

**Annual General Meeting  
ST Mary Magdalen  
27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm**

**1. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

The meeting started with adoration in the Church

Apologies from Fr Paul who was unwell.

**2. Parish Priest Report**

Fr Luke read out his report, see attached.

*Our last AGM Forum meeting was over 18 months ago, when we gathered to reflect on what has happened in our parish, particularly since Fr Paul and I arrived, and to map out some of the ways in which we can move forward.*

*As your parish priest, I have responsibility for three Catholic communities and two parishes: St Mark's with Holy Family Brantham and St Mary Magdalen. During our last AGM, I stressed the importance of working more closely together. Since then, we have made some positive movements towards this goal, which although is still ongoing, is a testament to our collective commitment and faith.*

*First and foremost, we now have one newsletter that embodies the dual identity of our two parishes. Although this is still in development, it has greatly improved communication and unity amongst our parishioners, helping to foster a stronger sense of community.*

*One of the notable changes has been in the preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. We have shifted to a family and community-based approach, ensuring that these sacraments are prepared for in the same way across both parishes. The change made to these programmes, specifically First Holy Communion, is designed to work with families in supporting and educating them in bringing up their children in the faith. The responsibility is rightly placed with the parents who are required to be actively involved in their children's preparation with attendance at Sunday Mass at the primary mode of preparation.*

*Additionally, I have appointed a Parish Mission Council (PMC) which includes representatives from all three of our churches. We have met twice, and the minutes of those meetings will be available shortly, showcasing our collaborative efforts and shared vision.*

*Furthermore, I have appointed a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who are working alongside me to help advise and assist in the daily management of the parish. The SLT members have delegated authority and will help as leaders in our parishes ensuring that our parish is well-supported and efficiently managed.*

*Alongside the SLT, I required a larger consultative body, similar in some ways to a parish council, but also taking responsibility for areas of parish life. This group is representative of each community and is designed to act as points of reference for parishioners in each church. They are to idea assist me in leading the parish as well as functioning as a consultative body. The Parish Mission Council (PMC), therefore, helps to shape the mission and life of our parishes. Importantly, as a presence in each community, they act as a point of contact for anyone who would like to raise non-urgent and strategic parish issues for discussion.*

*In December, I was canonically appointed as Parish Priest, and Fr Paul remains my assistant. This appointment has helped to solidify our leadership structure and provide stability for our parish communities, which is a cause for celebration.*

*Over the past year, we have hosted Alpha courses twice, providing an opportunity for deep spiritual exploration and growth within our parish community. We have also screened two seasons of the award-winning biblical series "The Chosen," and we are about to begin series three next week. These screenings have been well received and have fostered a sense of fellowship and engagement, enriching our spiritual lives.*

*In September, we had a successful parish BBQ, which was well attended and enjoyed by many. There was also a quiz evening in the hall last Lent that brought a good crowd together, demonstrating the strong sense of community within our parish.*

*At the beginning of this new year, the Polish Community began celebrating Sunday Masses here. Their presence has enriched our parish life and has also generated additional income for us, adding diversity and vibrancy to our community.*

*The introduction of the ChurchSuite software has also been a significant development, initially trialled at ST Mark's and then rolled out to include St Mary Magdalen, it enables a unified and secure database to be readily accessed by me and allows for greater communication across our three communities.*

*We do, however, face challenges as a community. The first phase of the diocesan consultation has been completed, and it highlights the unsustainable future of our Ipswich parishes. We cannot continue with business as usual, as our current structures are not fit for purpose. Due to the low attendance at the Saturday night Mass, a decision was taken to discontinue it last Advent.*

*At the last AGM, the question of parish merging was raised, and I said that this was not something we were looking at that time. Nineteen months later, and in light of the diocesan consultation, this is now something that we should seriously be expecting as a more imminent reality. If we realistically want to not just survive as a church, but to thrive as a church community, we need to embrace change. The writing is on the wall; Ipswich town has five parishes, and they are not viable as they are. This is not something to be disheartened about but to embrace, a chance to reimagine what St Mary Magdalen's could be as a community.*

*There are real reasons for hope; we can change, we can grow, we can renew our communities. I, and my leadership team, are working with a ministry called Divine Renovation, which is a Catholic ministry organization dedicated to helping parishes come alive and move from maintenance to mission. That is, being a vibrant community of faith that looks outwards and transforms the community around it as it makes followers of Jesus Christ. The bishop has authorized what I am doing and is watching us with interest. When our parish structures change, we should see this as a real opportunity, not as a way of managing decline, but rather a way of being the Catholic Church at St Mary Magdalen in a healthier, fuller way.*

*In conclusion, while we have made significant progress in many areas, we must continue to address the challenges we face. By working together and remaining committed to our mission, we can navigate these challenges and build a stronger, more vibrant parish community.*

*Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our parish. I am particularly indebted to Fr Paul for his hard work and pastoral commitment, despite his health concerns, for Chris Croker, Declan and the Finance Fabric committee, to Linis for her outstanding work with the hall, to Michael Long for his work behind the scenes and all of you who serve the parish in many, many ways, often unnoticed. My prayer is that we can move forward and outward together with faith and hope for the future.*

*Fr Luke Goymour VF*

*Appendix 1 – Fr Lukes slide presentation.*

### **3. Divine Renovation**

Fr Luke explained that yes there are real challenges but also opportunities for change and real growth. Divine Renovation is a Catholic ministry that has been going for about 15 years which works with parishes to move parishes from 'maintenance to mission'. Its origins are from North American, but it is now in the UK and spreading across the world. Divine renovation focuses on three keys the 'power of the holy spirit', 'priority of evangelisation', 'great leadership' or shared leadership. Fr L and his senior leadership team are receiving training, and he is also working with a network of priests.

