 2nd year)

Roger Martin (elected June 2021, 1st term)

Julie Lupton (from May 2017, re-elected June 2020 2nd term, 3rd year)

During 2022, the PCC met on 7 occasions, and 2 times in conjunction with Smarden PCC. Attendance was 86%. Judy Grey stepped down from the PCC in May 2022. Joanna Winston was elected onto the PCC in May 2022. Julie Lupton will be stepping down from the PCC in 2023. Ann Courtness will be stepping down as churchwarden in 2023.

PCC business - main topics covered:

Combined PCC

- Benefice, Group Ministry and Deanery matters
- Safeguarding
- Agreement of Parish Quota split between Biddenden and Smarden for 2023
- New Sunday service pattern
- PCC Employee Registration Contracts

Biddenden PCC

- Deanery matters
- Maintenance of church fabric
- Churchyard maintenance and improvement
- Health & Safety
- Mission Plan
- Worship patterns
- Pastoral care
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- Parish Safeguarding Policy
- Finance, Budgets
- Charitable giving
- Fund-raising and social events
- Parish Magazine
- John Mayne School
- Friends of All Saints Biddenden
- All Saints Food Pantry
- Biddenden Community Library

Achievement and Performance 2022

(Demonstration of public benefit)

Ministry was led by the **Rev'd Tess Lowe**, Priest in Charge from February 2022. **All Saints Biddenden** has a **lay worship team** consisting of **Ann Courtness, Martin Giles and Julie Lupton**.

We greatly appreciate the valued support of **Revd Sue Rose & Revd Mike Rose** from Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch benefice, **Revd Canon David Trustram** a retired priest from Tenterden and **Revd Canon Paul Miller** from the Ashford Deanery who have assisted us with covering services during the year. The support from **Archdeacon Darren Miller** is much appreciated with Diocesan matters throughout the year.

Administration

The Benefice office operates from a 20m2 timber cabin constructed in December 2014, located in the front garden of Biddenden Rectory. The cabin, which was financed jointly by the Diocese and the Benefice, provides a separate work base for the part-time Benefice Administrator Tanya Ling and a Benefice meeting venue.

Our Church Plan

The PCC's main priorities for 2022 were:

- *To continue to address the financial situation*
- *Continue to run weekly services*

The ongoing financial support of the Friends of All Saints Biddenden is paramount to the upkeep of the church fabric.

Statistics for Biddenden Parish	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Baptisms	5	3	1	6	7	8	15
Weddings & Blessings	1	1	3	3	2	7	6
Funerals	9	11	7	12	17	19	11
Estimated Usual Sunday Attendance	38	NA*	NA*	34	33	37	45
Electoral roll	64	58	59	61	59	80	83

** Due to Covid pandemic lockdowns, the Church of England did not report Sunday Attendance numbers for 2020 and 2021.*

Worship

We aim to offer a range of worship to suit different ages and preferences for worship. In 2022, the scope of worship at All Saints included Sunday morning Parish Eucharist using Common Worship (CW), 8am Communion from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) Lay-led Morning Worship (third Sunday of the month) and for families and children a monthly Active Church. BCP Evensong was offered on the third Sunday of the month.

After a two-month consultation in 2022 with the whole church community, we have changed to a new service pattern of alternating Sunday services between the two churches at 10am, followed by refreshments. This new pattern began in January 2023.

Breakfast Church

Throughout 2022 Breakfast Church met on the third Sunday each month. This lay-led service always begins at 0930 with a shared breakfast snack, usually sausages in rolls served with freshly made coffee or tea.

The service, at 10am, follows the usual lectionary readings but is a more informal service, allowing time for reflection and discussion on the topic. Each month a different liturgy is produced to reflect the theme. While we enjoy singing well known and popular hymns, we also have the opportunity to learn new songs.

This popular service has been 18 and 25 regular attendees.

In 2023 the service time pattern has changed, and Breakfast Church is now on the second Sunday each month.

