



January 2025 Update

We are edging ever closer to the union of the Parishes of St. Katharine and St. Nicholas with All Saints Pokesdown to form the new parish of Southbourne-on-Sea. A formal consultation is underway at the Church commissioners and it is not too late to register your support or otherwise by emailing rex.andrew@churchofengland.org.

Whilst the scheme [the joining to become one parish] is with the Church Commissioners it would be presumptuous to make too many plans however we don't have the luxury of sitting on our hands because if it does pass things happen very quickly. This Scheme shall come into operation on the first day of the month following the date of it being made by the Church Commissioners, which we hope will be the 1st of February.

However long the scheme takes there are certain agreements already in place some legal and some in local agreement with the current parishes leadership. As the sitting incumbent Rev. Canon Mike Powis will be the first incumbent of the new parish he will continue to reside at All Saints vicarage. St. Katharine's vicarage will revert to diocesan management but may well be used for a training curate in the future. The new parish is to have 2 churchwardens, locally agreed to be one from each of the old parishes and these will be supported by two deputies. All assets and liabilities are vested in the new parish once it is a legal entity, although at present we still need a new treasurer.

The local steering group have agreed to maintain weekly worship in all 3 churches until Easter 25, with All Saints moving to a 10.30 start to accommodate this. Post Easter the new PCC will have agreed a new worship pattern which

will probably see 2 rather than 3 worship options every week. In the longer term we will need to think carefully about our buildings, we commit to worship regularly in all 3 for a period of at least 12 months during which time the PCC will assess how those buildings are serving the community in which we're set and what is the most judicious use of them. There are a number of options for how we use the buildings that are entrusted to us.

The new PCC is elected at an extraordinary general meeting within 2 weeks of the Parish coming into being, there will be a maximum of 12 lay members serving for one to three years [drawn by lot] and three members of Deanery Synod serving for 3 years. It would be great to fill this body with a balance of people from the 2 existing parishes so do be thinking and praying about whether you might stand for election.

Hoping for a 1st of February completion we have the Bishop of Southampton joining us for a celebration service on the 2nd of February at 10.30 at St. Katharine's followed by a bring and share lunch. If the new parish is established by then she can undertake any necessary formal acts and if not then we can celebrate our church life together.

On the 8th of March 10am – 4pm we have the Archdeacon of Bournemouth joining us for a vision day at St. Katharine's School. This will be a really important event that will celebrate who we are and shape our future direction as a parish. All our voices will have equal weight so make sure that you attend to have your say on the future direction of the parish.

We love our churches and are used to doing things in a certain way and all know that change is hard. The purpose of our churches is to worship God and to build for his kingdom in our community and sometimes we reach a place when new things are asked of us. The evidence of our Christmas services is very much that we are stronger and more impactful together than apart, there was so much to be excited about with new faces and new experiences.

When a couple get married one of the things that needs negotiating is how they 'do Christmas'. You see we all are so used to our family pattern that we think it's immutable. The couples that flourish make sense of what is right for them and new traditions emerge, their new shared way of being.

The process of exploration by the steering group has been characterised by grace and not a little laughter which is always a good sign.

As we progress let's be honest, gracious and caring for one another so that others might see that the God we proclaim is worth exploring.

Finally pray, pray and pray some more. Pray for all the points set out in this update. Pray especially that someone might step forward for the important role of treasurer. Pray for those in leadership and those considering their level of engagement in the life of the Parish from PCC election and the Vision day. This is God's business let us all be attentive to him and courageous in our moving forward.