



St Stephen's Church

Trustees Annual Report and Financial Report

of The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of
St Stephen's Church, North Mundham with Merston, Chichester

For the year ending 31 December 2025



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Administrative details

Name:	St Stephen's Church, North Mundham
Address:	Church Road North Mundham Chichester PO20 1JU
Website:	www.mundhamhunstonchurches.co.uk
Incumbent:	The Reverend May Barker (Until 19 January 2026) The Rectory, Church Lane, Hunston, Chichester PO20 1AJ
Independent Examiner	Mr Peter Grace
Bankers:	Barclays East Street, Chichester PO19 1HR
Charity name:	North Mundham St Stephens PCC Registered with the code 610069 with the Diocese of Chichester The charity is exempted from registration with the Charity Commission.

Members of St Stephen's Parochial Church Council

Elizabeth Malan	(Churchwarden)
Joyce Jones	(Churchwarden)
Helen Alexander	(Treasurer)
Tony Atkins	(PCC Secretary)
David Coward	(Electoral Roll Officer)
Linda Fitzmaurice	
Nicola Highnam	(From 12 th May 2025)
Revd Anne Holderness	(co-opted)
Clare Leppard	
Stephen Quigley	(Until 12 th July 2025)
Naomi Lott	(Benefice Safeguarding Officer)
Rachel Russell-Wells	(Benefice Safeguarding Officer)



Trustees Annual Report

Our aims and purposes as a charity

The primary object of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the promotion of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England.

The PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the minister (Revd May Barker until January 2026) in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

St Stephen's Church, together with St Leodegar's Church, are members of the United Benefice of North Mundham with Merston and Hunston.

Our benefice vision

Our vision is to bring hope, friendship and welcome by sharing the love of Jesus

We are a church that is committed to worshipping God in a way that is accessible and relevant to the people we serve, and to encourage a personal commitment of faith and continued growth in discipleship for all.

We are a church with people who are generous in the giving of their time, talents and money and who express God's love in love and service to others.

Our Mission Action Plan is formed around the Diocesan strategy

- More open
- More converted to Jesus Christ
- More generous
- More engaged

What we planned to do to achieve our charitable objectives

When planning our activities for the year, the Leadership Team (Churchwardens, Clergy) and the Parochial Church Councils have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and the specific guidance on 'charities for the advancement of religion'.

The Parochial Church Councils have complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline measure 2016, fully recognising their duty to have due regard to the House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Our objectives:

1. Work together as a united benefice. Our mission is to remain strong and continue to explore new ways of working to provide the opportunities for all to worship, to develop faith and to participate in the varied activity of church life.
2. Continue to follow the benefice vision of Meeting Together, Praying Together, and Sharing Good Practice and Supporting Each Other.
3. Continue to review and improve the pattern of services across the benefice and support the teams leading these and other events.
4. Meet together, offering worship and prayer and enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches.
5. Teach, baptise and nurture new and existing believers.
6. Put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament, assisting people from all walks of life to develop their knowledge of and trust in Jesus.
7. Support the youth work ministry through the assistance of a freelance local mission worker, Alistair Ghinn.
8. Continue to provide pastoral care for the congregations and people living in the parish.
9. Continue to make finance and income generation a high priority.
10. Maintain the fabric of both the church buildings and graveyards as historic centres of life in the villages.



What we achieved and how we affected beneficiaries' lives

1 and 2. Working together as a United Benefice

Both the PCC of St Stephen's and the PCC of St Leodegar's have continued to work to bring villagers together no matter their age, wealth or background. We connect neighbours and bridge village boundaries every week in the many activities and groups we support.

- **Website** – We have one benefice website that is kept up to date.
- **Weekly e-Newsletter** – We have a Weekly Church News emailed out to 180 people on an email list from both churches and the community.
- **Facebook** – Both our Facebook pages are updated on a regular basis with photographs and events.
- **YouTube** – We have been recording the Holy Communion services in St Stephen's Church and uploading them to YouTube. This service was discontinued in the autumn of 2025.

3. Review and improve the patterns of service

During the year we held joint services, at St Stephen's Church and at St Leodegar's Church; meetings and shared events including a Harvest Lunch to thank volunteers and donors across the benefice; and coordinated a pattern of services to ensure both access and variety for all villagers to our church services, particularly during the special weeks of Easter and Advent.

4. Attendance at worship

The church family welcomes visitors from within as well as outside the parish boundary. Visitors attend by personal choice and it is our 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.