Fr Luke showed a short video from the Divine Renovation website.

Fr Luke views Divine Renovation (DR) as a potential solution to reimagine the parishes. The Bishop is supportive of Fr Luke's work with DR and is monitoring the progress. Fr Luke acknowledges that the required changes can be unsettling for some individuals.

### **4. Re-imaging St Mary Magdalens in light of Diocesan Consultation**

Fr Luke said that he could tell by some of the responses, that the gravity of the situation not fully been understood. Fr Luke then went on to share the diocesan consultation information and explained the data. He explained that the table shown based on Mass attendance in 2023, was slightly different now but not much different. He explained that all of the Ipswich parishes are in the lower mid quartile. Significantly StM & StMM are in the lower quartile of the diocese. StMM averages 110 weekly attendees and StM 205 weekly attendees.

Slide 3 showed the data for the parishes in the lowest quartile of diocesan provision ordered by distance to the nearest parish and showed StMM & StM within a 10 minute drive of another church.

The projected population of diocesan centres up to 2028 show growth in all areas but Ipswich. Ipswich has more parishes than in Norwich, Peterborough or Cambridge and we are smallest population wise. The diocese currently has 44 active parish priests out 52 parishes, more than half the parish priests in the diocese are already over the age of 60 therefore in 10 years' time there will be only around 30 parish priests.

As a matter of urgency, we need to address the reality that StMM and other parishes in Ipswich area are likely not to exist in the near future. This doesn't mean that StMM disappears, but it could if we don't do anything about it. Parish structures need to change as they are not fit for purpose, there is a sense of urgency. The addition of the polish community has now inflated our Mass numbers by 200 a week and helps our parish income. Decisions don't come easily but are strategic.

Fr Luke read out the number of people across three parishes and explained that we can't continue like this.

Fr Luke went through slide 9 (appendix 1) and then asked everyone to consider slide 10 (appendix 2), saying we must look to the future, asking ourselves what new things is God asking of us. We have to get out of this mindset that we work in isolation from other catholic parishes communities. We are Catholics and we belong to the diocese and that comes before we are parishioners. Our baptism is our primary identity, not buildings and structures, what matters is the way we live the gospel message. We change or we die, it really is that simple!

Those present discussed slide 10 (Appendix 1) and were asked to digest the questions and think about what we could do. Fr Luke asked can we be bold and imagine what StMM would

look like in 2, 3, 5 years' time: "What is God saying to us? What are you prepared to do to make this happen? "Take up my cross and follow me" Jesus said!

Everyone spent time discussion what they had just heard.

Fr Luke asked for some feedback

Jean Mcsorly - More communication with the school, doesn't know who the head teacher is. Lucy Pakes – wants the children to come to church and do more, used to have a good relationship with the school. Fr Luke agreed that there were not many children but said it isn't just the school that needs to engage, he offered the challenge: "What are you doing to be engaging with the school?" Would parishioners agree to volunteer in the school to bring the community to them? Some said they used to be governors and wondered if anyone from the parish was on the governing body. Joanna McCall said she had been Chair of Governors there for a year and was on the Our Lady of Walsingham Trust, she advised that there is due to be a change of leadership there and that David Verney was now Chair, a parishioner of St Marks.

Jim Poll talked about how the parish went into decline, Fr Luke said we don't want to look backwards but wanted to look forward. Jim Poll wanted to learn by mistakes and said we didn't get into this on our own. Parish & School used to be very united and all that was stopped. Fr Luke fully aware of the past but the world is different, and the school is different, and he said again let's not look to the past, let's look forward.

Andrew Ford – wanted to welcome all nationalities, he said he didn't know how to evangelise and not sure how to do it. Fr Luke said that the welcome we give, the hospitality is important and mentioned that the PMC had been looking at this.

Gary Page – asked even if we double the numbers that we have, would we still have problems? Fr Luke said we would still have problems as long as we kept our present structure - It has to change. It's not just more people it's about the structure, there is just not enough Priests, and it takes seven years to get a parish priest through training and 5 to get deacons. We have to work with our current reality.

It was mentioned that moving the polish parish does not change the numbers in Ipswich as a whole, although it gives us greater numbers at St MM.

Chris Croker said he thinks we have lost a few from the 10am Mass to the polish mass.

## **5. Minutes from Last AGM and Matters Arising**

Have been on the website for some time.

Since last meeting:

Statement from the bishop point 3 – Bishop came on visitation. There was no written report from his visit – it was a verbal report to Fr Luke. The fruits and outcome are seen in our discussion tonight and the situation in Ipswich. He is aware of the nature of our parishes and been to Mass at each of our communities but there was no report.

7.4 Mass times, it was mentioned there that Saturday night mass was low on number – it has now been discontinued. Fr Luke doesn't have the power to change Sunday Mass times on a whim, this has to be done through consultation with the bishop and diocese council of priests and they then have to vote on it.

Weekly bulletin – we have the new bulletin, again that is very much in flux while we have two parishes, and all being on one newsletter.

We haven't bought hymn books – we are currently working on the music liturgy; Fr Luke would still like to get new hymn books when this has been sorted out.

Vestments were bought, looking to buy some new alter clothes.

