

The Parish of St Mary and St James, Littlehampton



Parish Profile

July 2025

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Welcome

Proclaiming the Mystery of Faith

In 2025 this diocese celebrates the 950th anniversary of witness and evangelisation from a mission base in Chichester, building on the earlier mission founded by St Wilfrid at Selsey. 2025 also marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with its reminder of the formative claim upon us of the catholic creeds.

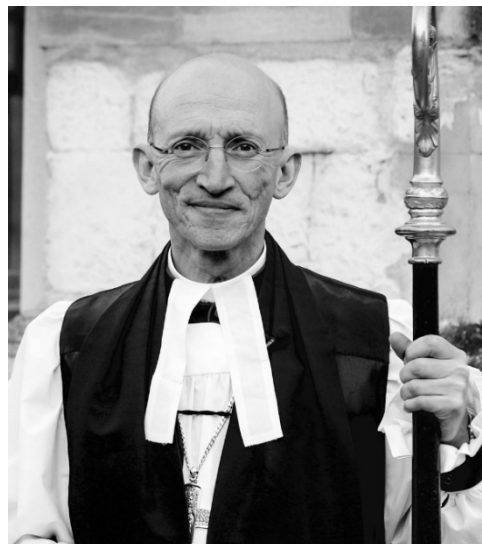
These anniversaries are more than historical footnotes. They speak powerfully about the richness of faith and mission that is our inheritance locally and universally.

Inspired by that inheritance, we seek to be a household of faith that is endlessly curious about how the Holy Scriptures and the sacraments of the New Covenant enable us to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in today's noisy and distracted world.

If God is calling you to join us in the task of proclaiming the mystery of faith in some part of this diocese, we pray that the contribution of your gifts and experience will enrich our witness and deepen your own discipleship.

We take very seriously the call to diversity and radical inclusion as characteristic of the Church's mission. For this reason, we welcome applications from Global Majority Heritage clergy, who are under-represented in those who serve this diocese.

Bishop Martin, Bishop of Chichester



PCC Welcome

On behalf of the PCC of the Parish of Littlehampton, St Mary and St James, I wish you a warm welcome and thank you for taking the time to read our parish profile.

Like many parishes the length and breadth of the UK, we face a number of challenges. However, the strengths of our church present many opportunities for the right incumbent to make a lasting and meaningful difference for Littlehampton.

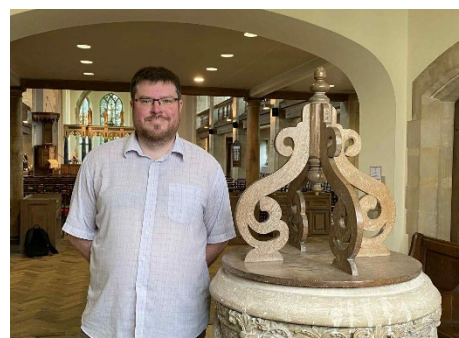
Our congregation is getting older and hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels, but we have a strong church family, firmly rooted in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. Reverent liturgy and music are at the heart of our spiritual life and we are blessed with several retired clergy who are hugely supportive of the parish. We are looking for someone who can lead us in growing in faithfulness and worshipping the Lord 'in the beauty of holiness', but also in welcoming new people of all ages and backgrounds into our family.

The town of Littlehampton has many social issues, with deprivation, homelessness and substance abuse affecting all too many people in our town. We are looking for someone who can reach out to those who need comfort and support and help us share the good news with them. However, Littlehampton is also a growing town with a beautiful seaside location between the south coast and the South Downs National Park, many amenities and a strong community ethos.

While St Mary's needs significant maintenance and restoration and finances are challenging, it is a beautiful Grade II building and much progress has been made in recent years, with extensive work on the roof and the imminent installation of a new infrared heating system. We are looking for someone who can help us in time to restore it to its full glory, and who we hope will grow to love it as much as we do.

If you feel that you could be the person we are looking for then I hope that this profile will provide you with a good introduction to our church and to the community we serve and may inspire you to consider applying for this vacancy.

James Kirk, Vice Chairman



Our Parish – Vision and Values

St Mary and St James is a church in the Anglo-Catholic tradition with full ceremony, set in the pleasant seaside town of Littlehampton. We are a Society parish, and the Anglo-Catholic liturgy is important to us. **We fully expect our priest will be a member of The Society.** Our Church building is a place of holiness and a quiet haven.

There is a strong history of Holy Communion being taken to the housebound and to residential homes by previous incumbents and this has been restarted recently by retired clergy and our Deacon.