Active Church is a monthly "Messy Church" style of service that takes place in Smarden. Sessions start with activities, all of which are designed to link in with the theme of the day. Everybody comes together at the end for a summary and retelling of the main theme/story.

Music and choir

During the past year our choir has enjoyed singing at the main services held in both churches. We have sung anthems for the Diamond Jubilee, harvest and Christmas, as well as singing, in March, Dysons Magnificat and Nunc dimittis in C minor. This was the first time in over 50 years a choral setting had been sung in Smarden at Evensong.

At some services we have sung a Psalm during Communion, this has been well received, so we will continue throughout the next year.

Practices are held on Friday evenings at 7pm, alternating between churches. These practices are informal and new members would be welcome.

I would like to thank Linda and Tony Webb for their help in doing the admin for the choir, Tess for conducting the anthems and all the choristers for their hard work and support. *Mark Wilson, organist and choir master*

Sidespeople

Throughout the year we have been lucky enough to always depend on a reliable group of people who act as sidesmen at every service; calling on willing volunteers, who do not appear on our permanent list, for services with larger congregations.

Changes in service times has led to a slight variation in our rota. We currently have Julie Lupton & Elizabeth Rickwood on the 1st. Sunday. Pamela Littlewood for Breakfast Church. Christopher Hautot & Joanna Winston 3rd. week & John Betts for the 4th. Denise Bennewith stands in as our reserve. *Joanna Winston, sidesperson co-ordinator.*

Community Library

The library was originally a church PCC initiative, set up in late 2021, to help the community come out of lockdown. It was designed to fulfil three objectives:

1. As a community fellowship project
2. As a church outreach opportunity
3. As a potential income stream for the church.

In April 2022 the library became an independent small charity run by a board of trustees. This move was designed to stabilize the library financial status and create more opportunity for it to raise funds. The library now contributes £3,000 a year in rental income to the church and splits many fund-raising events with the church to support upkeep.

The library is managed by the board of trustees and run by 24 volunteers. It now has over 2,500 books on its shelves which are changed regularly. There are 210 active members, which equates to almost 10% of the village community and has over 100 books out on loan at any one time. This makes Biddenden Community Library statistically more successful than any other Kent County library.

The library now offers regular activity groups of:

- A pre-school read & rhyme group on Saturday mornings
- A Knit and natter group on alternate Tuesday afternoons
- A puzzle group.

These group activities have kept the church building alive. By the library volunteers manning the library three sessions a week it has allowed the church to be open for visitors and other activities to

take place, including the Church Pantry. It also links with the Church Thursday coffee mornings and supplies tea, coffee, milk and biscuits for all regular library and church events.

The community library hopes to continue to work with the church PCC throughout the coming year and into the future in maintaining All Saints church as the centre of our village community.

The community Library Trust AGM and election of officers is due to be held on 9th September 2023 when the year-end reports and statement of accounts will be open to view. The AGM is open to all registered library members. Further detail can be found on the library website at: www.biddendenlibrary.org.uk. *Roger Martin, Library Trust Chairman*

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection – Safeguarding

Policy and procedures: this PCC takes seriously the responsibility to protect all children and vulnerable adults. Diocesan guidelines on the protection of both are followed. The PCC adopts annually the Child and the Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. This is done at the first meeting of the PCC following the APCM. The PCC ensures the policy is prominently displayed in the church along with other statutory notices of important contact numbers. These also appear on the church website alongside copies of the safeguarding statement and policies.

Training:

- PCC members have been encouraged to keep their safeguarding training up to date. The PSO records all training undertaken.
- All new library volunteers continue to have a simple safeguarding awareness talk as part of their induction.
- The volunteers involved in the Take-away Pantry have been encouraged to complete the online Basic Safeguarding Awareness course.
- There is still some training to be completed by the bell-ringers and the welcomers have asked to be included. Julie Lupton is going to complete a course to enable her to deliver courses at Basic and Foundation level in person to help those who prefer not to do online training.
- Any member of the congregation who would like to do some training in Safeguarding may do so. They simply need to contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer for directions.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks: are carried out on everyone who is in a position of responsibility according to Diocesan guidelines. These disclosures must now be renewed every three years rather than every five years. At present, all those in positions requiring this have a valid disclosure.