Chris Croker – brought up Number 2 on the second page regarding strength of the two parishes and that Fr Luke is not at StMM every week. Fr Luke said he was here every week and celebrates Mass every Thursday. He also has the Chosen running at StMM and very few in people in the room came, when people came over from StM and HF. He has put on the Parish BBQ, Alpha and the coming Lent course are all at StMM, he said when he can he will be at StMM. He has officially only been parish priest since December and is not able to get to every Mass. Chris Croker made a possible suggestion and asked is there any way that Fr Luke could introduce himself to St MM for just the homily and could be played over the speaker. Fr Luke mentioned that they are looking at technology this week to help with the sound, it is a very delicate situation. For now, there is a podcast made every week if people want to listen to it. It was mentioned that as a parishioner listening to a homily was different at home than at church.

## 6. Finance Report – Chris Croker

Key points:

- deficit/surpluse 2024 we made a deficit of 1.8k which was actually quite good when we spent a lot of money on the hall. Normally the hall makes a surpluse but last year we spent this, and it made a deficit of 5.3k. Actuals with an increase were in rates and utilities (gas and electric) our renewal came in at the last quarter of last year, but it will impact 2025. Because we were on a fixed contract our gas and electric are going to rise 8.3%
- Budgeting next year for a break even.
- 2024 – reason didn't make a huge deficit as we spent very little on the church and the house. Mostly spent on the hall and more will be spent on the church and house this year, but less on the hall. Roofing work to the church and house, painting to church and house and possibly hall. Depends on quotes as still waiting for some.
- **Income** - Offertory collection, this flat lined over the last few years might be because mass attendance not increasing or consequence of people not increasing what they give. We have seen a movement from cash to standing order, although they tend to not increase them. Something to go in the newsletter, Fr Luke suggested he could say something.
- Rental income successful year – all down to Linis efforts, highest amount we have ever had. Donations up on last year mainly because this includes money for use of the church. Next year will separate out the donations for use of the church. Interest 5% from diocese – reasonable bank balance and pretty much stayed the same.
- Just been pledged a further £5,000 Bernard Sunley Foundation, this is to help improve church and community hall, although comes with some stipulations which are being explored.
- Fr Luke thanked Chris on behalf of the parish for all his hard work.

Michael Long asked if the energy costs are they being included in the rent rates? Chris Croker confirmed that the rates went up last year but suggested the finance committee look at this in more detail.

Michael Long said that when the representative of the time treasure and talents initiatives came if was deferred. Fr Luke confirmed it didn't happen as it involves the parish priest to be here every week, so not possible to do it. He said some aspects of the initiative we will endeavour to do. Michael Long asked would it happen again? Fr Luke said it won't as an initiative, but the time and talents will be talked about in the parish as elements but not as the program. Not a priority at the moment as Lent starts soon.

See Appendix 2 for the accounts

## **7. Hall Report**

Linis read her report:

*Over the past 3 years, the hall has undergone renovation. The whole roof was stripped, new insulation laid and then tiled at a cost of over £30,000 funded by a very generous donation from a parishioner.*

*Last year, the windows were replaced at a cost of £20,000, with some of the money coming from grants.*

*These 2 projects alone have made an impact by making the hall warmer, reducing condensation and making it easier to ventilate. Installation of new LED lighting and new curtains have given the internal area a more cheerful look. The installation of WIFI has also pleased many users. All this could not have been achieved without the generosity of parishioners who have given up their time voluntarily.*

*Externally, the fencing at the front and rear together with a new fire exit gate have been renewed. The car park has been kept neat by the use of shingle. The trees and shrubs have been pruned and the hedges kept tidy. All this has been possible as a result of careful management of those who use the hall regularly (weekly) and those who hire for special occasions e.g. birthday parties.*

### **Future plans**

*A grant has been secured from North West Ipswich Big Local Trust (£4000) for the refurbishment of the kitchen. Quotes have been obtained and work is to begin before June when the grant has to be spent. This refurbishment is needed and additional funds will be added to complete the work.*

*The toilet area is also in need of refurbishment. It does not meet the standards for disabled users.*

*Plans are currently being discussed to enable the project to be costed and suitable plans drawn up.*

*The heating arrangements have been reviewed and a large amount of money is required to bring the heating up to current standards.*

*At present, the hall is in use each evening from Monday to Friday by organizations who have rented the hall over a number of years. It is also rented out 2 mornings per week. This income alone is not enough to sustain the upkeep of the hall. Occasional bookings for parties and cultural events contribute a significant amount to the income. The rates are competitive given that there are several halls in the area which are also available for rent. Management of these events demands a significant amount of time each week to ensure that the hirers get value for their money, balancing the risks and ensuring that there is no noise nuisance.*

*To enable the hall rental to continue to be managed successfully, more use of the hall during the day is required.*

*A management committee is required to help run the hall to share the responsibility and offer new ideas for rental. Currently the hall is managed by 1 person on a voluntary basis and there is 1 employee who cleans the hall once per week and helps with the garden, however this cannot continue indefinitely without a robust plan for the future.*

Fr Luke thanked Linis for her report and the income that this gives the parish. He also mentioned that we need some help for Linis and there needs to be a committee have discussed various protocols for locking up. If anyone can help, please speak to Fr Luke or Linis, if you think someone would be good then ask them and encourage them to volunteer.

Chris Croker mentioned that we need to spend over £5000 on the kitchen in the hall and therefore this needed approval by consultation in the parish. Everyone agreed that they were happy with the spend on the Kitchen.

