**Trustees Annual Report and Annual Finance Report**

**The Parochial Church Council of**

**St Leonard’s, Denton and St Mary’s, Tarring Neville**

**For the year ended 31st December 2024**

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| St Leonard's Church, Heighton Road, Denton, Newhaven |
| St Mary's Church, Tarring Neville, Newhaven |
| **Independent Examiner:** Christopher J Roberts, Abbotts Lodge, Hawth Hill, Seaford  BN25 2RD |
| **Bankers:** Barclays Bank UK PLC, Calverley Road Branch, Tunbridge Wells |
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**Parochial Church Council of**

**St Leonard’s, Denton**

**And**

**St Mary’s, Tarring Neville**

**Trustees Annual Report for 2024**

**Structure, governance and management**

The Parochial Church Council is a charity, but is exempt from registration with the Charity Commission within the meaning of section 30 of the Charities Act 2011. Its governing document is the Parochial Councils (Powers) Measure 1956.

During the year the following served as members of the Parochial Church Council.

**Ex-officio Members**

Priest-in-Charge Rev Michael Milmine Chair

Associate Vicar Rev Marcus Mak Joint Chair from May 2024

**Elected Members**

Paul Giles Treasurer from May 2024

Ann Anderson Secretary

Nicky Still Churchwarden

Maria Greco Churchwarden &

Deanery Synod (term 2023-2026)

Ruth Reynolds Safeguarding Officer – left March 2024

Church Administrator – left March 24

Children’s Work Lead – left March 24

Rachel Smith Safeguarding Officer – from May 2024

Children’s Work Lead – from May 24

Sue McKay Deanery Synod (term 2023-2026)

Katy Hildersley Church Administrator from April 2024 including SQP

Mia Balkham

Stewart Kinning

Tricia Lockyer Tarring Neville Lead

David Reynolds Left January 2024

James Evans Joined May 2024

Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of ex-officio members, the Rev. Michael Milmine and the Rev. Marcus Mak, two Churchwardens, members of the Deanery Synod and members of the church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). Members of the church are encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we endeavour to maintain a balance of skills and experience, and a balance to reflect the wide age difference in the Church membership wherever possible.

**Aims and Purposes as a charity**

We are an Anglican evangelical church which exists to promote the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. In particular, this means serving the needs of all those who live in this Parish and beyond through our services, events, clubs, outreach and pastoral support. Specifically and most importantly we exist to make mature disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, in increasing numbers from the youngest to the eldest, irrespective of level of need or ability to pay. In relation to the wider community, the church is increasingly viewed as a place where outsiders are welcome, where help is provided and questions of life will be answered.   
**What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives**The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have regard to House of Bishops’ Guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.   
For 2024 we discussed and planned the following objectives and activities to fulfil our aims:

* Teaching, baptising and discipling new and existing believers.
* Putting faith into practice, through prayer and Bible teaching, music and sacrament.
* Offering regular courses and study in small group situations.
* Provision of pastoral care and assistance for people living in the parish and beyond.
* Provision of regular and seasonal RE lessons to Denton CP School.
* Running various other clubs and activities for adults, babies, children and young people.
* Reaching out to the wider community through various activities, events and in particular the Denton Community Challenge.
* Maintaining the fabric of the church building as a historic centre and focus of community life.

**What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries’ lives**The church family welcomes visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary. Visitors attend by personal choice and it is our great pleasure to welcome anyone from all walks of life to take part in the life of the church. We contend that voluntary attendance to worship the Lord Jesus Christ is a major demonstration of the public benefit of our activities.

After a very fruitful and barn-storming first year, we feel that things have settled significantly in 2024. Our clergy team has grown, we’ve seen key people come and go; but the signs are very encouraging leading into 2025. Here’s a snapshot of some of the highlights:

· In January, the PCC voted to begin a new model of service once a month in **Café Church**. A more informal all-age service in the hall with refreshments and group discussion embedded into worship. We committed to trialling it for six months, and in time all felt that the success of the service was significant enough to continue. In May, **we decided to make Café Church a permanent feature of our calendar.** Aware of the need for balance and a more regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper, the PCC decided in November to **introduce a shortened Communion service before Café Church (9:15am), starting in January.**

**· Ruth Reynolds stepped down from her role as administrator in March and was quickly replaced by Katy Hildersly.** We’re delighted with the work Katy has done this year, upgrading many of our processes and making them more efficient. Katy has been an invaluable support to the clergy and works closely with Liz.

**· In April, we were delighted to receive Rev. Marcus Mak as our Associate Vicar jointly with St. Michael’s.** This was undoubtedly the most significant development within the life of the church this year. It’s been a huge joy to welcome Marcus, Rosalie and the children, who settled in very quickly. With Marcus’ arrival, significant pressure was taken off Mike, and we very quickly began to think about what future services patterns and ministry might look like.