If you would like any more information relating to our policies, please contact the person/ people below:

The Parish Disclosure Officer for the Benefice is Julie Lupton.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer for Biddenden is Julie Lupton.

Collaboration: Other Churches and the Community

The Benefice of Biddenden and Smarden is part of a Group ministry which also includes the parishes of Bethersden, High Halden and Woodchurch which are run by Rev'd Sue Rose and Mike Rose. Group services are held a few times a year.

Deanery

All Saints Biddenden is part of the Romney and Tenterden Deanery. Deanery Synod representatives vote at Deanery Synod meetings, and vote to elect representatives to General Synod of the Church of England.

Fund-raising and Events

During 2022 a full programme of fund-raising events happened. See accounts for final amounts raised through these events. These included:

Candlemas Supper, Lent fundraising for Dandelion Time, Christian Aid Week, The Flower Festival, Sutton Valance Choral society concert, The Fete, Kent Police Choir concert, The Big Breakfast, Community Christmas Craft Fair.

2023 programme includes:

1. Candlemas Supper (January)
2. Piano and poetry recital (February)
3. Lent Charity fundraising (March)
4. A quiz night (April)
5. Christian Aid Week (May)
6. Flower Festival (May)
7. Ashford Community Choir concert (June)
8. The Church Fete (July)
9. A harvest-time evening of music etc (October)
10. The Big Breakfast (November)
11. Community Christmas Craft Fair (November).

The committee meets regularly to ensure events are spread as evenly as possible throughout the year and that there is communication with other organisations such as FAB and the library who also organise events and make demands on local businesses.

The Events & Fundraising committee members are extremely grateful to all those whose support of every event is crucial.

The committee comprises: Gillian Burtenshaw, Sally Giles, Julie Lupton, Jeannette Oatway, Liz Rickwood and Elizabeth Shapiro.

Thursday Coffee Call-in

Thursday coffee mornings continue to be popular and well attended with an average of 18 to 20 coming regularly. Numbers are swelling with a lot of local folk who now rely on Thursday mornings to catch up with friends at what has become a local community hub.

We are joined on 1st Thursday of the month by pupils from John Mayne School, who help make and serve coffees and then help clear up after. Good interaction between the young people from the school and those attending for coffee.

My thanks to all those who fill the rota and give up their time to make and serve the coffee. *Sally Giles.*

Church flowers

Sadly, our talented but very small team of arrangers have not been able to undertake many flower dedications this year. The number of people who have asked for dedications has dropped significantly since Covid. Austerity combined with the increased price of flowers has caused people to look at other ways or remembering their loved ones. In order to maintain a floral display on the altar throughout the year, we purchased some high end silk flowers and now place these arrangements on the altar in the absence of a floral dedication.

However, we did provide posies for Mothering Sunday- they were blessed in church and welcomed by the recipients.

This year the flower fund paid for the flowers used at the Flower Festival, using the money that had accrued during Covid, however, this was done without precedence as the fund is reliant on donations and a surplus needs to be maintained to provide flowers at Christmas, Easter and harvest and any other special occasion celebrated in church.

Harvest was celebrated with beautiful floral displays, thanks to Jenny Cox, Nikki Ayling and Sally Giles for their attention to detail and inspirational arrangements. Thanks are also due to Julie Tester and Laura Neale for erecting and decorating the Christmas trees in church and the porch, what a lovely welcome to the Christmas celebrations!!