## **8. Items Submitted by parishioners**

1. Consultative Body Clarification – Fr Luke showed a slide of the clarification of the roles. The item submitted mentioned that they aren't representative of StMM. Firstly, Fr Luke explained that they don't need to be, he has the right to choose anyone he wants however he has chosen people he can work with. He explained when they are doing things or asking questions, they are doing it in my name and acting in the name of the priest. Also to note Pat West is parish secretary at StM but as there is no secretary at StMM she covers all the parishes. Fr Luke showed a slide of the PMC and that there were representatives from StMM, StM and HF on this group. Minutes will be published soon. He explained that these are your representatives. He also mentioned that the two Finance Chairs sit on the PMC as ex officio. He then went on to explain that the Finance committee is a consultative body and appointed at his discretion and advises on essential matters. He consults them on building and financial matters but ultimately the decision rests with Parish Priest, who is the one responsible. He went on to say that the SLT & PMC is a new evolving reality, and it will take time to filter down. He asked for patience whilst these got up and running.
2. Bishops Visit – This was discussed earlier
3. Mass Numbers query – Fr Luke had showed the data earlier and confirmed that they haven't been changed since Fr Luke has been involved. It was noted that Fr Paul Spellman was a charismatic priest and when he left some of those people went. It was also noted that the Covid "bounce back" also was a factor in varying numbers.
4. Risen Christ Statue – it was asked why this was removed without consultation. Fr Luke said, it was his understanding that the cross-statue was routinely removed according to the liturgical year and that the swapping of a crucifix is not something that would typically warrant parish-wide consultation. He also pointed out that it is only appropriate to have this up at Easter. He mentioned that photos on the website and on google of our church confirm that the cross was came and went from the alter routinely over the years. The Risen Christ Statue is not lost but in the sacristy. Jean McSorely was unhappy about this not being out and wanted it out all the time. Fr Luke said it was up to the Parish priest to make those decisions, and that for the reasons outlined it should only be up during the Easter season.
5. Mass Timings – Fr Luke explained that two Masses are not going to be sustainable in the future. He explained that there are four Saturday night Masses across town already. He explained that not having both the 8 and 10 Mass times on Sunday might well be the case. Jean McSorely said that she felt that StMM had been hard done by and felt that the Parish had lost out on this. Fr Luek said that this was not the case. Mr

& Mrs McSorley left the meeting. It was asked what time other Masses across the deanery were and was it possible to have a list of services. The Catholic website was mentioned but also that this wasn't always accurate. Michael Long said there are links to all the other parishes on StMM website, and you can get the Mass times. Fr Luke will talk to the deanery as a list was a good idea.

Deanery newsletter was suggested, what else is going on, seen as good idea and will become even more appointment.

Alpha course enjoyed and a wider community feeling, Claire Fox agreed that she would send details of the Alpha course to other parishes in the deanery.

Fr Luke said he was heartened about everyone that has come out, its challenging times but also an opportunity.

Michael Long asked why we don't get any feedback from the deanery. Fr Luke explained that the deanery doesn't function the way they did and so information will look different.

Dorothy – parking when polish mass on was an issue. Fr Luke said that this is a developing situation, and he will speak to the polish community, however if you know you are going to be here a long time then you might want to think about where you park. Dorothy mentioned she had to go into Mass to ask for people to move their cars. Dorothy said she can't walk anymore so has to come by car. Fr Luke said he will have a conversation about the parking, maybe put notices up. Wonderful that our church is full and being used.

6. Music at Mass – 8 am - we are not going to be able to have music at 8am played from a recording due to copyright restrictions.

7. Consultation Document - covered earlier in the meeting.

9. Closing prayer

# St Mary Magdalen

**Parish AGM**

**Fr Luke Goymour VF – *Parish Priest***

**Fr Paul Chanh – *Assistant Priest***



# 1. MASS ATTENDANCE IN THE DIOCESE BY PARISH

Parish	Mass Attendance '23	Percentage of Total	Range	Number of Parishes
CAMBRIDGE, OLEM	3944	21.8%	Upper Quartile	2
NORWICH, The Cathedral	1154	6.4%		
PETERBOROUGH, St Peter and All Souls	820	4.5%	Upper Mid Quartile	6
CAMBRIDGE, St Philip Howard	740	4.1%		
PETERBOROUGH, St Luke	737	4.1%		
CAMBRIDGE, St Laurence	637	3.5%		
BURY ST EDMUNDS	626	3.5%		
HUNTINGTON	531	2.9%		
IPSWICH, St Mary	528	2.9%	Lower Mid Quartile	11
PETERBOROUGH, Sacred Heart & St Oswald	527	2.9%		
KINGS LYNN	509	2.8%		
SAWSTON & CAMBOURNE	414	2.3%		
NORWICH, St George	378	2.1%		
ST IVES	374	2.1%		
IPSWICH, ST Pancras	334	1.8%		
HAVERHILL	312	1.7%		
ELY	267	1.5%		
GREAT YARMOUTH	253	1.4%		
WYMONDHAM	234	1.3%		
NEWMARKET	225	1.2%	Lower Quartile	33
NORTH WALSHAM	211	1.2%		
GORLESTON	210	1.2%		
LOWESTOFT	207	1.1%		
ST NEOTS	201	1.1%		
SUDBURY & HADLEIGH	199	1.1%		
COSTESSEY	196	1.1%		
IPSWICH, St Marks	176	1.0%		
FELIXSTOWE	175	1.0%		
WISBECH	175	1.0%		
SHERINGHAM & CROMER	168	0.9%		
SWAFFAM	166	0.9%		
DEREHAM	165	0.9%		
WOODBRIIDGE & FRAMLINGHAM	156	0.9%		
THETFORD	150	0.8%		
WALSINGHAM & WELLS-NEXT-SEA	148	0.8%		
BUCKDEN	147	0.8%		
MARCH	146	0.8%		

