

The Parochial Council of Sunninghill and South Ascot

Annual Report 2024

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APCM Reports 2024

Vicar's Report

2024 started with a fabulously celebratory Whole-parish service to celebrate Epiphany, and to give thanks for the ministry of our curate, Sarah Mortimer, whose last Sunday it was with us. Although tinged with sadness at her departure, it was wonderful to see so many people representing different areas of her ministry coming together, and to be able to pray for her and her husband Sam as they follow God's calling to new ministries in Bicester. The service was followed by a parish lunch at All Souls which allowed the festivities to continue.

Sarah's departure was followed shortly by the departure of our SSM associate minister, Vusi Mabuza, who moved away from the area. Vusi's departure was particularly felt at All Souls where he had exercised most of his ministry.

Sarah and Vusi's departures also meant that we needed to introduce a new service schedule, with a monthly whole parish service and the celebration of Holy Communion alternating between the two churches on other Sundays, with non-eucharistic lay-led services on the intervening weeks. Although there have been a few minor alterations to this pattern (for example to celebrate each church's patronal festival), after a year the pattern has bedded in well. There has been particularly positive feedback about the Whole Parish services – in part because it has been really rewarding being able to worship together across the two churches.

The reduction in the ministry team also caused us to look more closely at our administration and organisational structures. This parish, with two thriving and busy churches and a large number of occasional offices is a big job for the vicar alone to manage, especially as we are still feeling the effects and rebuilding after covid. In order to mitigate this, we increased the number of paid administrative hours in the parish and have invested in a new combined website and parish manage management system. This has been implemented in stages throughout 2024, and will come to fruition with the building of a new database when we also renew the electoral roll in 2025. The difficulty of finding new volunteers to fill the role of Treasurer also led us to engage the services of a paid bookkeeper. They have been an excellent investment, and have meant that as well as streamlining the treasurer's role, they have pointed out many ways which we could save money. This is important as the parish continues to run at a deficit – partly due to a large Parish Share.

One major piece of work that has taken place behind the scenes over the past year is the All Souls Church Hall. At the beginning of 2024, it was realised that the hall had fallen into a poor state of repair, and a surveyor's report and a little more investigation revealed that the problems were far worse than first thought, with estimates for the work needed to bring it up to a good state of repair being far beyond what the parish could afford. During the course of exploring various possible courses of action, however, it was discovered that the Hall was actually originally established under a long-forgotten but not-dissolved ecclesiastical trust. This meant that it does not actually belong to the parish, although it was intended to be used for church use (and still can be). Over the years this understanding has been lost and the finances between the two organisations had become muddied, meaning that (following legal advice and extensive financial detective work by Kate and our bookkeepers) the PCC made a nominal financial settlement to the Church Hall Trust to account for monies mistakenly paid into the church account in the past. The good news is that although the All Souls Church Hall is now entirely separate from the PCC, the trustees have appointed a managing company. It has now been awarded several grants by local charities, and the repair work is underway. This all means that the Hall will be available to the church and the community for decades to come.

Attendance at all of our services has been healthy throughout the year, with particularly high numbers for festivals (approaching, and in some cases exceeding pre-covid levels). The Christmas Eve Carol Service at St Michael's was particularly well attended, and despite a medical emergency pausing proceedings for a short while, received very positive feedback from the community. We also started a new monthly service in the Signature Care home on the Bagshot Road Roundabout in the Autumn, and are in conversation with other groups about the ways we can support those in our community with dementia. It has also been good to welcome some new people into our congregations, and welcome back others.

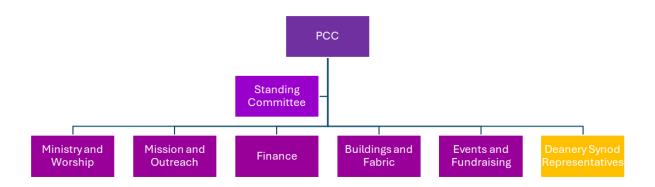
2024 also saw several successful parish events including the ever-popular Christmas concert and, new this year, a musical tea-party which defied the English weather and saw many of our congregation dancing in raincoats to the strains of ABBA! We also hosted Cards for Good Causes for the first time.

Thank you to the Church Wardens, the PCC and everyone who gives so freely of their time, gifts and resources to support the work and ministry of our parish. We could not do it without you.

