

PCC Secretary's Report 2025

This report summarises the PCC's activities in 2025. The PCC held 7 ordinary meetings on Wednesday evenings, firstly at Hilary Baldwin's or Harry Kirby's houses, and then from the spring in the Coffee Lounge at St Mark's. There was also one extraordinary meeting.

Finance

The parish's financial position at the end of 2025 is available on the parish website. David Bennison and David McCulloch continued to work together on the accounts as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, with Helen Davison's occasional assistance, depending on her availability.

The parish began 2025 in a reasonably healthy financial position, but the Treasurer's chose not to overstrain the parish finances by paying more than £20000 in parish share. This was not a concerning situation, but in previous years attempting to pay off our parish share of more than £26000 completely has put a considerable constraint on mission activities and essential maintenance. The PCC approved the churchwardens' and Treasurers' view that the parish would rather spend more on the diocesan priority of mission than pay off our parish share in its entirety, if a choice could not be avoided.

Advertising revenue from the Bridge magazine continued to be healthy and was fully paid into our account by early spring. The cost of producing the Bridge was more than fully met. Fuel costs were reduced in 2025 when the Treasurers negotiated a new contract with British Gas. At present the costs appear manageable.

The card reader at St Edmund's has continued in 2025 to be a small but valuable source of additional income. It is reasonable to presume that donations through the card reader will slowly grow as passing visitors to St Edmund's, particularly in the summer, will find it a more convenient method to offer our parish financial support.

The PCC agreed at the beginning of 2025 to put a small increase of £20pcm for charging the Skate Club to continue to use the Barn and the coffee lounge, and a similar small increase to the hire of the coffee lounge and church at St Mark's. Unfortunately, the number of the hirers of our space continues to reduce. Apparently, there are other cheaper spaces to hire now in the village, but our costs prevent making our hire charges more competitive. Helen Davison and Karen Osborne generously give their time to coordinate our relationship with organisations who hire our spaces.

The hourly rate for paying Sarah McHale to clean at St Mark's went up in accordance with the National Living Wage. The wages given to the organist increased in accordance with average RSCM rates and his wages as Assistant Treasurer also increased.

Working Towards a New Plurality

In 2025, the PCC continued to work towards the formation of the plurality of East Medina with Whippingham and East Cowes led by Rev Sandra. Despite being clear that greater progress towards the plurality's official formation was a priority for her, this had not yet been fully achieved by the end of 2025. Nevertheless, in collaboration with the churchwardens, much valuable work was done in building up trust and a collaborative spirit was created that should put the plurality on an increasingly strong foundation for the future.

Buildings, Land & Fabric

The graveyard at St Edmund's continues to be an ongoing source of work for the PCC in ensuring its tidiness and the correct marking of graves. The PCC particularly thanks Mike Broadsmith, Doreen Gazey, Helen Davison and other volunteers for their work in cataloguing and maintaining the graveyard and working with funeral directors.

No further concerns were raised about heavy traffic along Church Road in front of St

Edmund's. Discussions continued in 2025 about access along the footpath running between the 2 parts of the graveyard, and who exactly owns this strip of land. Some answers were found from the Land Registry and the Diocese about which rights the PCC and other users had, but the problem was not definitively resolved.

When he was available, Stephen Capps continued to contribute to the maintenance of the buildings and fabric in 2025. The PCC would like to thank him for how much they achieved over several years. The work of the Friends of St Edmund's in contributing towards the maintenance of the building and fabric is much appreciated by the PCC. More details on the maintenance of buildings and fabric can be found in the Churchwarden's Fabric Report.

Safeguarding

Steve Beynon continued his essential work as Safeguarding Officer throughout 2025. His Safeguarding Report summarises the great deal he achieved in improving our parish's work in this area. Safeguarding continued to be very much a priority of Rev Sandra. The PCC is extremely grateful for Steve for all the work he is doing. There were no major safeguarding concerns in 2025.

Pastoral Activities

Hilary Baldwin continued her work as a licensed Anna Chaplain as described in the Anna Chaplaincy Report.

The monthly service at Solent Grange continued throughout 2025, usually led by David Bennison and Helen Hopper. Other quiet work was continued by Margaret King and others, as noted in the Pastoral Report.

Café Communion is now well established on the first Wednesday of the month at 1115am at St Mark's and is a well-supported and valued service, especially for those who find it difficult to attend the normal earlier service time on Sundays. Rev Len Fox continued to normally lead these services although he has stepped back from active ministry, Rev Sandra and Rev Jonathan Hall also led this service. Lunch is always provided afterwards. The PCC particularly recognises the hard work of the Café Communion Team to ensure the ongoing success of this service.

The Mark's Brothers Men's Group continues to run successfully on the 2nd Wednesday of the month under the leadership of Harry Kirby, and a cooked breakfast is a well-received element of this group!

Due to lack of regular support from parents with young children, "Stay and Play" sessions had to come to an end in 2025. Ministry in our local primary school and school visits to St Mark's however continued to flourish. The parish's school ministry team visit Wootton Primary school to lead worship once a month. After our incumbent's arrival, Rev Sandra undertook regular visits to schools across the plurality, particular in East Cowes and the Priory School. These activities are more fully discussed in the Children's Ministry Report.

Miscellaneous Activities

The parish continued to support the School's Hardship Fund to safeguard the accessibility of cheap school meals for disadvantaged children. Regular collections were held at Café Communion, half of which went to support this cause. The parish also supported the Bishop's Lent Appeal charities in 2025, along with Ability Dogs Isle of Wight. Several hundred pounds was raised for those charities by the parish.

Jonathan Hall and Sandie Osborne continued as PTO priests for the parish, while Len Fox reduced his active ministry towards the end of 2025 after an unfortunate fall. He appears to be showing signs of good recovery however! Our list of PTO priests was enhanced by Rev Hugh Wright and Rev Janet Hallam beginning to take services in our parish. The ministry of

PTO priests continues to be very important in sacramental provision in the parish as, despite Sandra and Roy's dedication, there is still a great need for PTO priestly support. The PCC expresses its ongoing gratitude to them for their time and ministry. On a sad note, late in the year, Rev Roy Matthews' health rapidly declined, and he departed this life near the end of the year. Several parishioners attended his funeral on the mainland, the Bishop of Portsmouth leading the service.

The PCC noted on several occasions throughout the year how the Church of England's expectations about finding new officers for important positions such as monitoring health and safety, having responsibility for finance, taking bookings for the church and coffee lounge and safeguarding are making the search for volunteers to undertake these crucial roles more difficult. The PCC continues to try to widen the net of willing volunteers for these roles (some of which require practical expertise) so that the burden on some older members of the PCC and congregation is reduced.

The year ended on a highpoint with the service of Christingle, comfortably the best attended service of the year. The PCC noted how well planned, advertised and executed worship under the leadership of creative and committed lay ministers creates an enthusiasm for churchgoing that is still present in all ages within society, despite consistent slow decline in the numbers attending weekly acts of worship. The PCC continues to recognise that encouraging people's desire to seek and find God's presence however he comes to his disciples is our prime motivation for the parish's mission in our local community.

David McCulloch