With Christmas now past and Easter approaching, our thoughts once again start to focus on the Flower Festival which takes place over the late May Bank Holiday weekend. This year's theme "A Moment in Time" provides an opportunity to display special memories of a personal, national or

religious nature. Last year's event was a huge success both financially and socially, it has clearly become a "must see" event on the Kent social calendar. The Festival can only survive if there are sufficient volunteers and I am pleased to say we have attracted several new members to the Flower team, but there is plenty of room for additional people to join the team. *Jeannette Oatway.*

Parish Magazine

The magazine continues in its aim of serving the church, the village community and acting as a link between the two. It remains the case that we, as the village church, are privileged to be the publishers of Biddenden's main channel of communication and also providers of Christian content to every home.

As ever, I would like to thank all those who contribute written and photographic items. It is a great strength that every issue contains so much which is sent in by residents of the village, usually in the teens of items. The colour pages are great for photos. We could do with more contributions from active members of All Saints would be appreciated.

The deadline for contributions is always 13th of the month, but I greatly appreciate it if items can be sent in before then, because of the need to allocate space and plan the layout.

The circulation seems to be much as last year. In the eight months in which readers pay for the magazine, we sell over 400, while the quarterly free circulation continues to rise as new homes are built. We currently send out around 1400 copies in those months.

The magazine does well financially. Biddenden Parish Council now pays in full the printing bills for the quarterly issues, and we have a very healthy advertising income, running into the thousands of pounds. This is despite the fact that we limit the space given over to advertisements, so that they do not dominate.

As in previous years, I would like to thank my wife Anne, who spends many hours administering the subscriptions, "bagging up" magazines, taking them to distributors and delivering some of them herself. She has also run the advertising for 10 years. We are now looking for someone to take over from her the administration of the advertising. Please consider if you might be able to carry out this valuable task. As mentioned above, it raises a large amount of money for the church.

In the last year we have thanked Gillian Burtenshaw, who for many years calmly and efficiently carried out the large task of organising the distribution of the quarterly issues. We are very grateful to Chris Lang for taking this over and to the library volunteers who help by counting out and bagging the copies.

Many thanks also to all the army of people who deliver the magazines and, in some cases, collect subscription money. *Paul Webster, magazine editor.*

Website

Revd Tess updated the website during 2022 to include blogs on the Food Pantry and Flower Festival. Day to day management of the website is carried out by the church administrator, Tanya Ling and Revd Tess Lowe.

Churchyard

Last year saw two large areas of the Churchyard left to grow wild through the year. While this drew favourable comments from many, the work required to cut the areas at the end of the season was excessive and unmanageable with the few volunteers that we have. This year will see a much-reduced area of wilding.

We continue to operate with a shortage of volunteers despite repeated recruitment drives. Last year saw us operate with just 7 volunteer mowers to cover the 12 areas. This year sees us with 2 new volunteers and a long-term sick returner, while losing another to long term sickness. The result is that we now have 9 working volunteers and 2 volunteers unable to mow.

The Church equipment continues to hold up well with all 3 mowers recently returned from service. A number of trees in the Churchyard were damaged by high winds requiring extensive removal work. The hedge by the NW entrance to the Churchyard was removed (bar 1 bush) at the request of the

Church Warden. There was subsequent discussion about the legality of this and so work was stopped pending further instruction.

The brick wall between the cottages and the Churchyard by the main entrance has partially collapsed. The damaged area was cordoned off pending investigation as to who is responsible for the wall.
Tony Burtenshaw, churchyard co-ordinator.

Health and Safety

An enthusiastic local volunteer Cherry Cornelius has come forward as our new Health and Safety Officer with lots of H&S experience. She has attended a recent PCC meeting in 2023 and is working with our churchwardens to get our H&S policies up to date. No H&S issues were raised last year.

2022 Trustees Annual Financial Report and Accounts

Financial Review

The PCC's cash in bank (from all accounts) at the start of the year was £16,718, and at 31st December stood at £19,901, representing a cash surplus of £3,183 for the year. A transfer of £5,000 from the Church's investment account had been necessary in October to avoid a current account overdraft.

In summary, the Church's 2022 finances have ended the year in relatively good shape, especially when compared with the COVID years of 2020 and 2021, when annual net cash deficits of over £16,000 were incurred. In 2022, before the £5,000 transfer from investment reserves is taken into account, the deficit was £1,670.