Churchwarden's report

We began the church year at St Michael's with Kate Bolsover and Amelia Robinson as Churchwardens and Octavia O'Donoghue as Deputy Warden. As Kate was also treasurer it became too much of a workload, so she stepped down as CW and Octavia became full Churchwarden. Nicola Hughes (our Parish Administrator) stepped into the role of Churchwarden for All Souls, after many years of dedicated service from Aled and Sandra. Both Aled and Sandra remain an integral part of the All Souls' congregation. We sincerely thank them for all they have volunteered to the Church.

The PCC has continued to be split into the 5 committees established last year and the Churchwardens for both churches meet at least every three weeks, with a standing committee every few months



Six full PCC meetings plus the APCM have taken place.

Services

Service numbers in both Churches continue to build which has been very positive. At St Michael's, the 9.15am All ages service is now held weekly in the church hall, except for on the first and fifth Sundays. On the first Sunday of every month, both churches worship together and whilst well attended the challenge is still to get families to regularly attend. Without a Curate, we have relied heavily on our lay ministers and lay preachers to help Tansley cover services in both churches, and we are extremely grateful to them. We are delighted that Amanda has now been licensed here and look forward to her preaching and ministry when she is able to, not forgetting that she has a full-time job. The Choir has grown in number and junior choir has now begun, so we hope this will encourage children to come and sing.

The two local primary schools linked to St Michael's, held their Easter, Harvest and Christmas Services/concerts in Church. Nicola Shaw has developed strong links with South Ascot Village School, and happily they have hosted their Harvest and Christmas concerts in All Souls' Church. Creative Little Footsteps pre-school also performed their annual Nativity in All Souls' and groups of the children visit All Souls' Coffee Shop on occasion.

Remembrance Services in both Churches were, again, well very attended. Christmas Eve Carols at St Michael's was the best attended service of the year and was back to pre-Covid numbers. At All Souls' the number of those who attended Christmas services doubled compared to last year which was wonderful.

Fundraising, Finance and Maintenance

The IT across the Parish was upgraded (no small task), making office life much easier for the office administrators. The Church office at St Michael's was relocated into the Vestry and a new office installed in All Souls', where the Sunday School was previously held. This enables efficient working out of both Churches. Nicola's Parish Administrator job increased, doubling her office hours per week. This has meant that she is able to fully support the ministry team in the array of admin tasks which go hand in hand with running a busy Parish of two churches.

We have focused on various fundraising projects this year. Octavia, Amelia and Val Ward hosted a very successful summer musical tea party. At All Souls, Pami and Mike Cross organized and hosted a hugely enjoyable Parish Quiz. Kate Anstis organized a very successful Christmas Fayre in St Michael's Church Hall, offering a great selection of local art and crafts stall, full of quality handmade items. Liz Moore hosted a MacMillian Coffee morning in All Souls'. Card for Good Causes requested to use All Souls' Church from October through to December as a setting for their Charity fundraising card sales. Not only did it help to raise crucial funds for a charity initiative, but it increased the number of people through the door at All Souls' which was a positive outcome.

Finances continue to be a challenge and critically the decision was made to only embark on projects if the funding or necessary grants was available prior to work commencing. At St Michaels it was decided to reduce the heating output by turning the fan element off, however this has led to some older members not attending services in the cold weather so may need reconsidering this next winter. At All Souls, the Church is used almost daily, so the heating remains on timers during the winter months.

The plans to put in a disabled toilet at St Michael's had to be delayed whilst grants are being sort. We did, however, have new wheelchair ramps made for the main and inner front door, the hall door and the step between church and the hall, this has made a huge difference to access and for vergers as the new ramps are easier to handle. Two new speakers were installed in St Michael's and Octavia spent a great deal of time looking into the sound system. We have been generously gifted money to re paint the hall, toilets and kitchen once the work is completed on the disabled toilet. This will then make the hall more attractive to hirers and start to generate increased regular income. At St Michael's, water was pooling outside the main door after any heavy rain making it

hard to enter services, so new gravel was spread outside which has helped solve the problem. The shed now unused at the back of the hall will be relocated if possible or fully removed. The carpet in the main aisle needs the underlay replacing and quotes are being sort.