The figures for those attending church during 2025 at St Stephen's Church are outlined in the following table:

	2023	2024	2025
Overall attendance	4037	3014	3876
Attendance excluding weddings and Funerals	2973	2858	3671
1 st Sunday Holy communion	450	528	582
2 nd Sunday All Age Worship	266	529	550
3 rd Sunday Holy communion	470	589	713
4 th Sunday Morning praise	289	449	392
5 th Sunday Holy Communion	179	146	148

We also welcomed people to celebrate at the milestones in their life, as well as celebrating at other major festivals and other opportunities for worship:

	2023	2024	2025
Weddings	4	0	1
Funerals	5	5	1
Baptisms	6	7	13
Wednesday Holy Communion (including Ash Wednesday)			372
Christingle Service	0	29	70
Mothering Sunday	62	59	73
Ash Wednesday	9	242 (incl school)	12
Good Friday	10	17	17
Easter Day	116	121	84
Harvest Festival	42	85	72
Rogation	52	27	-
Remembrance	105	125	150
Carol Service	106	81	115
School Carol Service	254	265	276
Crib Service	82	97	106
Midnight Service	33	28	29
Christmas Day Service	21	0	22

5. Teaching, baptising and nurturing new and existing believers

In 2025 there were 13 baptisms, 1 wedding and 1 funeral conducted in St Stephen's Church as well as 3 conducted at the Chichester Crematorium and 1 at the Crematorium near Felpham. The ashes of 3 people were buried. 2 adults were confirmed. A greater number of the church family have been involved in leading various aspects of worship, reading and leading the intercessions. We continue to seek to extend the opportunities for people to be involved in ministry.

Stones and Pebbles (Sunday School)

Our numbers have continued to be healthy with an average of 19 attending regularly. On some occasions there have been 20-23 children present. The sessions have a friendly buzz and enable children and parents to feel part of our church family. Watching the children grow in confidence, contribute to discussions and provide their own feedback to the congregation has been very rewarding.

The age and interests of the children is wide ranging, so the leaders aim to provide a diverse programme. We started the year with a theme of 'Jesus is Special' learning about the presentation of Jesus at the temple and then focussing on some of the miracles Jesus performed. This provided the opportunity to visually recreate turning clear water into red 'wine' and build a pulley system to lower a lame man through the roof of a Lego house.

Mothering Sunday allowed children to decorate flower gifts to take home for families and the craft pompom bunnies and chicks on Easter Sunday proved very popular, especially with the accompanying chocolate eggs.

In the summer term we read the children's picture book 'My Path' by Jana Curll, a story about a snail who encounters all sorts of ups and downs as it journeys along its path. This linked with obstacles and celebrations we might encounter in our own lives. We thought about the path of faith, baptism and confirmation and how, with our actions, we can follow in Jesus' footsteps. We also learned how we should 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart... and he will make your paths straight', making a snail bookmark to help us remember this.

For Father's Day, as well as making gifts, we thought about God the Father and how sometimes we all need a helping hand. It is tradition to finish the school year with a party during the last session, and the good weather meant we could play group games outside.

We began the autumn term with a closer look at the Bible. The children have become familiar with lots of stories over the years, but our Bible focussed activities enabled a better understanding of how everything fits together and how to access specific Bible verses.

Once again, we worked busily to create a Christmas video to be shown at the Crib Service. This year it was the story of 'The Grumpy Owl and the Joy of Christmas', a book promoted by The Church of England for 2025. The children fully embraced their artistic and acting talents to create the characters, backdrops and provide voiceovers. We were aware it was the last time that Nigel would be able to help with filming and editing as he and Revd May were leaving our church early in the new year. We have been so grateful for Nigel's skills and the steadfast support from May in all our Sunday School activities.

To assist the wider church the children enthusiastically assembled oranges, candles and sweets into Christingles to be handed out and lit during the service in January. The leaders' team also organised two Film Nights this year, one in March and another in November. These were really well attended and had a lovely atmosphere, attracting people who would not usually come to church.

6. Putting faith into practice – prayer, scripture, music and sacrament

Music in Church

We are without a paid organist and have relied on two volunteers who played the organ and keyboard at our Holy Communion services. It is a blessing to still have the organ played as part of our Sunday worship. At our Holy Communion services, we have a small, robed choir and we would love others to join them. For informal services we used Worship Lyric Videos on the screen.



We once again held an organ recital in the church by the organ scholar from Chichester Cathedral, Stephanie Gaunt, accompanied by Ian Church. They amazed us with their talent and the musical possibilities of the organ. Stephanie also played the cello, accompanied by Ian on the organ. Their finale, played on the pedals only, was truly amazing! They played beautiful, fast-paced music using only their feet. Thank you to Maggie Rozier who arranged the event.

7. Supporting youth work ministry

Much planning and preparation was carried out to run two REDLANDS camps over two summer weekends, prior to the end of term. These were a great success with over 100 local young people attending. Two great videos of the camps will soon be available on You Tube. Search 'Alistair Ghinn REDLANDS 2025'.