If transfers from our investment reserves are disregarded (£5,000 in 2022, £20,000 in 2021) then total receipts in 2022 were significantly higher than in 2021. This was due to a variety of factors:

- Overall giving was 14% higher in 2022.
- Receipts for weddings and funerals were 60% higher in 2022, almost to pre-COVID levels.
- Receipts for charity appeals were 200% higher, boosted by the Ukraine Crisis appeal.
- Most significantly, receipts from fundraising events were over £5,500 (150%) higher than in 2021 and has seen the best results since 2016, with the Flower Festival, Church Fete and Big Breakfast being very successful. This is a testament to the great efforts of all involved in our fundraising and we are very grateful.
- In mid-2022, we started receiving monthly rental payments (currently £250 p.m.) from the Biddenden Community Library.
- In December, we were awarded an energy support grant of £4,400 from a Diocesan fund. This fund will be very helpful later in 2023, when our energy costs will rise sharply.

Total payments in 2022 were some 7% lower than in 2021. This was primarily due to lower Church upkeep costs in 2022. In 2021, we incurred significant expenditures on architect fees, internal scaffolding, a remote structural survey (tilt meters), the South Chapel repairs. In 2022, the most significant upkeep expenditures included new floodlights (£3,277) in April, and quinquennial inspection fees (£900) in September. In 2022, our requested Parish Share contribution was over 7% lower than in 2021. On the other hand, utility costs (primarily gas and electricity) in 2022 were almost double those incurred in 2021, reflecting the increased use of the Church. Also, charitable giving in 2022 was over double that in 2021, mainly boosted by the Ukraine Crisis Appeal.

During 2022, the PCC's total assets have reduced by about 12% (£6,300), primarily reflecting the transfer of funds from the investment account to support the Church's current account.

For 2023, an optimistic outlook might be deserved with respect to giving and fundraising and hopefully we can depend on a solid net income from the wonderful parish magazine. Also, we now have a rental income from the Biddenden Community Library. On the other hand, our current fixed energy (gas & electricity) contract will expire in June, at which point our utility costs will increase very significantly. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that we can depend on much more financial support from the Friends of All Saints Biddenden. The budget for 2023 assumed another transfer of funds from our investment account might be necessary to avoid a current account overdraft.

Reserves Policy

It is current PCC policy to try and maintain a balance of unrestricted funds equivalent to around three months of unrestricted payments. This is held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow and to meet potential emergencies. The average for a three-month period of unrestricted payments in 2022 has been around £17,000. At year-end, the balance of unrestricted cash held in our bank accounts was £10,090. However, in a future emergency, the Church could draw on its investment assets, which were valued at 31st December at £25,900.

Statement of Receipts and Payments

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary Receipts :					
Planned giving		21,224	-	21,224	15,478
Collections at services		4,120	-	4,120	954
All other giving	9a	3,282	1,013	4,294	20,497
Gift Aid recovered		6,090	-	6,090	4,125
		34,716	1,013	35,729	41,055
Fundraising activities	9b	9,251	-	9,251	3,594
Investment income	9c	5,919	-	5,919	21,221
Church activities	9d	19,534	7,775	27,309	16,964
Total receipts		69,419	8,788	78,207	82,834
PAYMENTS					
Church activities :					
Parish Share and fees	10a	37,728	-	37,728	40,267
Joint Benefice costs		7,920	-	7,920	8,278
Church running costs	10b	14,376	5,272	19,648	25,787
Mission giving and donation	10c	2,209	952	3,161	1,367
		62,233	6,224	68,457	75,699
Cost of generating funds	10d	6,422	-	6,422	5,716
Total Payments		68,656	6,224	74,880	81,415
Excess of Receipts over Payments		764	2,564	3,327	1,418
Adjustments					
Plus: Previous adjustments		-	-	-	338
Plus: Net cash flow from external accounts	7	439	-	439	-
Less: Income derived in 2022 but banked in 2023		(583)	-	(583)	-
		(144)	-	(144)	338
Excess of receipts over payments - adjusted		619	2,564	3,183	1,756
Cash in bank and at hand at 01 January		7,524	9,194	16,718	14,962
Cash in bank and at hand at 31 December		8,144	11,757	19,901	16,718