As a Parish church, we provide funeral services for the local community. In addition, the incumbent is requested to take services at the crematorium. We have occasional weddings and baptisms.

During Lent, we typically have a Lent course. It is our tradition to hold Stations of the Cross. During Holy Week, we celebrate Mass daily and all services of the Triduum. Our Maundy Thursday service includes foot-washing of a dozen members of the congregation; our Good Friday liturgy service is preceded by the Stations of the Cross. The Easter Vigil is a favourite service for many, steeped in solemnity and ceremony. This year Easter Sunday was well-attended with a number of visitors. Each Christmas we hold a Christingle service, Crib service and Midnight Mass. We keep all Holy Days of Obligation.

Our Sunday worship typically follows the Murray or Inwood mass settings with hymns from the New English Hymnal or Celebration Hymnal. Currently, in the absence of a choir, our psalm between the Old and New Testament readings, is said.

After our Sunday Mass, we socialise at the rear of the church over tea or coffee, which is sponsored weekly by different members of the congregation across the year.



Among our Lay participation, we are fortunate to have:

- a team of sidesmen who provide a warm welcome as well as giving out books and pew sheets
- a team of a dozen or so readers who read on a rota basis
- a small group of servers, some of whom have grown up in the church and remain faithful to serving regularly. The servers can carry out the roles of thurifer, crucifer, MC and acolyte and do so with great reverence.
- an organist
- a Sunday School leader who is accompanied by a member of the PCC on a rota basis to ensure our safeguarding practices are observed

All the above play a role in our Sunday Services.

We are fortunate to have two retired priests as well as a non-stipendiary deacon.

We are a committed congregation, albeit getting older in an area that has been expanding its housing considerably and we believe that there is scope therefore to grow the church and develop the children's ministry. The appointment of a new incumbent will mark the next phase in the development and delivery of our mission, as we look towards a number of opportunities for growth. There are some great skills within the laity and we need a priest who can encourage these to be used wisely and to their full potential for the good of the church and the surrounding community we serve. Our church hosts the annual Remembrance Civic service and Christmas Carol services. Our incumbent leads the service on the green on Armed Forces Day but there is great potential for further increasing the visibility of our parish in the community. We would like our new incumbent to be fully committed to the catholic tradition and invested in our growth, who can inspire us to build our congregation and turn Easter and Christmas visitors into regular attendees at our Sunday services.



History of St Mary's

The present church is the third on the site, dates from 1934-35, there was a medieval church on this site until 1826 when a faculty was granted for the building of a new church. Originally constructed in 1826 by George Draper on the site of a medieval church and then transformed in 1935 by WH Randoll Blacking. It has an impressive galleried interior. The church was listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest on 11th May 1949 under Section 30 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. Listed at Grade C, subsequently graded II.



Figure 1 Interior of St Mary's looking toward the main altar.



Figure 2 Interior of St Mary's looking toward the font and organ

History of St James the Great

For more than 100 years, St James Church in East Ham Road was a centre of worship and a focus of witness to the people of this area of Littlehampton. Opened in 1910 as a daughter church of St Mary's (the parish church of Littlehampton), St James became a parish in its own right, and then one of the constituent parishes in the Littlehampton and Wick Team ministry.

The church closed at the end of January 2018 and was designated a chapel-of-ease. In 2023, it was agreed by the PCC of St Mary's and St James (which amalgamated when St James closed) to pass the responsibility of the church building to the diocese of Chichester. This is still in the process of being completed, but this should be completed by the end of 2025.



Figure 3 Photograph of St James the Great church

St Mary's – the building

St Mary's is a beautiful Grade II listed building, constructed of red brick with stone dressing. The tower is plain with a clock face. A simple brick stringcourse runs along the parapet throughout, and the window and door surrounds are of stone. The nave and transept windows are diamond leaded light with tall, pointed arches and Y-tracery. There are broad transoms to the bottom of each window which are carved with shields. The transept windows to the east and west and the vestry and parish room windows are rectangular. The apse is five-sided with intersecting tracery windows. Most of the windows have clear glass and the walls are whitewashed, with the stone nave arcade, chancel arch and apsidal arch left exposed. The gallery is wooden.

Following the departure of the recent incumbent, the PCC has been proactive in inviting the architect, Julian Vallis, who conducted the most recent quinquennial inspection to discuss with us the conditions of the building and gain an understanding of the priorities. A main priority that began to be investigated when the previous incumbent was in position was the heating. For approximately the last three winters, the church has been without heating as the previous gas boiler system had stopped working. Following investigation into potential replacement systems (and their consequential obstacles), the most viable option was identified as the Halo infrared system by Hershel Infrared.