Our two youth groups ran throughout 2025 as follows:

Solid Rock takes place in the Annexe, adjacent to North Mundham Village Hall, on Wednesdays from 7-8pm, for school years 7+

Lighthouse takes place in the Annexe, adjacent to North Mundham Village Hall on Wednesdays from 6-7 pm, for school years 4-6

On average we've have had 35 local young people attending on a Wednesday evening, which is very encouraging!

We are very thankful to the volunteers who co-led the groups with Alistair Ghinn, plus sincere thanks to all those involved in fundraising over recent years, plus the management and safeguarding team (Rachel Russell-Wells, Kate Freeman, Revd May Barker and Naomi Lott) who have been very supportive.

8. Pastoral Care to the congregation and in the community

Café Connect

We are so proud as Café Connect is now entering its fourth year. We have a steady flow of customers throughout the Thursday mornings. There is a choice of drinks on offer, as well as various homemade cakes, homemade sausage rolls and a variation of teacakes, scones and croissants.



Five Villages Lunch Club

We continued to serve the communities of North Mundham and Hunston with a two-course meal followed by tea or coffee, all this for £4.00 per person. We also ran a Raffle each month. The lunch club ran for 11 months of the year. There was no meeting in August.

At the two lunch clubs, we served 241 meals throughout the year of 2025, an average of 22 people. each meeting, slightly down on last year. We have the capacity to provide up to 40 lunches per meeting.

On 12th December we were able to give a free Christmas lunch to those that had attended more than 6 lunches throughout the year. 28 attended of which 8 paid £4. This was due to two generous donations we received from MARRA and the Gala. These will help to fund a free Christmas lunch for future years as well.

Thank you to all the members of our lunch club for supporting it. And a huge thank you to our leader Sue Waite and to our volunteer helpers.

Little Sunbeams

This year has been one of steady growth, community presence, and continued encouragement for Little Sunbeams.

We are delighted that our Thursday morning sessions remain well attended, with an average of around 20 families each week and approximately 24 children. This consistent attendance means we are just about covering our regular overheads. While hall hire costs have increased slightly this year, we are currently managing well financially and there is no immediate cause for concern.

We were incredibly grateful to receive a generous donation from the Mundham & Runcton Residents Committee as they sadly closed down. Their contribution has provided helpful reassurance, particularly on weeks when costs outweigh income. In addition, funds donated by the local Gala committee enabled us to purchase a new event banner. The banner now takes pride of place outside the group each week, clearly displaying that we are a church-run group with St Stephen's Church logo. It looks welcoming and has already helped raise our visibility within the community.

Our volunteer team continues to be a real strength of the group: they support us behind the scenes, particularly by preparing crafts and activity resources, providing guidance at craft time and giving help where needed, leading story time and engaging the children with warmth and enthusiasm, providing support in the kitchen during snack time. and clearing up afterwards.

As a team, we have all completed the safeguarding training rolled out this year, ensuring we continue to provide a safe and supportive environment for every child and family who attends.

One change we will particularly feel is the loss of our Christmas and Easter visits from Revd May, who has now moved on to a new parish. She was always engaging and thoughtful when reading stories to the children and families, and she will be greatly missed.

For the first time this year, Little Sunbeams was represented at the North Mundham Gala. We provided a shaded area with toys, books, and crafts for under 5s to enjoy. It was a wonderful opportunity to serve local families, raise awareness of the group, and strengthen our presence in the wider community. We very much look forward to being involved again.

Our sessions continue to provide a warm, welcoming space rooted in Christian values, where parents and carers can build friendships and support one another while their children play, explore, and grow. We are thankful for another positive year and look ahead with confidence and gratitude.

Cornerstone

Cornerstone had been running for a longtime on a Wednesday morning, where we saw a good number of people joining us for coffee, biscuits and meeting friends. Revd May started a said Communion Service on Wednesday mornings, which became very popular. Sadly, when Revd May announced that she would be leaving at the end of the year, it was decided to close Cornerstone at Christmas 2025. Thank you to all volunteers who gave up their time, and for their friendship.

9. Prioritising finance and income generation

A small team attended a very useful training session at Church House in Hove, which spurred on efforts to rethink income generation, recognising the burden on a relatively small group of regular worshippers. This resulted in the installation of a Giving Wall at St Stephen's Church and the use of Church of England designed leaflets at Christmas to encourage festive giving. There is still much work to be done to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

10. Maintaining the church building and graveyards

Our church continues to be appreciated by our parishioners and many others, as a space where life events are celebrated with joy and thanksgiving. The church is used regularly for worship and fellowship, not just by our own congregation, but is central to the wider community, being used by the school for their Easter and Christmas services as well as during the annual Service of Remembrance.

While the PCC does not own the church building, it has responsibility for maintaining the facilities of the building and church graveyards for future generations. A Building and Facilities Committee was formed in late 2023 and, with Terms of Reference (ToRs) set out in October 2024 and finally agreed in February 2026.