STOWMARKET	145	0.8%		
BECCLES	139	0.8%		
CLARE	137	0.8%		
ALDEBURGH & LEISTON	123	0.7%		
BUNGAY	122	0.7%		
HUNSTANTON	119	0.7%		
PORINGLAND	117	0.6%		
IPSWICH, St Mary Magdalen	116	0.6%		
DISS	110	0.6%		
WHITTLESSEY & RAMSEY	99	0.5%		
SOUTHWOLD	88	0.5%		
FAKENHAM	83	0.5%		
IPSWICH, St James the Less	67	0.4%		
DOWNHAM MARKET	61	0.3%		
BRANDON & MILDENHALL	55	0.3%		

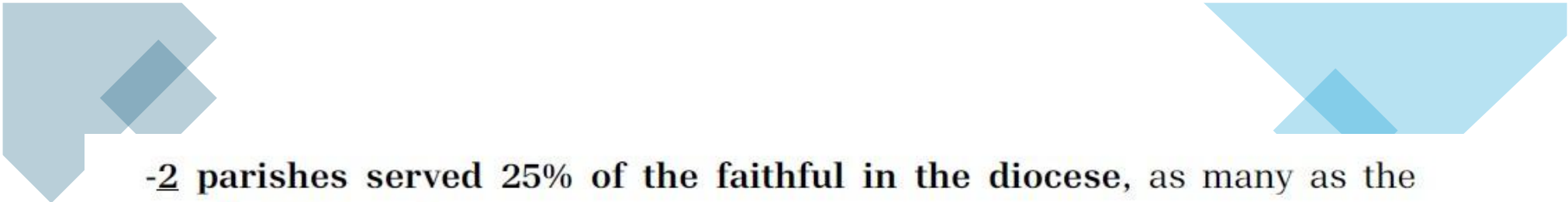
2024 figures

St Mary Magdalens: 110

St Marks 205

2. DIOCESAN PARISHES IN THE LOWER QUARTILE OF DIOCESAN PROVISION ORDERED BY DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST OTHER PARISH

Parish	Percentage of Diocesan Total	<i>Approx. Drive in minutes to nearest other Parish</i>
IPSWICH, St James the Less	0.4%	10
IPSWICH, St Mary Magdalen	0.6%	10
IPSWICH, St Marks	1.0%	10
ST NEOTS	1.1%	10
BRANDON & MILDENHALL	0.3%	15
FAKENHAM	0.5%	15
PORINGLAND	0.6%	15
BUNGAY	0.7%	15
BECCLES	0.8%	15
WALSINGHAM & WELLS-NEXT-SEA	0.8%	15
THETFORD	0.8%	15
COSTESSEY	1.1%	15
GORLESTON	1.2%	15




-**2** parishes served 25% of the faithful in the diocese, as many as the smallest 33 parishes

-**8** parishes served one half of the diocesan faithful, whilst **44** served the other

-**Half** of the parishes in the diocese, and therefore a great proportion of the priests, each **only serve 1% or less** of the total number of people who attend Mass across the diocese

-13 of the smallest parishes in the diocese are 15 minutes' drive or less to the nearest other parish

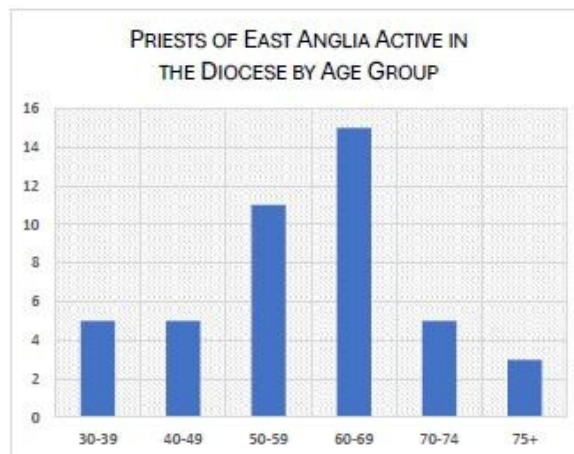


3. PROJECTED POPULATION INCREASE BY REGION IN THE DIOCESE  
ORDERED BY DECREASING PERCENTAGE CHANGE

Region	Expected Population Increase 2018-2028		Natural Change	Migration	Planned New Homes (to be built by 2036 unless otherwise specified)
	Total	%			
South Norfolk	20,400	15%	-1,771	22,122	See Norwich
Peterborough	17,733	9%	10,633	7,026	19,440
Fenland	8,717	9%	-1,552	10,241	11,000 by 2031
Breckland	11,925	9%	-4,231	16,112	15,298
Broadland	10,210	8%	-4,719	14,884	See Norwich
Forest Heath	4,982	8%	3,462	1,522	13,702, in merged West Suffolk, by 2040
Suffolk Coastal	8,991	7%	-6,436	15,396	9,756
Mid Suffolk	6,819	7%	-2,888	9,664	10,008 (including Babergh)
North Norfolk	6,120	6%	-7,979	14,066	9,600
Waveney	6,628	6%	-5,310	11,922	8,223
East Cambridgeshire	4,728	5%	759	3,951	See Cambridge
Norwich	5,162	4%	4,582	696	45,050 in Greater Norwich Area by 2038
Huntingdonshire	6,374	4%	1,436	4,847	20,100
South Cambridgeshire	5,283	3%	2,097	3,142	See Cambridge
Great Yarmouth	3,188	3%	-3,152	6,337	7,200 by 2041
King's Lynn/ W. Norfolk	3,555	2%	-5,064	8,586	10,780
St Edmundsbury	1,101	1%	-1,883	2,944	See Forest Heath due to merge as 'West Suffolk'
Cambridge	373	0%	2,602	-1,941	37,198 homes already planned for Greater Cambridge Area by 2041, with potential for significantly more
Ipswich	-2,175	-2%	4,541	-6,751	8,280