· In May, the PCC agreed to temporarily **remove the choir pews on the South Side in order to make space for wheelchair access**. Approval was given for this significant alteration by the Archdeacon on the basis that it would create space in front of the first South Side pews for wheelchairs or buggies in what is a tight building. The trial will run till 2026.

· June saw our church take part in the **Denton Community Challenge** on its 12th year. We had our usual stand, kindly run by Katy Hildersley, and offered evangelistic tracts to visitors with the chance to engage with the following question on a big post-it board: ‘If you could ask God one question, what would it be?’.

· After more than two decades of fruitful service, **Sara Alexander retired from her post as licensed Youth Worker within both parishes in July**. Sara had been planning this for a long time, and feels that things are finally stable enough to be able to take that step. Notwithstanding her retirement from licensed ministry, **Sara continued (and plans to continue) much of what she’s been doing in a voluntary capacity.** She continued to help leading Café Church, running Sunday Club and Messy Church at Newhaven and spearheading our work among teens (including youth club, bible study, May Camp and youth services).

· The trustees of **Newhaven Youth for Christ decided in the Summer to wind down the charity. All of the work, including school clubs, youth groups, monthly youth services, youth bible studies and outings (like May Camp) will continue exactly as before, but under the banner of St. Leonard’s and St. Michael’s**. This will make the youth ministry much more straight forward – run by the same people, but not overlaid by another organisation and the complication that could sometimes bring.

· In September, the PCCs at St. Leonard’s and St. Michael’s both voted unanimously to **move ahead with the United Benefice**. Mike communicated this decision to the Archdeacon and other senior staff, who booked in a date early in 2025 to come and discuss the formal process with us. **We anticipate that the Benefice will be finalised by Autumn 2025**.

· Shortly after passing this vote, we had a **Vision Night** in the Church Hall where we discussed what the Lord might be calling us to. I reiterated again that **both parishes will maintain their identity and mission within their own communities**; the Benefice is about how ministry is resourced (with the two clergy we have) rather than a blending of the two parishes. This was a joyful night. People asked good questions, left encouraged about the future, and as we committed ourselves and what’s ahead to the Lord.

· October saw a series of **Light-themed events over Halloween**. We had **a joint Light Party at Newhaven** (with well over 40 children), and the usual ‘**Night Light’** event on Denton Road organised by Hannah and others. We engaged hundreds of trick-or-treaters, handing out sweets and Christian literature as we chatted to passers-by.

· At the November meeting, the PCC decided to **return to our former pattern of 10am services**. We’d continued to meet at 9:15am while Marcus got his knees under the table, but it was felt that overall, the churches would benefit from a kinder start time and from clergy not rushing to and from services. This **change will begin in January 2025.**

· Another significant decision at the November meeting was to embrace a **United Benefice service** every time that there’s a fifth Sunday of the month (this happens around 3/4 times a year). We felt that it would be a wonderful way to celebrate our partnership with St. Michael’s, and the **first service at Denton on the 29th December** was a huge success. The **next service will be in April at St. Michael’s.**

Alongside strengthened partnership with St. Michael’s, we’ve also achieved the following in the parish:

· Our existing **children and youth groups continued** through to December – Bumps and Babies, Little Fishes, and the Fusion bible study (which attracted between 8-12 young people weekly during term time). This year our teens have become a core part of the joint **youth services** run by Sara, joining together with young people from Newhaven, Seaford and Peacehaven.

· **Two small groups** (of between 8-15 people) continue to meet at various times of the week for fellowship, bible study and prayer, with at least one more due to start in 2025.

· Our **Praise & Worship** service on Sunday evenings has evolved considerably. We tried meeting twice a month, and then increased to weekly. In time we found that this was more than the team could manage, so settled in the Autumn **back into a once-a-month pattern**. We have a consistent congregation of around 20 people. I lead the service alongside our Music Leader, Stewart Kinning.

· Our **Easter and Christmas services were well attended**, and over the Christmas season we made a strong push to sign people up to a **course exploring the Christian faith, ‘Hope Explored’**. The response was incredibly encouraging, with 17 people signing up to start in January 2025.

· I’ve continued to visit **Denton School** for assemblies, and we’ve welcomed the school choir at our Remembrance Sunday service.

· Our **joint Facebook page** continues to generate traffic and new followers (currently 604), with news of our services, events, and snapshots of the life of our church visible online to hundreds of people.

· Our term-time **Wednesday Holy Communion and bible study** has become established and mature. We have anywhere between 8-15 people who come regularly, and are growing in their faith and knowledge of Jesus. The group represents a wonderful breadth of our church family.