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Cash fund balances					
Church current account (NatWest)		5,510	11,757	17,268	14,524
Flower account (Lloyds)		809	-	809	1,707
P.Mag. Advertising account (Lloyds)		724	-	724	488
P.Mag. Subscription account (PayPal)		1,101	-	1,101	-
		8,144	11,757	19,901	16,718
Other Monetary Assets					
Gift Aid recoverable	4	760	-	760	772
Other		-	-	-	-
		760	-	760	772
Investment Assets					
PCC General Investment Fund	5	25,897	-	25,897	35,168
Other		-	-	-	-
		25,897	-	25,897	35,168
Assets retained for Church use					
Churchyard upkeep equipment	6	-	-	-	210
Other		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	210
Liabilities					
		-	-	-	-
Net Assets					
		34,801	11,757	46,559	52,868

Notes to the Accounts

1. The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared, with the exception of some minor adjustments, in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, using the Receipts and Payments basis, and is the method recommended by the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance (CDBF) for accounts of this type.
2. The format of these accounts follows, as far as possible, guidance from the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Finance. The Receipts and Payments statement presented here is a simple record of monies received and payments made in Calendar Year 2022 and a reconciliation to bank account

statements. It is not an accounting profit and loss statement. Similarly, the Statement of Assets and Liabilities is not a true accounting balance sheet.

3. The Statement of Receipts and Payments presented here reflect cash movements in (i) the All Saints Biddenden PCC General Fund bank account (NatWest), (ii) the Flower Account (Lloyds), (iii) the Parish Magazine Advertising Account (Lloyds), and (iv) the Magazine subscription account (PayPal). It does not incorporate the Church's investment funds (CCLA).
4. Gift Aid recoverable represents outstanding claims for November and December 2022, which should be paid to us in early 2023.
5. For the Investment Assets (managed by CCLA), the drop in value in 2022 was due to a £5,000 transfer to the PCC's current account and also due to unfavourable market movements through the year. This meant that dividend income was also reduced (see Note 9c).
6. Churchyard upkeep equipment (mowers and strimmers) has been fully depreciated in 2022.
7. For Adjustments to the accounts, the "External Accounts" represent (i) the Flower Account, (ii) the Magazine Advertising account and (iii) the Magazine Subscription account.
8. Movements and balances for restricted funds during 2022 are summarised in the table below:

Restricted Funds	Bal. b/fwd	Receipts	Payments	Bal. c/fwd
	£	£	£	£
Church Fabric & Upkeep	901	1,609	2,389	122
Churchyard Upkeep	540	-	540	-
Benefice and Choir	1,459	65	-	1,524
Tower and Bells	1,007	-	-	1,007
In Need!	1,195	1,300	496	1,999
Utilities & Floodlighting	125	4,835	639	4,321
North Aisle Repairs	100	-	-	100
Lent Appeal - 2021	-	456	456	-
B.Comm.Library	2,160	523	1,705	978
Total	7,487	8,788	6,224	10,050

Notes on Restricted Funds:

In a change from previous reports, the Flower Account has not been included as a restricted fund. The opening balance total in the table above is therefore £1,707 less than the balance carried forward presented in the 2021 report.

For Church Fabric and Upkeep restricted fund receipts primarily represent reclaimed VAT on upkeep expenditure in previous years. The payments represent the new floodlighting installation.

The In Need! Fund receipts were all donations for the Take-Away Pantry.

The Lent Appeal receipts were donated to the Dandelion Time charity.

The receipts for the Biddenden Community Library have been held here for convenience and are to be transferred to a separate bank account in 2023 and this account will be closed.