The projector screen at All Souls had broken and the congregation relied on weekly printed service sheets and hymns – both costly and time consuming. After liaising with Rev Tansley and the ministry team as to what they required from the system, several quotations were gathered for varying amounts of the work. One quote included a full upgrade of the system, including the audio and microphones, another dividing the project into smaller stages, thus reducing individual payments into manageable amounts. One of the engineers, whilst on site, had the correct part in his van and fitted a slightly updated replacement to the circuit board. Whilst only a temporary fix (the screen is still not fully operational), Sunday services can once again be shown on screen. The full refurbishment of the complete audio system will be addressed in 2025.

Another significant task was to improve the lighting (or lack of) inside All Souls' Church. An upgraded lighting system had previously been installed (a huge amount of work by previous Churchwardens), however there was still work to be done to switch all the lights over from halogen to LED, and this required upgrading the lighting tracks. The number of halogen bulbs that had blown was becoming impactful on holding anything in the Church. On a dim day the Church was very dark indeed. A fair bit of time was spent locating the original lighting plans before two companies would offer a quote. Several quotes were collected before work would begin and it was decided that the electrician who had installed a vast proportion of the original lighting was to complete the job. A grant was successfully applied for, which covered the cost of this stage of the lighting upgrade. The main Church lights are now fully operational with only the final settings to be input into the system. The lady Chapel still requires the lights being switch over, and work on this is due to be completed in 2025.

The Churchwardens would like to sincerely thank everyone who helps and volunteers in so many ways; from Sunday service rota duties, in weekly groups and to counting money and keeping our churches looking so lovely. We really couldn't do this without your help. Thank you.

Amelia, Octavia and Nicola

<u>Treasurer's report year ending 31st December</u> 2024

For the year ending 31 December 2024, the Parish of Sunninghill and South Ascot made a loss for the year of £61,081. This is slightly less than we had budgeted but nevertheless a level which we cannot sustain over the medium-term. This amount includes depreciation of £25,195 and so our operating loss was £35,886.

All Souls, which now bears 50% of all admin and support costs, made an operating loss of £32,983. Income included a bequest of £20,000 which has been transferred to our reserves. St Michael's made an operating loss of £2,904.

The single largest challenge that we face as a Parish is the size of our Parish share. Whilst the amount is unchanged for the coming year, it is £96,318. We have fewer than 90 regular churchgoers in the parish and so this represents in excess of £1,000 per head from after-tax income. It is a substantial amount and during the year the PCC has been discussing how best to approach the Diocese and seek some reduction in the cost. I am not optimistic that we will have a positive outcome.

Budget

We are forecasting an operating deficit for the year of £98,995.96. However, there is £24,083.19 of depreciation in that figure and so the actual operating deficit is lower by that amount, or £74,912.77. The key elements of this are our Parish share, which is unchanged at £97,921, utility costs of £40,600 and insurance which costs £11,500. These are the minimum costs that we face to keep both churches open. In addition, we should note that we now only have one parish office manager to administer and run both churches as Fay has resigned.

You will be aware that our parish share works out at over £1,000 per annum per congregation member. This is a significant sum. We are working with the Diocese to see how (if at all) this can be reduced. We are hugely grateful to all those who give and recognise that we cannot expect you all to be able to contribute such a large annual amount simply to meet our payment to the Diocese! None of the cost-cutting options considered by the PCC make economic sense.

Instead, we are undertaking a publicity campaign to increase lettings of both St Michael's Church Hall and All Souls' Church. The latter is a wonderful space for events and it is hoped we can generate over £30,000 per annum from these two activities in the coming years. In order to support the parish during this year of transition, we have been

extremely fortunate to receive two donations totalling £50,000 which, together with recovering heating and cleaning costs for All Souls from the Miss Cook Trust, brings our budgeted deficit for the year to just over £5,000. However, I cannot emphasise enough the need to increase income and keep a keen eye on costs as these are one-off donations and we will need to have our revenue streams secured by the end of 2026 if we are to survive as a parish in our current form.

All Souls Church Hall - Financial Adjustment

You will remember that last year we budgeted for some capital expenditure to support the hall. During the year, we discovered that the Parish had been inadvertently receiving income from the Church Hall which should have been retained to cover its ongoing and future expenses. This has been ongoing for many years and it has proved difficult to get accurate records going back more than six years. Having discussed this with our auditors and with the Trustees, we have concluded that we will therefore use the six-year figure to determine the correct amount that should be settled between the Hall and ASSA. Accordingly, it was agreed by the PCC and the trustees of the ASSA Church Hall (Tansley Jordan, Fiona Jones and Liz Moore) that £21,800 be paid across to ASSA Church Hall.