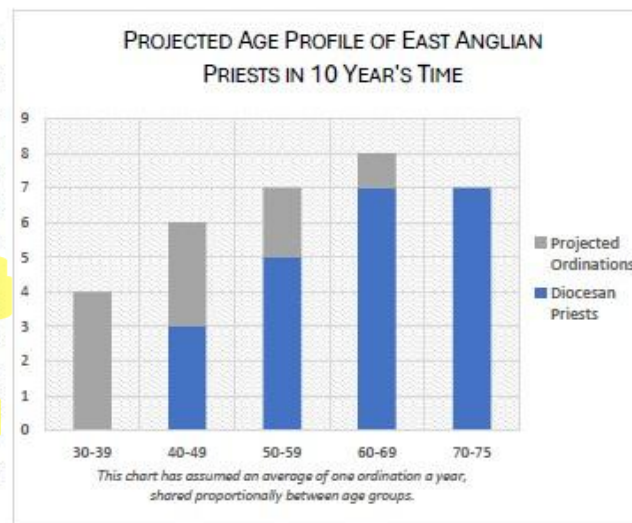
Forecasts are taken from the latest numbers from the Office for National Statistics for subnational population projections. These are generally regarded as underestimates, e.g. Cambridge's 0% change.

The figures on the right, drawn from Local Authority Local Plan housing targets, are a more reliable indicator of likely population increase in your area.



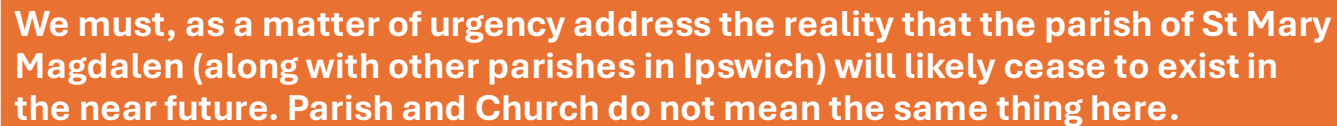
Many parishes in the Diocese are cared for by priests from outside of East Anglia. This generous service can mask that the Diocese now has fewer of its own priests than it has parishes. Presently, the diocese has a total of 44 active priests from which to appoint to 52 parishes.

More than half of the priests of the diocese are over 60 years of age, and the number of new priests each year is regularly lower than the number of priests retiring. For this reason, in 10 years' time, there will only be around 30 priests of the Diocese of East Anglia in active ministry, with only 10 priests under the age of 50.



# Re-imagining St Mary Magdalens

We must, as a matter of urgency address the reality that the parish of St Mary Magdalen (along with other parishes in Ipswich) will likely cease to exist in the near future. Parish and Church do not mean the same thing here.




BUT: This doesn't mean the Church of St Mary Magdalen disappears, nor does it mean the community of St Mary Magdalen disappears.



Parish Structures need to change as they are not fit for purpose – This is an opportunity to evolve into a healthier more vibrant community.





English Masses across our three  
Churches and approximate  
numbers

**Saturday Night:** St Marks 35  
people

**Sunday**

St Mary Magdalen: 8 am:45 people

Holy Family: 9 am: 55 People

St Mary Magdalen 10 am: 65 People

St Marks 11 am: 115

**5 Masses for 315 People!**

The old ways of doing things are largely no longer working in a world, a society, a town, and a community that has radically changed.

We can't look back to so called 'golden years' and want to return to the past we must look to the future and ask ourselves what new thing does God want for us, what is God will for our parish?

We have to get out of the mentality that St Mary Magdalens exists in isolation from Ipswich, the deanery and the diocese. This is no longer sustainable

We are Catholics, and we belong to the diocese of East Anglia. That is, the Church in East Anglia.

We are Catholics first before we are parishioners of St Mary Magdalen's, what is of ultimate importance isn't the preservation of buildings and structures but our relationship with God, our Faith, the way we live the gospel message and reach others with that message.

