

Trustees' Annual Report

of

**The Parochial Church Council of
Warbleton Parish Church**

For the year ended 31st December 2025

Warbleton Parish Church, Church Hill, Warbleton, East Sussex, TN21 9BD.

***Incumbent:* The Reverend Canon Marc A. Lloyd, The Rectory, Rookery Lane,
Rushlake Green, Heathfield, TN21 9QJ.**

***Independent Examiner:* Mr. Jonathan Gray, Glydes Farm,
Ashburnham, TN33 9PB.**

Our aims and purposes as a charity

Warbleton Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Revd. Marc Lloyd, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical, according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, and the provision of financial support to other organisations with similar objectives. The PCC is specifically responsible for the maintenance of the Church, Church Rooms, and Churchyard.

The PCC's objectives are seeking to make disciples (evangelism), Christian nurture and teaching. In particular, we try to have a focus on younger people and families, but also to provide practical support and care for people of all ages and needs within the Parish.

What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

The PCC has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'. We try to enable our church family to live out their faith as part of the wider community.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, fully recognising its duty to have due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. (see report further down)

For 2025 we discussed and planned the following objectives to fulfil our aims:

- Enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church in person and online.
- Reaching out to and enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community.
- Teaching, baptising, and nurturing new and existing believers.
- Maintaining an overview of worship.
- Considering how services can involve the many groups that live within the parish.
- Putting faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament, offering worship and prayer and learning about the Gospel in small group situations.
- Assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of, and trust in, Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
- Financial support to missionary organisations.
- Maintaining the fabric of the church building as an historic centre and focus of life in the village.

What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries' lives

Attendance at worship

The Church family welcomes those from both within and outside the parish boundary and it is our great pleasure to welcome people from all walks of life to take part in the life of the church. Voluntary attendance to worship the Lord Jesus Christ is a major demonstration of public benefit of our activities. We are keen to offer a range of services over the course of the year that our community find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

The average weekly attendance at services, within the church building, has seen a slight increase during the year, with a few new members of the congregation. There has been a regular core of worshippers during the year. Services are videoed and uploaded to YouTube, and the sermons (audio) to the church website. In both cases, search for Warbleton Parish Church.

The figures in brackets are included as a comparison from the 2024 statistics for in person attendance. A more realistic view of online participation has been used this year.

	<u>In church</u>	<u>Online (estimated)</u>	<u>Last year</u>
Easter Sunday	73	2	(82)
Marquee service	48	0 not recorded	(63)
Harvest Festival	40	3	(42)
Remembrance Sunday	53	5	(58)
Crib Service	201	0 not recorded	(188)
Carol Service	120	12	(158)
Christmas Day	90	2	(54)

There is a music group and small group of singers involved in our Sunday morning services, helping to enhance the worship of Our Lord. A recent comment received was: "It's a lovely music group that makes church more inclusive". A robed choir leads the singing for weddings and funerals on request.

As well as our regular services, we enable our community to celebrate and thank God at the milestones of the journey through life. In marriage, public vows are exchanged with God's blessing and through funeral services friends and families express their grief and give thanks for the life which is now complete in this world and commend the person into God's keeping. During 2025, there were two weddings. Two funeral services were held in church, one crematorium service and four burials of cremated remains. We held a bereavement service in September, for the families of the deceased. There was one service of thanksgiving for a child. Two persons under 18 and three adults were confirmed at services at Chichester Cathedral and locally.

Electoral Roll

On 31st December 2024, there were 82 people on our Electoral Roll - 33 resided outside of the Parish and 49 within it. On 31st December 2025, there were 62 people on our Electoral Roll - 28 resided outside of the Parish and 34 within it. During 2025, we constructed a new Electoral Roll from scratch with all members having to apply to rejoin, hence the reduction in the figures for 2025 when compared to 2024.

Safeguarding Report

The major change during 2025 was the appointment of Steve Clark as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), for Warbleton Parish Church, taking over from Jane Atherden on 1st October 2025. Steve spent much of the period between then and the end of the year attending several training opportunities to learn more about his duties and responsibilities in this role. There is still a huge number of things to learn, including a Domestic Violence course which Steve will attend later this year.

The final follow-up task in his induction training was to formulate an Action Plan for which he has gained approval from the PCC. An integral part of the Action Plan is to increase the awareness of Safeguarding within the Church family.