Accordingly, the PCC is focussing this year on increasing income both through fundraising but also more pro-active marketing and rental of the SMAA church hall, SMAA church and ASSA church. Historically, we have used ASSA as a community outreach hub, charging little for rental while still heating the church. This will no longer be possible and so we are implementing commercial charging structures, apart from our Friday Food bank. Any support that can be given by encouraging their use for parties and events would be greatly appreciated. It is hoped that over two years, this growth strategy will begin to produce good income and most importantly sufficient to support our basic costs as a minimum.

Importantly, we have received one-off unrestricted donations totalling £50,000. The purpose of this is to assist us in the bridging the gap between our income today and the income that we hope to produce as a result of our new strategy.

We therefore project an estimated deficit of £24,912.77. By making efficient use of our reserves (where allowed) we are able to further reduce the deficit by £19,000 to £5,912.77. However, it will of course deplete the assets of that trust further.

It has been agreed that no building or other large expenditure will be carried out without the funding having already been secured up-front. There is project to make the SMAA

Hall accessible to those in wheelchairs. This work will begin once funding has been secured.

The PCC believes that, at present, we have sufficient funds in reserves to meet future commitments but, in view of our annual projected deficit we should take a considered approach to the use of the reserves until we can see a clear path to returning to an annual surplus.

Capital and Reserves Funds

As of 31 December 2024 total capital and reserves for All Souls was £331,073, £276,280 of which is restricted as to the purpose to which the fund can be applied. This leaves unrestricted capital and reserves of £54,793 that can be used for any ecclesiastical purpose in the parish.

Total reserves for St Michaels are £177,203, of which £17,571 is restricted. The PCC will periodically review the availability of restricted funds and where appropriate advice will be

sought to amend or remove the restrictions where desirable.

The financial position remains perilous but with your support and the active promotion of our wonderful spaces for rental, we will hopefully be able to keep the doors open at both churches.

Kate Bolsover - Treasurer

Safeguarding Report

The Parish follows the guidance of the Diocese in ensuring that we comply with Safeguarding requirements given our duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016. This includes Safeguarding Training for all of those requiring training, under the guidance of Churchwarden Amelia Robinson.

Churchwardens

PCC Secretary Report

The governance of the Parish is vested in the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Members of the PCC include:

- Ministers licenced in the Parish
- Churchwardens

- Individuals elected to the Deanery Synod not otherwise members of PCC
- Elected Lay Members

Members of the PCC serve for a three-year term unless they stand down earlier. They may stand for a second three-year term after which they must stand down.

This year, there are no Lay Members of the PCC who have completed three years terms and need to be re-elected or stand down.

There is one vacancy on the PCC as well as three church wardens.

The full PCC met on 6 occasions since the last APCM:

28th April 2024, immediately following APCM

11th June 2024

15th July 2024

9th October 2024

26th November 2024

27th February 2025

In addition, the five sub-committees met as required (see Church Warden's report)

Regular topics on the agendas for the full PCC include:

- Reports from sub-committees
- Budgets and accounts
- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety
- Deanery Synod reports
- Vicar's report

Elizabeth Francescon

PCC Secretary

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Churches

This year we have focussed on the outstanding points raised during the most recent Quinquennials. At St Michael's the hall fire door was replaced and the organ pedal board was fully restored. This meant the organ was out of action for two weeks whilst

this work was conducted in an external workshop. There have been the annual checks conducted to the roofs and guttering of both churches, with both Church lightning conductors now tested annually. Woodworm was noted on one of the tower beams in the clock tower of St Michael's and some damp around a beam, due to the roof requiring some work. This is scheduled to be completed and treated.

Churchwardens

Discipleship

In 2024 we ran two parish Quiet Days (Lent and Advent) and a very successful Parish Pilgrimage from Shawford to Winchester Cathedral via St Cross Hospital and St Swithun-upon-Kingsgate. In the Autumn Vanessa Cummings and Geoff New also ran a small house group.