The major issue of the year was dealing with the Diocese Architect's Quinquennial Inspection (QI). A very lengthy report document was received from the architect which included 193 separate works statements/requirements items for the internal and external elements of the church. Most of the work requires specific skills such as stone masons, carpenters and glaziers, with a large proportion of the items located at high level. Of these we identified those most urgent as being in the Tower, especially timber supports for the bells. On the architect's strong advice, a further survey was carried out by a Structural Engineer who provided a more detailed understanding of work that is required. The committee will continue to work towards generating a formal works schedule as a step towards carrying out the repairs.

Particular attention was paid by the committee to less complex requirements from the QI which were classed as DIY/Self-help and identified as being within the

capabilities of church volunteers. This led to many of the items raised by the architect being completed, as recorded in the church logbook, with the cost of most of these covered by donations. We are grateful to the volunteers who completed this work, saving a considerable sum of money.

The War Memorial was inspected and cleaned ahead of the annual service of Remembrance.

The active graveyard at Merston is a responsibility of the St Stephen's Church PCC since the Merston Parish was combined with the parish North Mundham. There is no regular income available to offset the cost and work is scheduled to minimise the cost of maintenance. In addition, the old School Room has, since the closure of St Giles, been managed by the PCC while its future is being determined.

Volunteers

The only paid members of our team were the Revd May Barker and our Church Mission Worker, Alistair Ghinn. All other work (and that is the correct term) is carried out by volunteers who we would like to thank. We have recognised many of these within other sections of this report. There are an enormous number of people within our community who volunteer in addition to members of the PCC and the groups already mentioned including:

Flower Arrangers

Many visitors and regular attendees comment on the beautiful flower arrangements within St Stephen's Church. We are immensely grateful to the team of flower arrangers who bring an artistry in their arrangements that is breathtaking.

Sidespeople

Thank you to our sidespeople for St Stephen's Church who welcomed visitors and regular congregation members, making our church friendly and welcoming.

We are particularly grateful to Marjorie Coward who has taken on the role of Verger, opening the building for many families for baptisms, weddings and funerals and assisting the vicar at services.

The Graveyard and Cleaning Teams

Alongside those who regularly cut and trim the graveyards we would like to thank those who responded to calls to help cut trees and shrubs, fight the brambles and ivy and detach the stubborn weeds from graveyard walls. Cleaning and polishing has been carried out by a dedicated team who we also thank.



Financial Review

St Stephen's Church is an independent charity and receives no regular funding from the Church of England, Chichester Diocese or from the government. The work that we do to support people in our parish and maintain our historic building is funded by the generosity of those who live and work in our villages. We would like to thank all those who give so generously on a regular basis.

Receipts fell below payments by £649 in the year. The deficit reflects the continuing difficulty rural churches face in meeting the ever-increasing cost of providing services, whilst also maintaining historic buildings and graveyards. North Mundham Parochial Church Council is responsible not only for the maintenance of St Stephen's Church and graveyards but also the School Room and graveyard at St Giles Church, Merston.

Total receipts fell to £56,219 (2024: £59,709) due to a reduction in one-off unrestricted donations. Planned regular giving rose by 5.9% from £17,478 in 2024 to £18,505 in 2025 but cash and card collections during services fell again from £4,129 in 2024 to £2,599 in 2025. During the year the PCC decided to stop taking a cash collection during weekly services in response to the society-wide shift towards cash-less payments.

The income shown as restricted is given for specific purposes and may only be spent on those purposes. £5,745 of the restricted income was donated to support the youth clubs. The PCC is grateful to North Mundham Parish Council and to local businesses in the Runcton and Mundham area who have continued to support the youth club financially. The support of these organisations enables the employment of a part-time Youth Mission Worker and payment of rent to the North Mundham Village Hall. We are also grateful to those who gave one-off donations during 2025 which helped us continue our programme of maintenance and repairs, particularly in the graveyard.

The largest cost at £28,800 was our contribution to Chichester Diocese for ministry and support services (£28,800 in 2024). Our incumbent vicar was employed directly by the Diocese which also provided training, housing and a pension together with resources to support the delivery of services. The increase in clergy and staffing costs reflects more transparent remuneration for our Youth Mission Worker and the annual increase in council tax for the rectory.

Cash and reserves

Cash balances at 31st December decreased from £49,796 to £49,147. While this may on the surface appear to be healthy, only £18,199 of this is available to cover regular

ministry and running costs at St Stephen's Church. The remainder is either designated for emergency repairs or is restricted and can only be spent on very specific purposes such as the youth club.

The PCC has long held a policy that it should maintain 6 months of costs as free reserves in the general fund to cover deficits and any unforeseen costs. The current unrestricted reserve balance of £18,199 represents 4.7 months of general expenditure.