Warbleton Church is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of our ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult who attend our Church or the events that we organise. To achieve this, we have robust policies, procedures, and guidelines in place, to ensure good practice throughout everything that we do.

Reaching out to and enabling as many people as possible to become part of our parish community.

As well as being good neighbours and friends and being involved in our community we attempt to provide points of contact or "pre-evangelistic" engagement for those who are perhaps not yet Christians.

Men's Breakfasts: Breakfasts have been well attended, and we even managed to run a ladies coffee morning this last year. Something that we hope to repeat in the not-too-distant future. There seems to be a genuine desire to explore God's word just as much from those who are regular worshippers as those who look in from the periphery.

Chaps Who Lunch: This men's group meet monthly for friendship, fellowship and enjoying good pub food. Usually there were between six to ten of us in 2025. One of our lunch times involved a steam trip from Bodiam to Tenterden, another the new station at Robertsbridge and yet another a game of boules.

Coffee and Company: we use Osborne House resident's lounge for our weekly get-togethers, when folk from Osborne House, the community and the church can spend time together over a hot drink. Our thanks to the committee of Osborne House for the use of the room.

WarbleArt: The community art group is continuing to thrive and grow, with eight regular members. Our aim is to meet with others who are learning and developing skills and friendship. We paint in the Church Rooms and outside in the warm weather. This year we displayed some of our work at the Rushlake Green Flower Show. We have a WhatsApp group chat and keep in touch through this, offering support to each other.

Warbleton Weeders is a group of folks who care about keeping the churchyard tidy and a blessing to our visitors many of whom have commented on how smart it looks. We met monthly armed with a selection of gardening equipment.

There's a small army of volunteers who turned up when they were available to do anything from removing dangerous branches from trees, hedge cutting, bramble removal, gentle pruning, leaf sweeping, pathway maintenance, cleaning gravestones, keeping boundaries clear, ivy removal. Although that all sounds exhausting there was always time for refreshments and fellowship together.

WarbleSingers: The community choir continued to meet. We have developed a Facebook site to enhance our advertising beyond the usual notices in Church publications. This year, as usual, we sang at a variety of events; open mic nights at The White Horse and The Runt in Tun, a concert in Battle as part of the Folk Festival; the Church barbecue; the Christingle service; Carols on the Green, followed by carols and Christmas songs in the Horse and Groom. Peter Martin our guitarist guided us through a range of songs but is unable to continue into 2026, so we have decided that we would continue to meet on Monday evenings, starting on 2nd March 2026, 7:15 – 8:30pm. We have a WhatsApp group chat and keep in touch through this, offering support to each other.

Christmas craft evening: 18 mums and grannies from Little Warblers and LW leavers attended the craft evening on 21st November 2025. This year, everyone constructed and decorated gingerbread houses. We enjoyed various desserts and mulled wine. Barbara Cooke's talk included a preprepared gingerbread house with a green roof which looked very like a stained-glass window in church. Her talk focused on talking to children about the wonder of the Christmas story. Each family was given a copy of 'The Christmas Promise' to read to their children or a Christmas puzzle book for those with slightly older children. We received positive feedback from those who attended. We continue to pray that the Lord will work in the hearts of those who came.

Easter Event for Families

A good number of children and adults enjoyed our Easter Eggstravaganza event for Families on Saturday 14th April with crafts, songs, an Easter Egg hunt, a Bible talk, refreshments, and of course quite a lot of chocolate.

We reached out to the community by donating food to the local Food Bank at Harvest and Christmas, and filling shoeboxes for Samaritan's Purse 'Operation Christmas Child' Shoebox Appeal. One of our members works one day a week at the Hailsham foodbank, and two are members of the Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team. One works with the Prison Fellowship in a local prison.

Dallington Deanery Synod

The deanery synod met three times as usual (in March, June and November) at three different venues across the deanery (including at Warbleton). Meetings are chaired alternately by The Rural Dean (our Rector) and the Lay Chair (Matthew Van Gtrutten).

In addition to the usual business, we considered:

Evangelistic and Discipleship Resources with our own Shirley Austin speaking about The Word One to One - <https://www.theword121.com/>.

The Revd Buff Stone, The Diocesan Environment Officer also spoke.