Rev Tansley Jordan

Deanery Synod

This year there has been a strong focus on children and young people within our congregations, and ways to engage with those who are not of a faith background. This focus has been requested of local deaneries by the diocesan bishops. We have completed a deanery-wide survey of what each parish is currently able to provide for children and young people, and what resources might be needed to develop this further. Discussions have included working together in area clusters to provide some activities, and the possible joint funding of youth workers.

Across the deanery there has been a massive reduction of clergy numbers: all our curates moved on to new roles (we only had one incoming curate in June – she is currently a deacon and so unable to preside at Holy Communion etc until next year) and we also lost 4 stipendiary clergy, one SSM, and one lay/leader/ordinand. This means that cover is very sparse at the moment, with two benefices in vacancy.

We also said goodbye to our area bishop - + Olivia – her replacement was consecrated and installed in the spring of 2025.

Deanery synod meetings have also benefitted from some interesting guest speakers, the most recent of which came to speak about the work of Christian aid and the different ways that churches can support them (especially at a time when many churches are uneasy about carrying out the door to door collections as they used to).

Rev Tansley Jordan

Electoral Roll

Last year (2024) I reported that the number on the Electoral Roll for St Michael's was 205 and that for All Souls was 54, giving the total for the Parish of 259. 2025 was full revision of the Electoral Roll. The figure for St Michael's Church is now 88 and the figure for All Souls Church is now 40. The total Parish Electoral Roll is now 128.

Children and Young People

Our work with children and young people continues to be a cornerstone of ministry in Sunninghill and South Ascot.

Toddler Praise

Toddler Praise, led by Nicola Shaw, continues to meet weekly on a Tuesday morning and provides excellent discipleship for our youngest members, as well as a much needed place of fellowship for their carers! It is a mark of how successful this is in engaging the children that during school holidays many older children also come back! Teenagers who once went to Toddler Praise also come back for services like Christingle.

Rev Tansley Jordan

We are a friendly and very lively group that meet every Tuesday at 10.30am.

The service is specially designed for babies, children and their parents or carers - it is simple & short.

Our session begins with a craft activity followed by a Bible story to help us learn about God. We have lots of fun as we sing, dance and pray together. We end with tea & biscuits

We also meet during the school holidays, and I look forward to welcoming older brothers & sisters back to visit us. To summarize - it's an exciting time of talking, sharing and listening to each other as we grow in our faith and learn more about our incredible God.

2024/2025 started very well again with new families joining us, which was great because we said goodbye to three families in September as they were starting big school. (These three families have come back to visit during the school holidays, it was so lovely to see

them). Numbers do vary from week to week but we have 10 families that join us most weeks. We have a family from Afghanistan who have joined us.

Every Blessing
Nicola Shaw

9:15@St Michael's

The 9:15 service continues to grow and develop. In 2024 we moved the service to St Michael's Church Hall which allows for greater flexibility and also the opportunity to sit round tables for activities. We also invested in a new set of resources from Roots which provides materials linked to the weekly lectionary.

Rev Tansley Jordan

Sunday School - All Souls'

We have decided not to have a Sunday school as the Children attending service are older and sitting in the church service should be the next step in their spiritual growth.

However, I do provide worksheets for them to do on the readings for that day, if they want to do something.

We have one four-year-old who sits with Carol to do activities, this is Aled's daughter.

Many thanks to Carol for looking after Seren each week We have 3 other families, but they are not always regular.

Every blessing
Nicola Shaw

Junior Choir

In 2024 we also started a Junior choir at St Michael's led by Octavia O'Donoghue (McGlashen) providing children and younger teenagers with the opportunity to sing a variety of music, as well as providing them with musical tuition. Numbers so far have been quite small, but we hope that this will grow with time.

Rev Tansley Jordan

Work with older children/teenagers

Although in 2024 we ran a confirmation course for some of our teenagers, in general one group we have struggled to make provision for is older children and teenagers. This is partly due to a lack of resources and volunteers, but we have also struggled to find a format and a time which works with our young people. We have also noticed that it is difficult to get the young people from the two different churches to meet together. This is something to think about in the coming year.

Rev Tansley Jordan

Schools

Tansley has continued to work closely with our two Church of England schools, both as governor, and also by going into the schools, working with the children and delivering half-termly assemblies. Both schools also come in to Church for harvest, Christmas, Easter and End-of-Year services, as well as occasional school trips.