· Our **Pastoral Care Team**, led by Rosemary Cutbush, continues to support the clergy in pastoral visitation and in identifying acute practical and prayer needs.

· We started the year by appointing a new Facilities’ Manager in **Liz Kinning**. Liz has worked tirelessly to ensure that we’re compliant with legislation in relation to our buildings and has been a huge support to the clergy and wardens in a number of other related areas (around health and safety in particular).

. In 2024 we’ve held events at St. Mary’s Tarring Neville, inviting members of the community to enjoy the beauty of the church building in a context of prayer and relationship building. We appointed **Tricia Lockyer to be our ‘deputy warden for Tarring Neville’**, who serves by championing all things related to St. Mary’s and being the first point of contact for those interested in visiting or finding out more.

As you can see, much has happened in 2024 and we have many blessings for which to thank the Lord. With so many huge changes over the last couple of years, we finally feel that things are set for a more stable 2025. Marcus and I are thankful to you and to the Lord for your continued generosity and kindness to us, and for your real desire to see the people of this Parish won for Jesus. Here’s to a fruitful 2025, where the Kingdom of Christ is built and in which he receives even greater glory.

**Church Attendance and Review of PCC**

For Church Attendance across the year, we had an average of 11 children/young people aged 17 and under, and 41 adults, with our extra services throughout December and Christmas attracting a total of 164 people.

The PCC held 6 meetings during the period 01st January – 31st December 2024. All meetings were held in the Church Hall, with almost full attendance at each meeting. The APCM this year was held a little differently, on a weekday evening in May in the church building, and was attended by 25 people from the electoral roll. At that APCM Rachel Smith and Patricia Lockyer completed their three-year term, both agreed to re-stand for a further 3 years and were nominated accordingly. Having stepped back into the Treasurer’s role in 2023 in the form of Acting Treasurer, Paul Giles agreed to formally re-join the PCC as Treasurer for a 3-year term, and was also nominated accordingly.

During April 2024 the Church electoral roll was simply revised, as a complete rewrite is due in 2025. At the 2024 APCM we were advised our numbers currently stand at 87 members, 26 of whom do not live in the parish.

**Disclosure and Barring Service**

DBS certificates are issued for all people working in roles with both children and vulnerable adults. These are renewed every 3 years.

During 2024 we processed 8 new DBS certificates which were all approved – 4 for Pastoral Adult Support and 4 for Children’s work.

**Safeguarding**

Safeguarding remains of the utmost importance in the life of Denton Parish Church as we seek to care for all those we come into contact with. PCC approve our policy yearly and safeguarding reports are submitted to each PCC meeting.

During 2024 there were no safeguarding incidences reported.

**Simple Quality Protects**

The Parish continues to work to the standards as set out in the Simple Quality Protects Audit Document and continues to practice safer recruitment of volunteers.

**Deanery Synod report**

The Deanery Synod met four times in 2024. Our two representatives are Sue McKay and Maria Greco and there is a vacancy for a third.

Denton hosted the 08th February meeting when we had a presentation by M. Miller about the training and provision of Lay Readers in churches. Sadly, the training has been discontinued due to financial cuts and there are no suggestions that the situation will change any time soon.

In 2024 new members were elected for Diocesan Synod.

We continue to think of better and creative ways to support and sustain ministry in the Deanery. For example, we had a presentation and discussion led by representatives of St. Andrew’s, Alfriston on the work of pastoral volunteers.

Deanery Synod is an opportunity to network and keep in touch with other parishes near us, to hear about what they are doing, exchange news and information, see how we can help each other and above all pray for our local churches and our needs.

**Churchwardens’ report**

The Church Hall has continued to be busy in 2024. The hall has been used for coffee after services, PCC meetings, Prayer meetings and Sunday Worship as well as social and fellowship gatherings of our church community. New this year was the introduction of Cafe Church which has proved to be very popular. The two church-run baby and toddler groups, Bumps & Babies and Little Fishes, continue to meet weekly and are thriving. The hall is hired for uniformed groups sessions, table tennis club and private celebrations. Children and youth groups also meet in the hall.

**Fabric of St Leonard’s Church, Denton**

Additional electrical sockets were fitted in both the vestry and the church to prevent overload of plugs on extension leads. A new fuse box was also installed in the church, as the existing one did not meet Electrical 18th Edition Wiring Regulations.

A new pump was installed to the gas boiler in the vestry.

A new light frame disabled ramp was purchased, as the existing wooden one was not fit for purpose, and a number of pews were removed in the church to make space for wheelchairs.

**Fabric of St Mary’s, Tarring Neville**

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| The church was used for the occasional funeral, as well as for burials and internment of ashes. New in 2024 was the opening of the church for two ‘Quiet Days’.  The lawn has been mowed regularly throughout the year. | |
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