As did Colin Perkins, Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser on the subject 'Domestic Abuse – Raising Awareness'.

At the time of writing, we continue to be in need of a Deanery Synod Secretary and Treasurer.

Teaching, baptising, and nurturing new and existing believers and putting faith into practice.

We are committed to seeking to live in the light of and share the good news of Jesus Christ in faithfulness to the Scriptures and in prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit. We want to know, love, and follow Jesus. We believe we are called to care for, support and encourage one another as we grow in our discipleship.

We believe we are called to study, to grow in our Christian faith, and encourage involvement in appropriate study and discussion groups. Several house groups meet around the parish, providing opportunities for discussion, teaching, prayer, and fellowship including The Good Book Club, and the Ladies Home group. On average, 25 people are regularly involved. We meet for prayer on the first Thursday of the month; this a hybrid in-person at the Rectory, and on Zoom meeting.

The Lent Course in 2025 was on The Nicene Creed for the Diocesan Year of Faith and held at the Rectory.

We look to the deepening of faith for all ages and alongside our services there is a programme for young people from birth to teenagers.

Sunday Club: We started the year with 11 children attending some, or all, of the sessions offered twice a month. By the end of the year, we had three regular member and occasional visitors.

Jane Atherden left at the summer term when she moved to Brighton and she is greatly missed. She ran the Sunday Club for many years with great wisdom and love of the Lord. I am very grateful to Judith Hemsley and Melinda Harries for helping me run the group.

We continue to use the material produced by the 'Faith In Kids' organisation covering topics in both the Old and New Testaments.

Little Warblers: Little Warblers has continued to be thrive during the year with average attendees of 14 adults and 17 children per session. The highlight of the year was in the summer when we celebrated 13 of our regular children receiving bibles as they were starting school in September. All expressed sadness at leaving, what they felt, had been a very friendly and supportive group. At that same session we officially said goodbye to Jane Atherden who had successfully run LW for several years. We all missed her, especially when we restarted after the summer break. We are very blessed that Freddie Geal has joined our regulars of Judith Hemsley and myself. We are also grateful to Melinda Harries who helps when one of us cannot come. We have continued to use the excellent material produced by the 'Faith In Kids' organisation in our story time.

We would like to thank the church family in supporting us in prayer and with generous donations of books which this year we have given to the children at Easter, at the end of the summer term and Christmas. Sue Holden

Maintaining an overview of worship

We are committed to enable as many people as possible to worship at our church, and to being part of our parish community at Warbleton. We maintain an overview of worship throughout the parish and make suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music, and sacrament.

We have an induction loop for the hard of hearing, and the wording on the screens is in a dyslexia friendly font. The church buildings are wheelchair accessible.

Monthly meetings, to pray for the church and parishioners, are held in the Rectory and via Zoom. Our Rector broadcasts Morning Prayer on Facebook, Mon-Thurs, and Sat, except on his weeks off.

Considering how services involve the many groups that live within the parish.

In addition to our regular services, events and activities, and our commitment to all who live in the parish, we continue to have a focus on ministry to children, young people and families through: monthly family service, Children's Sunday Club, the role of Foundation Governors at Dallington Church of England Primary School / Woodlands Federation, Little Warblers Toddler Group, and Home Study Groups.

We are starting to use the Word 121 booklets for those who prefer to study with just one other person.

There are annual joint Benefice services held for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and the joint Benefice Marquee Service in July, shared with the Heathfield Chapel congregation.

The Little Arts Group in Rushlake Green, held an Arts Festival in August. The Church was the venue for a workshop and concert by Sussex Harmony (West Gallery Quire) who sing and play the music between the Civil War and Victorian periods.

The monthly Parish magazine covers the activities of the three churches in the Benefice as well as serving the wider community by keeping our parishioners informed of upcoming services and events in the benefice. Most of our services, events and activities are also listed on our website: warbletonchurch.org.uk which also contains our monthly Benefice Magazine and weekly notice sheet.

