

ST MARY'S PCC NEWS – SEPTEMBER 2025

Help needed:-

- The search for a new Treasurer has become the most urgent issue for the PCC. It will be a focus at the "Generous Giving Project" to be launched during the Eucharist on 28th September with a presentation on Friday 3rd October at 7.30 and Saturday 4th October at 10.00 am, both in the Church room.
- Our current Safeguarding Officer wishes to retire from the role and we are therefore looking to find a replacement, ideally someone with some experience. She will remain in place until a replacement is found.

The Diocese uses a "Parish Dashboard" which provides safeguarding officers with everything they need in one place. Safeguarding Sunday is on November 16th.

- There is a vacancy for a suitable Health and Safety Officer from within our congregation.

Other News:-

- Electoral roll update – The number stands at 76. Please would you check if you are on the roll or not (available at the back of the church). Application forms are available in church or speak to Shirley or Meriel.
- Finance – there is an urgent need to increase giving to the church, especially as electricity usage will increase dramatically in winter to keep the church and Church room warm enough. All users must check that the kitchen water heater is turned off when leaving the building. Our income is up 10% against our deficit budget - mainly due to an increase in donations from Church room users.
- Rev'd David's Sabbatical – Rev'd David will be on Sabbatical during June, July and August 2026 for refreshment and study. Clergy in the deanery will lead Sunday eucharists and mid-week eucharists may be replaced by a Ministry of the Word or Morning Prayer led by lay people.
- Friends of St Mary's are holding a Jazz Evening on October 18th All money raised will go towards addressing the damp in the church walls and redecoration of the affected plaster. Do put this date in your diary and support the evening. The PCC agreed to apply for a Temporary Event Notice from Lewes-Eastbourne District Council for permission to sell alcohol at fundraising events such as this.
- An advertising flyer for the Parish Magazine has been designed to try and increase circulation of the magazine. Added advertisements have increased our revenue.
- Eco Church – Do support our other two meetings in the Church room on October 9th about sustainable travel from 7.30 to 9.00 and November 13th on how insects and wildflowers are vital to our biodiversity from 6.00 until 7.30. Supporters of the Repair Café delivered leaflets advertising these talks and the Repair Café to all new-builds in the village.
- Worship discussion group – Richard continues his Bible studies on Thursday afternoon studies at 3.30 to 5.00 in the Church room.

- Rev'd Pat has completed her four years as Deacon and is now fully qualified and her licence as Assistant Curate has expired. We'd like her to continue her work at St Mary's - possibly as Associate Vicar - and are applying to the Diocese for her to be licensed to this role.

Notes written by Margaret Sweatman, September 2025

Proposed Additional Churchyard: please see the following letter from Rev'd David:

From Rev'd David Bouskill

The need for a "New" New Churchyard for the next 100 years for the village of Ringmer

The parish church of Ringmer sits in the village of Ringmer and has a churchyard around the building. This is a 'closed' churchyard and its maintenance is the responsibility of Ringmer Parish Council. Ringmer Parochial Church Council (PCC) liaise closely with the contractors to maintain a balance between ecological wildflower areas and closer mown areas.

In 1938 another churchyard was opened across the road from the church. The PCC maintain and administer this churchyard, known as the New Churchyard. It contains a public footpath which leads to a popular dog walking field known as The Muttons. The New Churchyard is now the sole point of access to the Almond Field.

In Ringmer we bury an average of 12 to 15 people a year with a similar number of interment of ashes taking place. The space in the existing New Churchyard will only enable another 2 or 3 years of burials to take place and so I, and previous incumbents, have been looking for suitable land for a churchyard extension when our current New Churchyard is full.

Ringmer is a traditional village with numerous families who have lived in and around the village for generations. It is important to the local community that they can be buried within the location in which they have lived, and in many circumstances, have family grave sites that they tend now.

When the current New Churchyard is full it will be 'closed'. Burials and interments of ashes will have to be carried out in Eastbourne if no site is found in Ringmer.

The Almond Field is identified as a possible churchyard in the current Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan Policy 8.13, but this land has now been gifted to the Parish Council with the requirement that it is not to be used as a burial ground.

Mr. Gus Christie has offered to the PCC of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Ringmer a piece of land within the parish to be used as a churchyard. This land lies adjacent to the Almond Field. The

ownership of the land would eventually be transferred to the Incumbent of Ringmer Church if the project proceeds.

That piece of land is near the church, at the top of the hill, and would need some work to make suitable access. It would also need a perimeter boundary to ensure that people are aware that this space is a churchyard. There would be a substantial bio-diversity net gain.

I, the Churchwardens, a member of the PCC project working group, and representatives from the Parish Council have met informally with a representative of Mr. Christie to begin the conversations.

Discussions will need to be held with Chichester Diocese, the Environment Agency and our local planning authority to ensure that the land is suitable for burials.

There will be considerable initial costs of reports and legal fees for change of use and necessary permissions. Of course, there will need to be active fund-raising to complete the project, but it is predicted that there will be widespread community interest and support for this important resource for the people of Ringmer.

The PCC and I will keep you informed as to progress.

Your prayers for wisdom in pursuing this project would be greatly valued.

Rev'd David, September 2025