It is PCC policy to invest fund balances not immediately required with the CBF Church of England Deposit fund.

Plans for the future

Revd May Barker moved to a new post in January 2026 and as a result the parish entered a period of Interregnum. During this period, the churchwardens and PCC members plan to maintain as many of the current services as possible, while recognising that this may not always be possible.

Structure, Governance and Management

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

St Stephen's Church, together with St Leodegar's Church, is a member of the United Benefice of North Mundham with Merston and Hunston. The clergy work as a team across the benefice, but each Parochial Church Council (PCC) meets separately to consider the needs of each respective church and community.

Membership of the PCC is determined under the Church Representation Rules and consists of certain ex-officio members (Clergy), churchwardens and members of the Deanery, Diocesan or General Synod and members of the Church who are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Members are warmly encouraged to stand for election to the PCC and we try to ensure a balance of skills and experience wherever possible.

The PCC met six times during the year. In addition to the PCC there is a standing committee of churchwardens and treasurer who, together with the minister, may meet to take decisions between PCC meetings. There is also a building and facilities committee, a fundraising committee and a youth work management committee which report back to the PCC.

Risk Management

The PCC has spent considerable time during the year on the development of policies and procedures to reduce the risk of harm to members of its community but has further work to do to develop a formal framework recognising the principal risks and uncertainties facing the charity.

Statement of Financial Receipts and Payments

PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF ST STEPHEN, NORTH MUNDHAM
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Receipts						
Planned Giving		18,505			18,505	17,478
Collections at services		2,599			2,599	4,129
All other giving/voluntary receipts	5a	6,502	8,605		15,107	18,080
Gift Aid recovered		5,669	50		5,719	5,687
		<u>33,275</u>	<u>8,655</u>	-	<u>41,930</u>	<u>45,374</u>
Activities for generating funds	5b	3,122	0		3,122	2,549
Investment income	5c	1,848	0	113	1,961	2,149
Church activities	5d	9,166	-		9,166	9,458
Other receipts		40			40	179
Total receipts		<u>47,451</u>	<u>8,655</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>56,219</u>	<u>59,709</u>
PAYMENTS						
Church activities						
Diocesan parish contribution		28,800			28,800	28,800
Clergy and staffing costs		3,680	4,420		8,100	6,733
Church running expenses	5e	14,833	4,096		18,929	16,730
Major repairs					-	-
Mission giving and donations	5f	370	-		370	190
		<u>47,683</u>	<u>8,516</u>	-	<u>56,199</u>	<u>52,453</u>
Costs of generating funds		669			669	79
Total payments		<u>48,352</u>	<u>8,516</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>56,868</u>	<u>52,532</u>
Excess of payments over receipts		(901)	139	113	(649)	7,177
Transfers between funds	4	(521)	521		0	0
		<u>(1,422)</u>	<u>660</u>	<u>113</u>	<u>(649)</u>	<u>7,177</u>
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January		34,467	12,907	2,422	49,796	42,619
Cash at bank and in hand 31 December		<u>33,045</u>	<u>13,567</u>	<u>2,535</u>	<u>49,147</u>	<u>49,796</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Cash Funds						
Current Account and cash		8,671	2,229		10,900	13,231
Deposit Funds		24,374	11,338		35,712	34,143
Chancel Trust Accumulated income				2,535	2,535	2,422
		<u>33,045</u>	<u>13,567</u>	<u>2,535</u>	<u>49,147</u>	<u>49,796</u>
Other Monetary Assets						
PGS Christmas Donations					0	285
Gift Aid recoverable		821			821	758
		<u>821</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>821</u>	<u>1,043</u>
Liabilities						
Clergy expenses		15			15	127
Café Connect Hall rent		243			243	189
Little Sunbeams Hall Rent		95			95	0
Lunch club hall rent		42			42	150
Organ tuning		355			355	0
Youth club expenses			84		84	613
Fundraising costs					0	4
Electricity		387			387	197
		<u>1,137</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,221</u>	<u>1,280</u>

Notes to the accounts

- 1 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2017 and the Charities Act 2011 using the Receipts and Payments basis.
- 2 The land and buildings (the church at North Mundham, the school room and graveyard at Merston, and the rectory) are in the ownership of the Church Commissioners but the PCC has a vested responsibility to maintain and repair these assets. The PCC has designated £10,000 in funds towards the cost of fees required for urgent major repairs, recognising the age and historic importance of the church building and the tower in particular.
- 3 The Chancel Trust Endowment Fund is held on trust by the the Chichester Diocesan Board of Finance and may not be spent. It is invested with the CCLA with a valuation of £9,640. The accumulated income shown in these accounts is restricted for expenditure on repairs to the chancel.

