

THE BEACON PARISH NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Without the financial support of more residents of our villages, the future of our three churches is at risk: please help us to secure their future.

WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

The parish is completely dependent on voluntary donations for all of its costs – including the salary of our vicar, the church's activities and the costs of running and maintaining three ancient buildings. We get no financial support from any 'central' church resources.

Despite careful management, our expenditure has exceeded our receipts since 2016; we expect a deficit of **circa £25,000** in 2024 (before any major works costs).

We are funding these losses by drawing on legacies but these will soon run out.

Very few residents of our three villages make any contribution to our costs and, unless more of us make regular donations, one or more of these churches may be forced to close and youth work in the Parish may be impossible to continue.

The loss of these assets to the community would be very deeply felt – the church and its ministry are regarded by many as the 'heart' of their villages: there for regular worship and community, for our hours of need and for those special moments in our lives.

PLEASE HELP US IF YOU CAN!!

Regular donations, however small, are particularly useful

WHAT DO WE NEED?

Continuity and certainty of funding via regular giving from more friends and supporters in our villages.

- You can do this via the 'Parish Giving Scheme' (PGS) – which allows us to receive Gift Aid automatically. Go to www.parishgiving.org.uk to be taken to the online application form.
- If you are already giving, please consider switching it to the PGS and/or increasing the amount that you give. Please check that you are gift-aiding where possible.

Please also consider leaving a gift in your will:

- Talk to Matthew Searle, on 07986 383 991, email matthewsearle@btopenworld.com
- There is also a helpful guide on this subject on the Church of England's website:

www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/church-legacy

Or to set up a standing order of any size or to make a single donation talk to our Treasurer, Mark Moody-Stuart, on 01273 846525, email markmoodystuart@msmjc.com

For more information, check out our website:

www.beaconparish.co.uk



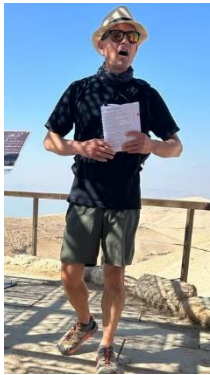
Or visit the displays about this appeal in our churches! Details of these are on the website.

WHAT DOES YOUR GIVING ENABLE?

Beyond meeting the core costs of running and maintaining the parish and our three ancient buildings, your giving will help enable the following to continue:

- A vicar at the heart of our community (see more about David on the next page)
- Regular services in our three churches, now featuring 'Little Beacons' Sunday School
- Baptisms, weddings and funerals
- Regular services in St George's Park Retirement Village, Ditchling
- The services of a youth worker, who works closely with the Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School and Downlands Secondary School to introduce our children and young people to the Christian way of life. Hitherto this has included collective worship and an after-school club, a weekly youth club at the Emmanuel Centre for Year 6 and above and young people attending the Diocesan May camp.
- Regular Community events such as Souper Saturday, Safari Suppers, Christmas wreath-making and many others.
- Special events and services around the key dates in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter. In 2023, for example we hosted 'Shepherds Arise' at St Margaret's, a celebration of traditional Sussex carols.
- Leading the Remembrance and Armistice Day commemorations at the Ditchling and Streat war memorials.

ABOUT OUR VICAR



The Rev. David Wallis, seen here on song in Jordan, has been our vicar since 2008. He was born in London but grew up in Sussex and has worked for the Church for over 30 years, including in Ghana, Romania and Marseille. He was ordained over 20 years ago. He lives with his wife Sally, a horticulturalist, in Ditchling and they have two children: Ben, a research chemist and Samantha, an army officer. When he isn't leading our services in his uplifting and inclusive way, he can be spotted pounding the streets of the village in his running gear!

ABOUT OUR FINANCES

Most of our income comes from voluntary giving, though we do derive a small amount from some legacies left to the Parish. Whilst we incur the normal expenses of running and maintaining our various church buildings, the largest expense (over 50% of our core expenditure) is the 'Parish Share' (PS), an annually negotiated monthly payment to the Diocese, who, in turn, fund the pay, pension and accommodation costs of our vicar. The PS also funds training for clergy and support services for parishes. For 2024 the Diocese requested a payment of c.£81,000 but, **given the state of our finances, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) has taken the difficult decision for 2024 to pay £30,000 less than the Diocese**

suggested. The PCC considered this was a necessary (and hopefully temporary) step before launching this appeal.

Our resources have also supported a **Youth Worker (YW)**, whose success in introducing our children to the Christian way of life can be measured by packed churches at the six dedicated events each year and services being provided for 200 children in the Parish every week! Our current YW's contract expires in July, as the Beacon Parish cannot currently afford to fully fund youth work indefinitely without further support. We are considering a number of options but we urgently ask you to make a regular donation to ensure that we can continue to provide this vital service to our community.

We fund **our major works and purchases** via legacies and by drawing on the support of the Friends of St Margaret's charity.

ABOUT OUR CHURCHES

The Beacon Parish is a registered charity (registered number 1132488) and comprises three village communities, each centred on its ancient, listed church.

St Margaret's Church, Ditchling



The Parish Church of St Margaret of Antioch is the centrepiece of the historic village of Ditchling. The present building dates from the late 12th century and is

built on top of the earlier Saxon church referred to in the Domesday Book.

Streat Church



Streat Church stands on the greensand ridge just south of the nearby Roman road and was, in its original form, created soon after the compilation of the Domesday Book. It replaced one of the two Saxon churches, sitting on the site of one of them.

St Martin's Church, Westmeston



The nave (or central aisle) of St Martin's Church in Westmeston was built in Norman times and has been added to over the centuries. The font is Norman and is one of only two in England made of clunch (a chalky form of limestone).

ST GEORGE'S PARK, DITCHLING COMMON

The Beacon Parish also provides regular services for the residents of St George's, a retirement village offering accommodation and a range of facilities in the beautiful setting of Ditchling Common. St George's is operated by the Order of St Augustine of the Mercy of Jesus.