After substantial research, including members of the PCC visiting a church in the local area with the Halo system in place, and consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), the PCC decided the infrared heating system was the best solution and met the church and its community's needs. We have been supported in this choice by the diocese, particularly as it is a sustainable, environmentally friendly option that helps us to meet the Church of England's net zero target for 2030.

The PCC is currently in the process of organising the installation of the two Halo units, with the aim of expanding further, which the system allows us to do. The formalities are being undertaken so we can pursue installation ahead of Winter 2025.

The meeting with Julian helped to reassure the PCC that while there were a number of areas of the building's fabric that needed attention, the building itself is structurally sound, and the areas highlighted during the meeting were a result of historical issues which have been resolved.

The church roof is in a good state of repair and the drainage has been improved and a regular programme of maintenance is in place to prevent any issues. In the medium term, pointing will need to be carried out on certain areas of the building which is due to the coastal location of the church and the subsequent weather conditions.

There are cosmetic issues in the building such as areas where some plaster was removed as a precautionary safety measure, however the work needed is mostly cosmetic in nature to restore the fabric of those areas back to their original condition.

Julian has given the PCC advice and guidance on potential grants on the cosmetic work needed and we will be investigating this further over the coming months. The meeting has helped give us a firmer grasp on the maintenance required and we are eager to explore possible funding avenues.

Julian's verdict on St Mary's? That it is a building which is a work in progress, but where a lot has already been achieved. We are excited for the future of the church, and we hope that the new incumbent will help to take this forward.

Churchyard

The Churchyard is closed apart from the interment of ashes. The District Council has assumed responsibility for the grass cutting and other maintenance. There are two trees with a preservation order on them.

Parish Hall

The hall is to the north of the church, with its own access via a path from Church Street. It is fully accessible via an outdoor ramp and internal ramp, linking it to the church office, which adjoins the church.

Our parish hall was fully renovated in 2015 and is of good size, equipped with an overhead projector and built in audio and video equipment. The projector can be connected to via HDMI, VGA or Airplay. There is also a great lighting system with several settings depending on what is needed.

In the hall there is a well-equipped kitchen with a large cooker, microwave, water heater and fridge. There are also toilets just next to the main hall and include facilities for the disabled and baby changing.

We have several groups who regularly book the hall and we are currently looking at ways to grow this area of church life to generate further income



Figure 4 The church hall

and provide more service to the local community. We would love a new priest who will lead and aspire us in how to best use our facilities to further our mission and ministry.

The Church Office

The office adjoins the church and the hall. It currently is not staffed, but there is an answer machine so we can remain connected to the local community. Since the departure of the previous incumbent, messages are picked up by members of the PCC and dealt with accordingly. The PCC is planning its redecoration as it has not been done for a number of years and needs refreshing.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is a four-bedroomed detached house with garage, refurbished and extended in 2009, garden front and back and is a short walk to the church. There is a spacious office (ground floor) and a lounge to the rear of the property.

Due to the needs of the family of the previous incumbent, extensive adaptations have been made to the property for wheelchair users.



Figure 5 Picture of the vicarage

Youth Ministry

Historically, we have had a strong provision for children in the church, with the children helping support the parish community by collecting hymn books, helping at fundraising events, whether serving cakes or giving out prizes.

There have been a number of children who have progressed from Baptism through to Confirmation with the guidance and encouragement of the clergy and congregation. One young man who was baptised and confirmed in the church was ordained last year.

The children are regarded as a very important part of our Church Family. The children of St Mary & St James participate in regular Sunday School lessons where the Gospel reading for that Sunday is taught. A number of the children have now grown up, so we are looking to grow this area of worship again, with the new housing developments and growing population hopefully contributing to this.

Schools

There are a number of nurseries in the town and surrounding area, alongside primary schools. There is large Woodard academy within the parish and while we do not currently have a direct link, the chaplaincy team there encourages an open door to ministers in the local area.

In surrounding villages there are Church of England primary schools, although we do not have links to them. There are also several colleges in the surrounding area, providing both Further Education and Adult Education courses. The nearest universities are the University of Chichester, the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton.