We change or we die – it's as simple as that



**What could St Mary Magdalen look like in 2, 5, 10 years time?**



**What do you think God is asking of you personally?**



**What do you think God is saying to this community?**



**What would you like to see develop at St Mary Magdalen?**



**What are you immediately prepared to do or give up in order to make this happen?**

# **Fr Luke Goymour – Parish Priest**

(Fr Paul Chanh – Assistant)

## **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

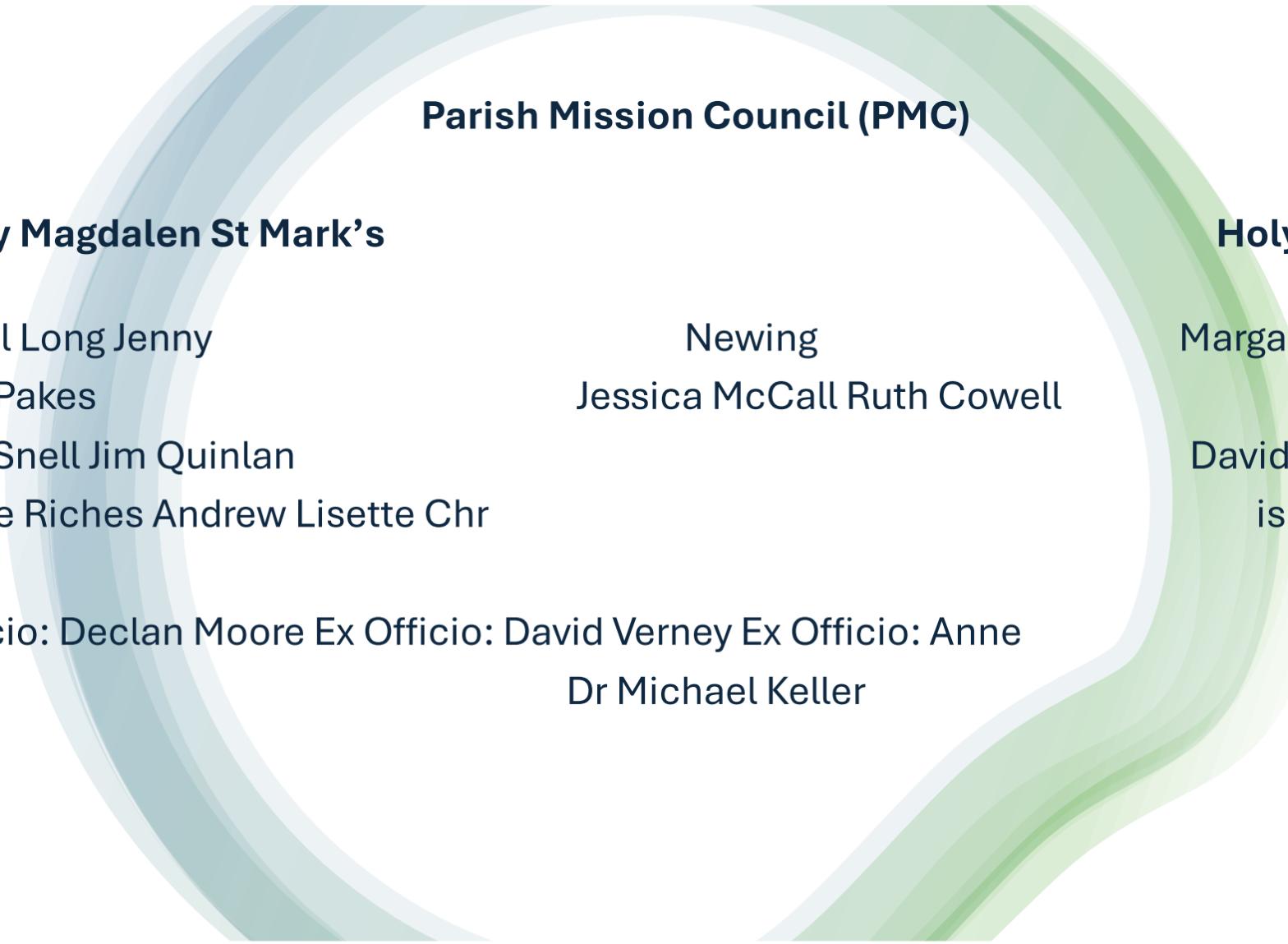
**Simon Fox, Clare Fox, Joanna McCall, Ian Tearle, Rachael Tearle,**

Each can each be contacted at their names @stmarksparish.org.uk

i.e. clare@stmarksparish.org.uk



**(Administration: Pat West, Secretary at St Marks)**



**Parish Mission Council (PMC)**

**St Mary Magdalen St Mark's**

Michael Long Jenny

Martin Pakes

Tracey Snell Jim Quinlan

Chrissie Riches Andrew Lisette Chr

Ex Officio: Declan Moore Ex Officio: David Verney Ex Officio: Anne

Dr Michael Keller

Newing

Jessica McCall Ruth Cowell

**Holy Family**

Margaret Barber

David Ford  
is McEwen

Smitheram

### **Finance and Fabric committee:**

**St Mary Magdalen** – Declan Moore (Chair), Chris Croker (Treasurer), Linis Dolby (Hall Manager)  
Joanna McCall

**St Mark's** – David Verney (Chair), Rosita Mascarenhas (Treasurer), Darshan Edwards, Sharon Cullum, Edwin Edwards, Ian McCall, Edmund Smitherham.

**The remit of the Finance Committee** is laid out in the Diocese of East Anglia– Parish Handbook – 2024 Edition as follows: The finance committee is mandated in Canon Law to advise the Parish Priest in looking after the Church's good and finances. The Parish priest has a legal duty to prevent fraud or theft, to set an annual budget and produce an Annual Account. The parish priest is required to exercise the care of a "Good Householder" in looking after the Church's goods and is legally responsible for ensuring data protection and health and safety legislation are correctly followed in the parish. He is advised in all of this by the Finance Committee; however, it is the parish priest and not the Finance Committee who is the actual decisionmaker in law.

Fabric and Finance committee, therefore, is appointed by the Parish Priest at his discretion and is advisory body at the service of the Parish Priest and the community.