We have also continued to build on our relationship with SAVS: Nicola Shaw goes into the school monthly to deliver 'Open The Book' style assemblies, and the school come into church for Harvest, Christmas and Easter services delivered by Tansley and Nicola.

South Ascot Village School

Fiona Jones and I go into South Ascot Village School once a month to lead the assembly. This is not a Church school so we have to tread carefully in what we say & do.

We use the OPEN the BOOK BIBLE which is Ofsted approved.

The Children are very lively and enjoy volunteering to take part in the stories. We share two stories from the Bible - during the session we ask the Children what links the two stories together and they always come up with interesting & amazing comments.

The whole school come over to All Souls Church for an Assembly to celebrate Christmas, Easter & Harvest in which Tansley takes the lead & Judith plays the Piano for us.

We were delighted that the school used our Church once again for their Christmas Nativity production. The whole school took part in the retelling of the wonderful story of the birth of Jesus in readings & songs.

Every blessing **Nicola Shaw**

All Souls Coffee Shop

The All Souls Coffee shop has been open now for more than 12 years we are open Monday to Friday from 10am to 12 and only close for bank holidays. It serves the local community and is a warm space in the winter months.

Lots of activities run while it's open, seated Zumba classes and Art Classes, we have Sen carer groups, home schooler, workers using the WiFi, rambler clubs and local community police surgeries.

We sell homemade cakes and toasted items together with over seven types of hot and cold drinks. We cater for gluten free and vegan customers.

The coffee shop is run by a happy band of 8 volunteers and one paid member of staff.

Liz Moore

All Souls Art Classes

The free art classes have been running in All Souls church for several years. They run on Tuesday mornings from 10 until 12. We have over 40 participants and an average class each week of about 20. We use watercolours, pastels, acrylic and much more. It is not necessary to book, people are welcome to come when they wish, no equipment is needed until you are sure the class is for you. It's a very friendly, happy group of all abilities.

Liz Moore

Ladies' Fellowship Report

Ladies' Fellowship continues to thrive, now with 26 members aged from 60+ to 90+! We've had another busy and diverse year with activities such as outings to the park, celebrating "Ladies' Day", World Book Day – any excuse to dress up! We've been lucky to have had some interesting speakers, most of whom waive their fee, in aid of the church. At Christmas, Tansley's parents and two friends gave us a fascinating talk about bell-ringing, followed by us having a go with the handbells. Octavia kindly took us for a carol singing session, followed by mince pies. Other weeks we play board games, bingo,

or just have a good old natter. Tansley or Mary take us for Holy Communion each month, which is always very peaceful and special.

During this past year, we've tried two new ventures, following a freebie seated Zumba session with Anita last September, many od us attend her classes at All Souls' on a Wednesday. Our second venture took us to the Ascot Day Centre for a very delicious lunch. We were treated so royally that we will definitely make it a regular occurrence! Sharing friendship and fellowship is most important and we look forward to more of the same in the coming year. We are always open to new members of any age! We welcome guests to many of our meetings, for which they pay $\mathfrak{L}5.00$. Also we pay $\mathfrak{L}1.00$ into the kitty each week for our coffee. So each month we are able to send off the proceeds to the Church Treasurer.

Pam Cross

Friends of St Michael and All Angels Church '100 Club'

The Club continues to flourish, but growth is still rather slower than anticipated, towards our eventual target of 100 memberships. At the end of December 2024 we had 43 memberships, some members holding more than one membership. During the twelve months of 2024 we were able to donate $\mathfrak{L}3,148$ to the Church as well as give two prizes each month, which in total amounted to $\mathfrak{L}1,572$.

As a reminder to anyone reading this and particularly for the benefit of newcomers, the Club was started in June 2022, as an easy way for supporters of the Church, whether or not regular attendees, to contribute to its financial security, whilst at the same time having some fun on the first Sunday of every month, through the draw. Membership is very easy and financial commitment not onerous, with members agreeing to donate just £10 a month on a standing order basis.

If, when reading this, you are not already a Club member, please do consider joining us and contact me – David Mear, telephone 01344 621419/ 07757 224240 or email davidrmear@gmail.com as soon as possible. Likewise, if you already hold a membership and would like to add to it, either for yourself or partner, please contact me.

David Mear