Social Events and Fundraising

The Parish has a fundraising group which arranges events to help raise money towards the upkeep of the church buildings. The group meets periodically throughout the year to plan such events as Hoy Bingo, quizzes, beetle drives, race nights, our Spring and Christmas Fairs as well as our St. Mary's and St. James' Patronal Festivals. Information about these events is circulated throughout Littlehampton to welcome people outside the congregation to join us for these fun events.

Our Deacon

I was born and brought up in the catholic faith in Austria. In December 1979, I moved with my family to England and attended All Saints Church in Wick, Littlehampton. Around 1990 I moved from All Saints to St Mary's Littlehampton. Throughout my life I always had a sense of vocation which was realised to its full at St Mary's. Throughout my discernment I experienced the full support from the clergy, the PCC and the parishioners at St Mary's. I was ordained Deacon on 26th June 2004 and have served St Mary's as a non-stipendiary deacon ever since. I have regarded St Mary's as my spiritual home and it gives me great joy to share that I am able to fulfil my diaconal ministry to the full here.

In March 2023 I retired from my role as a Parish deacon but carried on to serve in the Parish of Littlehampton as a deacon with permission to officiate (PTO).

Sisters of the Community of the Sacred Passion

The three remaining sisters of the Community of the Sacred Passion now live in the parish and worship with us.



Figure 7 Picture of a sister from the Community of the Sacred Passion and a parishioner during Sunday Mass.



Figure 6 Preparing flower displays for Easter 2025

Parish Structure and Groups

The PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) meets regularly throughout the year and there is an Annual Parochial Church meeting in April/May. Meetings are chaired by the incumbent (during the vacancy this has been taken over by the Lay Vice Chair) and regular items on the agenda are finances, safeguarding and maintenance of the building. There are a couple of working groups who report to the PCC, including fundraising. In line with the size of our parish, we are allowed nine members to the PCC, and all nine positions are currently filled.

Safeguarding

As a parish, we take our responsibility to safeguard our young and vulnerable people very seriously. Our Safeguarding Coordinator regularly updates the PCC to ensure all members are aware of potential safeguarding issues, regulations and any actions that need to be taken. We ensure that all members who work closely with children and/or vulnerable adults have current DBS certificates, and all members of the clergy and PCC have to undertake safeguarding training. We passed our parish safeguarding assessment help by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team in May 2024.

Financial Resources

Parishioners are regularly reminded of the importance of Stewardship and regular members are encouraged to donate via the Parish Giving Scheme, or the contactless card reader we have installed in church. We also strongly encourage GiftAid to those who qualify. St Mary's owns a curacy house in the parish, which is currently rented to a private tenant.

As with many parishes since the pandemic, finances are tight and a regular agenda at PCC meetings. However, the parish has a number of investments which gives it considerable resilience, and there are some changes taking place which will strengthen its financial position. These include the closure of St James Church, which in 2024 cost just over £8,000 in insurance and other costs. Copies of the Summary of Financial

Receipts and Payments and Statement of Assets and Liabilities for 2024 are included as an appendix to this profile.

Working Parties

We hold regular working parties to help with cleaning of the church and in particular during the Christmas and Easter seasons. These are comprised of members of the congregation coming together to provide service to their church community.

Flower Arrangers

A group of enthusiastic parishioners who are devoted to making the church looking as lovely as possible with flower arrangements.

Some of our recent decorations for seasonal events can be seen in the photos below.



Figure 100 Christmas 2024 at St Marys



Figure 9 Remembrance Sunday 2024



Figure 8 Flower pedestal created by our flower arrangers

Quotes from our congregation

We asked the congregation what they think about their parish and church.

We have a very good team of servers and a lovely organist.

I love the smell of the church, the sound of the organ, the sincerity of the clergy.

This has been my church since the days of Fr. David (1981)

Wonderful people and awesome priests and I feel closer to God and I love Jesus so much.

We would like the incumbent to form closer relationships with the community as a whole i.e. visiting local schools, home visits to our own sick, taking an open presence in local activities.

It is welcoming to new parishioners.

I attend the 8 o'clock on a Sunday. While it is a said service, it is a beautiful and peaceful service that really helps me to connect to God.

I worship here because the loyalty and kindness of so many members of the congregation.

Quotes from our congregation (cont.)

The church is a beautiful building – peaceful atmosphere. The services are celebrated in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The members of the congregation are friendly.

A lovely church and people very calming

Nice place situation in the town. Lovely church to visit. Has a very calming feel.

The actual chapel; high altar area has a very spiritual feel.

If someone is feeling unwell, everyone else will comfort and help them.

Our lovely church needs more people to attend, but it was cold during the winter months without heating which some people did not attend during the very cold snaps.