## Summary of Diocese Feedback

- **There were 14 responses, 8 from St Marks, 3 from Holy Family Brantham and 3 from St Mary Magdalen. The questions were also discussed at the Parish Mission Council Meeting in November**
- **1. How do you think parish structures and practices need to evolve to best serve the mission of the Church, that is, sharing the Gospel in a society which is forgetting its Christian roots more and more?**
- Respondents emphasised the need for parish structures to adapt to modern societal challenges and the realities of changing demographics. Flexibility in worship schedules was highlighted as an important way to accommodate diverse commitments, such as work and family responsibilities, and to increase accessibility for people of all ages. Many stressed the significance of creating inclusive and welcoming communities, particularly focusing on integrating new members and ensuring that everyone feels valued and connected. Challenges in engaging those unfamiliar with Church practices were acknowledged and seen as opportunities for outreach and education, fostering a deeper understanding of faith. Improved communication methods, including more frequent and clear updates about parish events, activities, and opportunities, were suggested to keep parishioners informed and engaged.



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- **2. How can we foster and sustain a deeper personal relationship with Christ within the communion of the Church, both in your local parish and as part of the diocese? What can be done to ensure that young and old alike can better live their everyday lives as 'intentional' disciples, that is, followers of Jesus Christ who embrace His teaching and become capable of sharing a living Catholic faith with others?**

- Feedback emphasised the importance of fostering personal connections with faith through both community -oriented activities and structured educational programs. Respondents frequently highlighted youth engagement as a key priority, recommending initiatives that are specifically tailored to the interests and spiritual growth of children and teenagers. Suggestions included organising youth groups, interactive catechism classes, and retreats aimed at deepening their faith and sense of belonging within the Church. Building stronger intergenerational connections was also seen as valuable, with respondents suggesting events that bring together different age groups to share experiences and learn from one another. Opportunities for collective spiritual growth, such as group prayers, Bible study sessions, and workshops on practical faith application, were viewed as crucial to supporting parishioners in becoming intentional disciples.



- **3. Being realistic about our resources, both human and financial, what concrete steps do you think should be taken in your parish to address present and future needs?**

- Respondents acknowledged resource constraints while offering practical and thoughtful suggestions to address them. Mobilising volunteers was seen as an essential step, with a focus on encouraging more parishioners to take on active roles in parish life and activities. Respondents emphasised the importance of clear and transparent communication about financial needs and priorities. Collaboration between neighbouring parishes was also suggested as an effective way to share responsibilities and pool resources, such as combining efforts for events or shared use of facilities. Respondents recommended forming committees or working groups to focus on resource management, ensuring that financial and human resources are used in a sustainable and impactful way.

- 
- This feedback reflects a shared commitment to strengthening parish communities through adaptability, inclusivity, and resourcefulness. Solutions mentioned include:
    - Embracing digital platforms, such as parish websites and social media, to improve communication and engagement.
    - Hosting collaborative events across multiple parishes to foster community and share resources.
    - Establishing virtual prayer groups or online Bible studies to reach parishioners who cannot attend in person.
    - Utilising live video streaming to broadcast Mass across multiple churches, ensuring those unable to attend in person at one location can still participate.
    - Coordinating rotational Mass schedules among three churches to make better use of available clergy and facilities while maintaining a sense of unity.
    - Considering the possibility of closing underutilised churches while ensuring that the community's spiritual and social needs are met through amalgamation.

## Appendix 2

### St Mary Magdalen Income & Expenditure Summary for the 2024 Financial Year & Budget for 2025 - General Funds

£						
Income	Actual 2024	Budget 2025	Expenditure	Actual 2024	Budget 2025	
Main Offertory Collection	27244	28000	<u>Property</u>			
Hall Rents	16420	15000	Church & Grounds Maintenance	1776		
150 Club Fundraising	2487	2500	House Maintenance	2802	34300	
Tax Rebate from Gift Aid	4618	4600	Hall Maintenance	20373		
Easter & Christmas Offerings	2468	2500	Rates & Utilities	8621	9700	
Second Collections for Others	2854	3000	Insurance	1860	2000	
Stole Fees (For Funerals etc)	790	1000	Other	530	600	
Mass Stipends (Intentions etc)	1475	1500		35962	46600	
Votive Candles & Flowers	1644	1700				
Donations (inc for use of church)	2995	6000	<u>Priest</u>			
Bank Interest	1263	1000	Salary & Expenses	8890	9600	
Parish Social Events	718	500	Easter & Christmas Offering	2468	2500	
Grants Tfd from Restricted Income	-	10950	Other (Inc supply)	424	600	
Other	92	200		11782	12700	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>65068</b>	<b>78450</b>	<u>Diocesan Levies</u>	10993	10689	
<b>Deficit/Surplus</b>	<b>-1839</b>	<b>341</b>	<u>Administration</u>	1303	1450	
<b>Funds Summary</b>			<u>Liturgical Supplies</u>	2360	1200	
<b>Cash at Bank (Unrestricted)</b>	<b>24340</b>					
<b>Debtors Owing</b>	<b>4643</b>	Incl. Giftaid	<u>Other</u>			
<b>Creditors Owed</b>	<b>-2172</b>		Second Collections for Others	2854	3000	
			Flowers & Votive Candles	1237	1400	
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>26811</b>		Other	416	1070	
				4507	5470	
<b>Cash at Bank (Restricted)</b>	<b>11558</b>	Incl £10,950 Hall Grants	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>66907</b>	<b>78109</b>	

All figures prepared on an accruals basis

Chris Croker

Treasurer 17.02.25