Notes to the accounts (continued)

4 The movements in the unrestricted, designated and restricted funds during the year were:

	Bal b/fwd £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfer £	Bal c/fwd £
<u>Unrestricted</u>	19,254	46,811	47,345	(521)	18,199
<u>Designated</u>					
Merston	5,213	640	1,007		4,846
Fabric	10,000				10,000
Total unrestricted	34,467	47,451	48,352	(521)	33,045
<u>Restricted</u>					
Café connect restricted	124	645	130		639
Youth Club	2,358	5,745	6,795	921	2,229
Children	1,985				1,985
Little Sunbeams	800	645	198		1,247
Lunch club restricted	-	645	12	(146)	487
Fabric	5,241				5,241
Clock fund	1,739				1,739
Graveyard	357	530	991	104	-
Memorial garden	-	445	390	(55)	-
Other restricted	303			(303)	-
Chancel Endowment	2,422	113			2,535
Total restricted	15,329	8,768	8,516	521	16,102
Total funds	49,796	56,219	56,868	-	49,147

The transfers between funds reflect the allocation of expenses to make best use of fund restrictions.

5 Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments Accounts

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
<u>Receipts</u>					
a) All other giving/voluntary receipts					
Donations	6,502	2,330		8,832	12,580
Grants		530		530	-
Youth Club donations & grants		5,745		5,745	5,500
	6,502	8,605	-	15,107	18,080
b) Activities for generating funds					
Hall lettings	600			600	600
Fund raising activities and events	2,522			2,522	1,949
	3,122	-	-	3,122	2,549
c) Investment Income					
On CBF endowment invested			113	113	121
Bank and deposit fund interest	1,848			1,848	2,028
	1,848	-	113	1,961	2,149
d) Church activities					
Fees for weddings and funerals	1,643			1,643	2,596
Lunch Club receipts	1,092			1,092	1,233
Café Connect	2,242			2,242	2,440
Cornerstone	786			786	799
Little Sunbeams	2,482			2,482	1,965
Youth Club	921			921	425
	9,166	-	-	9,166	9,458

Notes to the accounts (continued)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	TOTAL 2025 £	TOTAL 2024 £
Payments					
e) Church running expenses					
Parish Mission and evangelism				-	160
Youth club expenses		2,374		2,374	1,624
Lunch Club	1,238	12		1,250	821
Café Connect expenses	1,296	130		1,426	1,660
Little Sunbeams	2,106	198		2,304	1,931
Cost of services	625			625	1,480
Utilities and Insurance	4,434			4,434	5,068
Churchyards	338	895		1,233	1,879
Minor Repairs	4,796	487		5,283	2,107
	<u>14,833</u>	<u>4,096</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18,929</u>	<u>16,730</u>
f) Mission giving and donations					
The Children's Society	10			10	-
Christian Aid				-	30
Emmanuel International	100			100	-
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	260			260	160
	<u>370</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>190</u>

6 None of the trustees was paid a salary by the charity.

The Rev May Barker was paid a stipend by The Diocese of Chichester. Council tax and water rates totalling £2,887 were paid by the PCC for the benefit of Rev Barker.

Approved by North Mundham Parochial Church Council and signed on behalf of the PCC by:

Mrs Elizabeth Malan

Mrs Helen Alexander

Churchwarden

Vice-Chair of the PCC

Date

Date

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the members/trustees of the Parochial Church Council of St Stephen's Church, North Mundham

I report on the accounts of the PCC for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145 (5) (b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCC and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the PCC concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act 2011; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

The presentation of the accounts and the presence and filing of the supporting documentation is once again of a very good standard and easy to follow.

Signature

Name : Peter Grace

Relevant Professional Qualification or body: Retired Accountant (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA))

Address: 2 Fletcher Close, North Mundham, Chichester, West Sussex

Date: 14.3.2026

Safeguarding

During the past year, the previous SQP documentation for safeguarding practice has been replaced by the Parish Dashboard and Parish Hub.

The dashboard has seven focus areas with numerous targets for each. The dashboard has three levels that need to be completed and at the moment both churches within the Benefice are working on level two. The dashboard enables us to be very focused in our approach to safeguarding in the Benefice but also highlights the wide-ranging responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officers job.

The following summary sets out progress towards the dashboard mandatory requirements:

Policies and Action Plan

We have adopted the Church of England 'promoting a safer church' safeguarding policy.

We have a safeguarding action plan for each church.

Safeguarding Procedures

We have safeguarding procedures in place for those working with children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Roles

Our Parish safeguarding officers, Churchwardens and Lead recruiter are all aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Training For Key Roles

Parish safeguarding officers, Churchwardens, Lead recruiter and PCC members have all completed the required safeguarding training.