Bill and I feel quite a strong sense of loyalty towards St Mary and St James and there are aspects of the worship which we very much appreciate – the catholic tradition, the very good organ and organist(s), and a large church which provides lovely spaces for worship and adornment. We need a holy priest, who encourages lay contribution from all age groups, and is a good team manager.

Our Community in Littlehampton

Overview

Littlehampton is primarily a seaside resort situated in West Sussex, at the mouth of the river Arun. It has excellent rail and road links to London, Brighton, Arundel, Chichester and Portsmouth.

Littlehampton has sandy, award-winning beaches, a marina and harbour



Figure 11 Photo of the riverfront in Littlehampton

and stunning contemporary architecture, including the award winning East Beach café and the colourful Long Bench which stretches the along the sea front and is believed to be the longest bench in the UK. In 2020, Arun District Council (the council in Littlehampton) was awarded part of the levelling-up fund from the then government and are using it to improve Littlehampton seafront.



Figure 12 Littlehampton Wave Leisure Centre

There has been considerable expansion to Littlehampton over recent years with new housing estates throughout the area, which we hope will provide opportunity for growth within the town itself. The leisure centre was completely refurbished in 2019 and includes a swimming pool.

Other leisure facilities include a golf course, sailing opportunities and a skate park. There are numerous parks and open green spaces, a small cinema/theatre on the sea front and various leisure activities such as mini-golf, tennis courts and a leisure park.

The town itself has a high street with a number of shops, restaurants, cafes and public houses. There are also several supermarkets chains in the area.

St Mary's itself is situated to the east end of the high street, next to the museum, council offices and just up from the library.



Figure 13 Littlehampton Windmill Cinema

Outside Littlehampton, in Ford, there is an open prison with an active work programme in the community to aid with rehabilitation and previously the church has invited people in to help with work on the building.

Health and Community Care

Within Littlehampton there are several medical centres, dental practices and a health centre/minor injuries unit. There are residential and care homes with which we have strong links with and for many years visited to administer communion and lead services. Littlehampton is between two major hospitals located in Worthing and Chichester. There are well established chaplaincies in each and historically the incumbent of St Marys and St James has been on the rota.

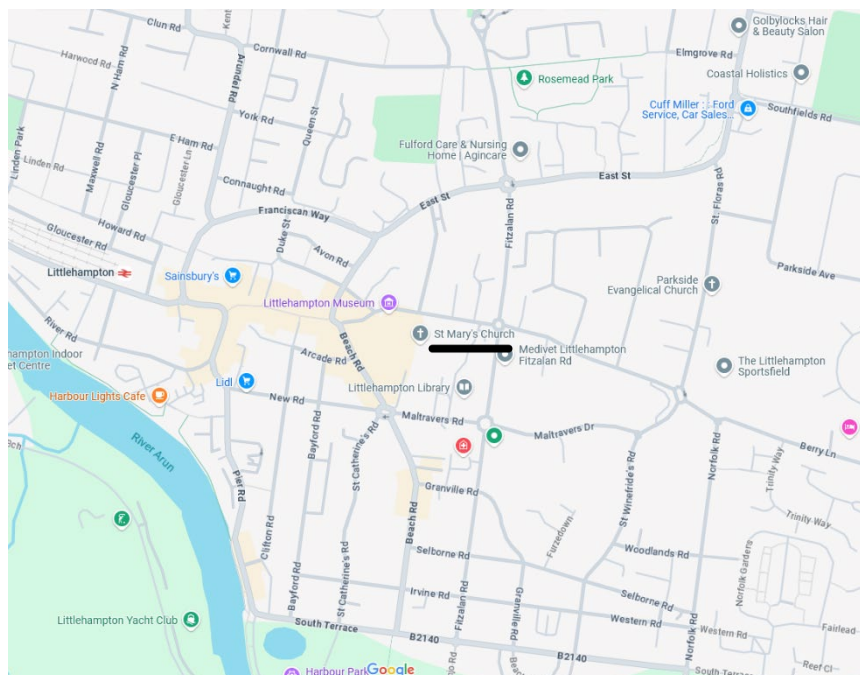


Figure 14 Photograph of Littlehampton Seafront

The Parish Setting



The Parish of St Mary's and St James is in the West Sussex town of Littlehampton. The town is situated on the coast, with good transport links to the cities of Brighton and London, plus Gatwick Airport. We have the benefit of not only being a seaside town, but also not too far from the beautiful South Downs National Park.