9. Further break-down of Receipts:

RECEIPTS	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
a) All other giving				
Sundry Donations	868	-	868	6,758
Charity Appeals	1,896	456	2,352	833
General Fund	517	-	517	244
Preservation Fund	-	122	122	60
Floodlighting	-	435	435	341
Friends of Biddenden (FAB) Donations	-	-	-	9,756
Parish Council Donations	-	-	-	896
Other	-	-	-	2,785
	3,282	1,013	4,294	21,672
b) Fundraising activities				
Candlemas Supper	143	-	143	-
Flower Festival	3,412	-	3,412	-
Church Fete	1,925	-	1,925	2,113
Ride and Stride	183	-	183	290
Big Breakfast	1,774	-	1,774	975
Sutton Valence Choir	300	-	300	-
Kent Police Choir	1,514	-	1,514	216
	9,251	-	9,251	3,594
c) Investment income				
Transfer from investment funds	5,000	-	5,000	20,000
Dividends from investment funds	919	-	919	1,221
	5,919	-	5,919	21,221
d) Church activities				
Book Stall	249	-	249	72
Parish Magazine	11,859	-	11,859	12,102
Weddings / Funerals / Memorials	5,455	-	5,455	3,615
Other	1,972	7,775	9,747	-
	19,534	7,775	27,309	15,789

10. Further break-down of Payments:

PAYMENTS	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
a) Parish Share and Fees				
Diocesan quota	36,126	-	36,126	38,896
CDBF Statutory Fees	1,602	-	1,602	1,371
	37,728	-	37,728	40,267
b) Church running expenses				
Church Upkeep	4,786	2,389	7,175	17,274
Insurance	4,738	-	4,738	4,625
Utilities	2,726	639	3,365	1,802
Services Upkeep	805	-	805	703
Churchyard Upkeep	387	540	926	745
Other - transfers	934	1,705	2,639	637
	14,376	5,272	19,648	25,787
	-	-		
c) Mission giving and donation				
Royal British Legion	163	-	163	148
In Need! fund donations	-	496	496	525
Lent Appeal - Dandelion Time	-	456	456	694
British Red Cross - Ukraine Crisis Appeal	1,153	-	1,153	-
Bishop's Justice Appeal	826	-	826	-
The Children's Society	67	-	67	-
	2,209	952	3,161	1,367
d) Cost of generating funds				
Parish Magazine Costs	5,616	-	5,616	5,432
Fundraising	806	-	806	284
Bookstall / Gen. Trading	-	-	-	-
	6,422	-	6,422	5,716

Parochial Church Council of All Saints Church, Biddenden

Independent Examiner's Report

To the Parochial Church Council, All Saints Church, Biddenden, Kent.

This report on the financial statements of the PCC for the year ended 31st December, 2022 which are set out in this document, is in respect of the examination carried out in accordance with the Church Accounting regulations 2006 ("the Regulations") and section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act")

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and examiner

The PCC members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC members consider that an audit, as set out in section 144 (2) of the Act, is not required for this year but that an independent examination is carried out.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under the charity law but is eligible for independent examination, it has been my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. The examination has included a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It has also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and sought where necessary, explanations from you, as Trustees, concerning any such matters. As this has not been an audit, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view'; the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Report

Following examination of the accounts, I can confirm the following:

- * Accounting records confirm the requirement for independent examination, rather than audit
- * Following analytical review, I have obtained an understanding of the PCC's organisation, accounting system, activities and nature of its assets, liabilities, incoming resources and application of resources for planning purposes
- * Accounting records are in accordance with sections 130 and 133 of the Act
- * Financial statements follow applicable rules on form and content
- * No particular matters have come to my attention

Thus, from the information supplied to me, these accounts, prima facie, represent an appropriate view of Income and Expenditure of All Saints Church, Biddenden, for the year ended 31st December, 2022.

David Spry Esq.,
Little Crampton Farm,
High Halden,
Kent, TN26 3HR



Date: 27th March, 2023.