Displayed Information

The Benefice safeguarding policy is displayed in both churches. The Safeguarding who's who and the promoting a safer church poster are in the porch of each church. The Benefice website has all the necessary safeguarding documentation available.

Reviews And Reports

Safeguarding is always on the agenda on a PCC meeting. Reports of safeguarding progress is made at PCC meetings and a report is given at the APCM. The PCCs of both churches have approved the activities that take place under the 'umbrella' of the Church.

Church Activities

This is the area we are now focusing on. It is a huge undertaking with EACH activity taking place in the parish, under the 'umbrella' of the church having eight areas that need to be completed.

Naomi Lott and Rachel Russell-Wells

Benefice Safeguarding Officers

Electoral Roll Report

At the start of 2025 the Electoral Roll list included 81 eligible people following the previous year's cull, the pre-APCM check and some sad losses. There have been several further sad losses during the year and a removal for not meeting eligibility rules.

Of these about 60% were resident in the parish of North Mundham with the other circa 40% travelling in from nearby parishes, some of them duplicating with neighbouring Hunston.

Looking ahead to the APCM, I anticipate a similar number but am in the hope that several relative newcomers will sign up soon. The new list will be produced shortly before the Sunday annual meeting ready for presentation to the PCC for approval and certification to the Diocese. Appropriate notices will be displayed on the notice boards as required.

David Coward

Electoral Roll Officer

Annual fabric report

St Stephen's Church Building and Facilities Committee

The committee was formed in late 2023 and, with Terms of Reference (ToRs) set out in October 2024, settled into a regular set of bi-monthly meetings with agenda items under its chair and minute writer.

The major issue of the year was dealing with the Diocese Architect's Quinquennial Inspection (QI), a very lengthy report document. In addition to information about the requirements of such inspections, it included 193 separate works statements/requirements items for the internal and external elements of the church, which has been transcribed to a format that eases managing maintenance and other work, showing priorities for action. Over 50 of the items were dealt with in 2025!

Most of the work requirements require specific skills such as stone masons, carpenters and glaziers, a large proportion of them items located at high level, so not yet considered for any action. Of these the most urgent is the Tower, especially timber supports for the bells. On the architect's strong advice, a further survey was carried out by a Structural Engineer who provided a more detailed understanding of work that was required. The architect will be requested to draft a formal works schedule, followed by a faculty application submission to the Diocese.

Particular attention was paid to less complex, DIY/Self-help tasks within the capabilities of church volunteers. Many of the items raised by the architect has been completed and recorded in the church logbook. The cost of most of these was covered by donations. Checks were also carried out on all recurring inspection and annual maintenance work.

In addition to the QI items, a lot of extra maintenance and repair projects were carried out during the year, including a complete refurbishment of the WC area and reorganising of the storage area on the Mezzanine floor, and the small room behind it.

The reorganisation of the Terrier (Inventory) records was started, with good progress, by the Revd May with the churchwardens to increase the information held on all valuable items held, including photographs, to meet insurance requirements. These items were also treated with smartwater for security.

Some work was carried out to repair and clear graveyard walls and efforts have been made to improve the gardening arrangements.

The new Remembrance Garden was developed within a surrounding bush fence which is gradually developing following donations towards the central stone and

planting costs. In line with the direction of the Chichester Diocese, there are no memorial plaques identifying the location of the interments.

War Memorial and Remembrance

Early in the year a survey by a West Sussex Surveyor was carried out regarding the tilt situation of the 1921 War Memorial. Although the memorial is tilted to the east, it is not causing an immediate problem. Measurements were taken and will be used for checking in future years.

In preparation for the annual Remembrance Sunday service the War Memorial name inscriptions and additional plaque were cleaned, lichen was removed from the column, and the surrounding area was weeded in October 2025.

The Remembrance Sunday service was well attended but the previously regular format was modified somewhat without the Memorial Roll of Honour being paraded, nor was a wreath available on behalf of the Church community. The previous extensive poppy display on the Bell Tower was not put in place due to the instability of the Tower, but instead the Communion Table was draped with a net of poppies. The local Brownie Group paraded with their standard.



After the service a wreath was laid at the foot of the memorial by Parish Councillor Commodore David Maclean, accompanied by Commander Andy Forsythe and Captain Ben Morgan. After the service, the annual Poppy Appeal organised by David Maclean was held in the North Mundham Village Hall with about 100 in attendance.

The Church Clock

The church clock is regularly checked to make sure it is keeping good time and functioning as it should, with adjustments made where necessary including an annual service. Funds have been ring fenced for the upkeep of the clock.

Sound System

The church sound system continues to enhance our weekly services, especially as we are without a full-time organist, so rely on sound system at least once a month for audio accompaniment for hymns. Repairs/replacement of microphones is carried out as and when required.