The Sanctuary Guild. Sanctuary Guild members have continued to provide flowers each week, except in Lent. The church has been decorated with special arrangements for Easter, Harvest and Christmas Festivals and two members have carried out brass cleaning at intervals throughout the year. Altar linen is also cared for, and two new cloths have been made by a member of the church. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to one of our most expert flower arrangers who had helped to organise the guild. For this reason, a decision was made at the Annual Meeting in November not to offer floral arranging for weddings for the time being. It was also agreed that after the sad death of our treasurer the Sanctuary Guild bank account be

merged with the church account. In the coming year arrangers and brass cleaners will continue to use their skills to give pleasure to those visiting the church as well as to the weekly congregation.

Bell ringers: Last year was a quiet year for the bellringers as unusually we did not have any weddings or other special celebrations. We regularly ring on a Sunday morning to welcome people and let the parish know we are in business as a Church. We have been a little light on the ground lately due to illness so we would welcome anybody who would be keen to learn as we have people who can teach the art. If you would fancy a go or like to see the bells and a view from the tower speak to Jan Leeves our captain or any other bellringer.

Ecumenical and Other Relationships

The church is a member of The Sussex Gospel Partnership and The Church Society.

Pastoral care

Some members of our parish are unable to attend church due to sickness or age. Reverend Marc Lloyd has visited all church members who have requested it, to celebrate communion with them either at their homes or in hospital. Other members of the church also visit those who are house-bound or in hospital.

Mission Support

We have continued to support with prayer and giving a different Christian organisation each month. Details of the work and items for prayer are published in the parish magazine and the weekly bulletin. The support in 2025 is as follows:

Overseas Mission Fellowship: Chris and Kesia Pain, Japan

Christian Solidarity Worldwide

Brickworks: John and Poppy Spens, South Sudan, and Uganda

Latin American Mission: Ken and Sue Vissers

Sussex Gospel Partnership

Church Society

Faith In Kids

Beachy Head Chaplaincy

Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship

Speak Life: Glen Scrivener

Prison Fellowship

Brighton and Hove City Mission

Bible Society

St. Matthew's School, Rwanda

In addition, we have supported Tear Fund (Marquee Service) and the Royal British Legion (Remembrance Sunday).

Maintaining the fabric of the church building

During 2025 we have not had much done in building repairs, but some outstanding electrical work has been completed as the main incoming fuse box has been replaced, also some wiring as demanded by the quinquennial of 2023. This box is now metal as demanded by new regulations for public buildings, so we are now fully compliant but at a cost of £1523.72. We also had the LED floodlight replaced in the bell tower in November at a cost of £158.36. We have still not done the outstanding building work around the church roof as we have had 6 different companies to look at the roof but only 2 have produced estimates which were very high so we have reduced the necessity of some of it but will hopefully come up with a result soon. The other job we have done in the belfry by Douglas Andrews to stop the rain driving in was to replace the west louvers and to put an oak framed gale break screen behind the south louvers to reduce the rain blowing in at a cost of £916.80.

Church Rooms

During the week, the church rooms are used for various meetings and clubs, and for small gatherings after funerals etc. Members of the congregation gather in the rooms for light refreshments and a time of fellowship after services. The new heaters are now programmed and working effectively for the enjoyment of all who use the church rooms.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the life of the church in any way, often quietly carrying out their duties in the background.

Structure, governance and management of the charity

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is registered with the Charity Commission as required by the Charities Act 2011. The governing document is the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of certain ex-officio members (the incumbent, the churchwardens and members of the Deanery Synod) and up to nine members of the church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). As a previous APCM had decided, the Reader is also a member of the PCC.

Three members of the PCC sat on the deanery synod providing the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider structure of the church.

All those who attend our services are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and consider standing for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a balance of skills and experience where possible. The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent.

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

Ex Officio members:

Incumbent: The Revd. Marc Lloyd - Chairman

Churchwardens: David Cleverley – (& Vice Chairman) until APCM

 Tony Welford – from the APCM

 Jonathan Austin

Representatives on Deanery Synod - David Cleverley, Matthew Van Grutten, Gez Ellis (latter half of the year)

Reader: Sir Jeremy Cooke (as decided by a previous APCM)

Elected Members:

Jane Atherden – Secretary – until she moved away in September

Meryl Clark - Treasurer

Tony Welford then Churchwarden from APCM

Sue Holden

John Holden

Gez Ellis

This Trustee's Annual Report was approved by the PCC and signed on their behalf by the Revd. Marc Lloyd, PCC Chairman

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