St Mary's church (our Parish church) is situated in the heart of the Littlehampton is within walking distance of both the high street and the seafront. The Parish itself covers the town of Littlehampton and borders the parishes of Clymping, Wick, Lymminster and Rustington.

Conclusion

This concludes our Parish Profile, and we hope it has provided an insight into our church community.

As noted above, our strengths include teamwork, welcoming and pastoral care. We acknowledge that some aspects of our life together need attention or transformation, and we welcome growth and development. Our active membership is weighted towards those who are approaching or have reached retirement, and we would like to develop younger membership. We would like to see a rise in attendance levels at the main Sunday Services and would like to recruit the help and support of those on the 'fringe' of the congregation, so all members are active, and a communal cohesion is achieved.

We look forward to welcoming our next incumbent who will be a man of vision who can lead us, help us shape and fulfil our strategic and missionary direct, and particularly has an enthusiasm for outreach and youth ministry. For our part, we will love, support, nurture and greatly value our new priest and his family (if he has one).

Thank you for reading our Parish Profile and for considering the Parish of St Mary and St James.



Figure 15 The St Mary and St James community when Bishop Martin visited in May 2025.

Appendix

St Mary and St James, Littlehampton

Summary of Financial Receipts and Payments 2024

	Unrestricted					
	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowed Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Income and Endowments from:						
Voluntary Giving	£33,987	£0	£0	£0	£33,987	£55,033
Fundraising Activities	£1,993	£0	£0	£0	£1,993	£6,500
Income from Church Activities	£5,400	£0	£0	£0	£5,400	£692
Investments	£3,466	£8,324	£281	£0	£12,070	£12,246
Grant	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£11,008
Total Received	£44,846	£8,324	£281	£0	£53,450	£85,479
Expenditure on:						
Church Activities	£23,340	£0	£160	£0	£23,500	£22,654
Church Expenses	£41,935	£857	£2,594	£0	£45,387	£119,322
Total Paid	£65,276	£857	£2,754	£0	£68,887	£141,976
<i>Reconciliation of funds:</i>						
Net income/expenditure	-£20,430	£7,467	-£2,473	£0	-£15,437	-£56,497
Transfer between funds	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Gains/(losses) on investments	£7,389	£0	£1,359	£931	£9,679	-£1,476
Net movement in funds	-£13,041	£7,467	-£1,114	£931	-£5,757	-£57,973
Bank accounts as at 1st January 2024	£251,338	£46,558	£62,643	£38,859	£399,398	£408,067
Banks accounts as at 31st December 2024	£238,724	£54,024	£61,529	£39,790	£394,067	£350,094

St Mary and St James, Littlehampton
Statements of Assets and Liabilities 2024

	Unrestricted					
	General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowed Funds	Total 2024	Total 2023
Assets:						
Barclays Main Account	£15,413	£0	£0	£0	£15,413	£37,013
Barclays Second Account	£599	£0	£0	£0	£599	£590
Barclays Winter Knoll Account	£0	£28,874	£0	£0	£28,874	£22,151
Barclays Restoration & Maintenance Account	£0	£14,742	£0	£0	£14,742	£14,523
Share Portfolio	£122,802	£0	£0	£0	£122,802	£114,986
CBF Deposit Fund: General	£5,951	£0	£0	£0	£5,951	£4,966
CBF Deposit Fund: Olney Bequest	£0	£10,408	£0	£0	£10,408	£9,883
CBF Deposit Fund: Yearsley	£1,950	£0	£0	£0	£1,950	£1,809
CBF Deposit Fund: Renovation	£695	£0	£0	£0	£695	£660
CBF Deposit Fund: Mitchell	£11,927	£0	£0	£0	£11,927	£11,927
CBF Deposit Fund: L Bratt	£0	£0	£61,529	£0	£61,529	£60,170
CBF Deposit Fund: Pickford	£0	£0	£0	£4,444	£4,444	£6,819
CBF Deposit Fund: J Corney	£0	£0	£0	£5,865	£5,865	£5,735
Yearsley Endowment	£0	£0	£0	£29,481	£29,481	£28,778
Tangible Fixed Assets	£79,387	£0	£0	£0	£79,387	£79,387
Bank and deposit accounts	£238,724	£54,024	£61,529	£39,790	£394,067	£399,398
Debtors	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	
Total assets	£238,724	£54,024	£61,529	£39,790	£394,067	£399,398
Liabilities:						
Unpaid Diocesan fees for weddings/funerals	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Total liabilities	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0