St Giles Church, Merston

The Grade 1 listed St Giles Church ceased being used as a parish church several years ago and was taken over by the Churches' Conservation Trust (CCT) with no responsibility left with the St Stephen's Church PCC. As of 2025 the Church building was under the management of the CCT, with an arrangement made with local Merston residents holding keys to clean inside as necessary and open the building for pre-arranged visitors. There was an agreement that the church could be used for graveyard interment services and a single service each year, usually a Christmas Carol service, led by the Joint Beneficiary Vicar but this was not held in 2025.

The nearby square building (known as The School Room) next to the gate from the road is outside the church boundary and is not listed. In the past it had been variously used as a vestry, civil parish meeting place and short time stable. Currently it is rented out to a local resident as an art studio. The tenant pays a small rental charge, but the insurance cover is paid for from left over St Giles Church funds and the rental income. The building is in a poor state of repair with the estimated cost of repairs well in excess of available funds.

The School Room should have been registered as a separate entity by the Chichester Diocese, but a mistake was made and this has not been corrected, nor was a registration made. Back in early 2024 tentative arrangements were being explored by the Revd May, whose incumbency the building is vested in, not the St Stephen's Church PCC. On the advice of the Diocese Property Manager, she sought advice from solicitors in London, believed to represent the CCT, and they responded comprehensively detailing the many possible problems there were in trying to sell the building and seeking answers, which still needs attention.

It is noted that the active graveyard at Merston is a responsibility of the St Stephen's Church PCC since the Merston Parish was combined into the Joint Beneficiary with North Mundham with Merston and Hunston.

Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod

The Rural Dean, Rev Canon Paul Doick, welcomed everyone to St Paul's Church, Chichester, for the **January** meeting and the service began with Evening prayer.

The Rural Dean then summarised the Diocesan Synod meeting held in November at which the Budget was discussed and agreed. The finance team is budgeting for a £720k deficit.

The new Diocesan strategy beginning in 2025 in our Year of Faith was introduced. Beginning in Advent 2025 the vision will look through the lens of the four gospels focusing on the themes of Discipleship, Mission and Evangelism, Vocation and Prayer and Worship. This will focus on the coastal Deaneries, work with young people and equipping lay and ordained ministry. The Diocese will apply for significant funding.

As our Mission Action Plan only had three topics the directory was not necessary. A Family Social Worker was a good idea but parishes are struggling financially so the charity will be asked how best to move that forward. Synod then broke into discussion groups to find out what people wanted from the Deanery Synod. Feedback included better communication in the parishes, people with the same role getting together and a need to share all our information.

In **June** the Deanery Synod meeting was held in St Anne's, East Wittering and opened with a short introduction to the parish of East Wittering, Earnley and Almodington. St Anne's was the first church in the diocese to have solar panels.

The main part of the meeting was then given over to a presentation by the Rev Jo King, the Diocesan disability adviser, on Becoming More Welcoming. She started by asking us to think about the welcome to our services and how well our churches catered for people with disabilities. Church isn't complete until all disabled people are welcomed. Most important is giving disabled the chance to do things and use their skills. Rotas encourage people to take part. We all might be able bodied today but next week maybe not and it takes courage to admit our own failings and disabilities.

The Rural Dean then summarised the Diocesan Synod held in May. The motion was passed to request General Synod to change clergy pensions back to 2/3 stipend after 41 years of service. The Diocesan budget was passed. The 2024 deficit was reduced from the budgeted £1.5million to £441,000. Green shoots are starting to show – church congregations are growing.

Heart for the Homeless would like to work more closely with local churches and Liz, the new Outreach worker, would be getting in touch and visiting churches soon especially in Chichester.

In **September** the Deanery Finance Meeting was held. At the beginning the new Archdeacon, the Very Reverend Dr Tom Carpenter introduced himself and explained where an Archdeacon fits in between a bishop and the parish priest.

The Diocesan team, Melissa, from the new growth team and the finance director, Catherine Dawkins spoke about the more detailed Autumn deanery document. There were a few questions from those present.

The Rural Dean said we are trying to do God's will but parishes have been upset by the Church Commissioners. Catherine Dawkins replied saying that the Diocese does not always agree with the decisions of the Church Commissioners and always tries to keep Church House staff to a minimum with many staff working in more than one of the sections.

The staff of Church House were thanked for the presentations and all the work put into running the diocese. 2026 Diocese Estimated income was £17.551M and Estimated expenditure £17.867M leading to a deficit of £0.316M.

In **November** the Deanery Synod meeting was held at St. Pancras church. The main part of the meeting was an excellent presentation with slides from a representative of Children on the Edge, which is based in St. Pancras close to the church. This is a child rights organisation created to support the world's most marginalised children and was very informative.

Joan Duberley

Deanery Synod Representative, Hunston

Naomi Lott

Deanery Synod Representative, North Mundham