

The Parish Churches of St Margarets of Antioch, West Hoathly and All Saints, Highbrook



Parish Profile ~ January 2017



In the Beginning

West Hoathly is a village and civil parish in the Mid Sussex District of West Sussex located 3.5 miles south west of East Grinstead. The parish includes the hamlets of Highbrook, and Sharpthorne. The area was already settled by the 11th century, when St Margaret's Church was founded. Names recorded at that time include Hadlega and Hodlega ~ later standardised to Hodlegh and Hothelegh, then (West) Hoathly. This Anglo-Saxon word signifies a heath-covered clearing. The parish lay on the edge of the dense woodland of the Ashdown Forest.



At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, the land covered by the present parish was held by the manors of Ditchling and Plumpton to the southeast. The rectory of the church was associated with Lewes Priory. By the 16th century, the manor of Gravetye was in existence. Gravetye Manor house, built in 1598, still stands in extensive grounds one mile north of the village.

In 1556, West Hoathly resident Ann Tree was burnt at the stake in East Grinstead for refusing to renounce Protestantism; she was one of seventeen "Sussex Martyrs" who suffered this fate. A brass memorial in the church commemorates her.



The Railway Connection

West Hoathly was connected to the British railway network when the Lewes and East Grinstead Railway was built in 1882. A station was provided east of the village, between the village itself and Sharpthorne. The line passed under a sandstone ridge by means of a tunnel. The line and station closed in 1958, and the station stood derelict for many years, with the footbridge and platform buildings removed in 1964 and the station house demolished in 1967. The preserved Bluebell Railway now runs along part of the former Lewes and East Grinstead route. These great engines now steam through West Hoathly and Sharpthorne, adding delightful nostalgic charm and character to the two villages.



St Margaret's Church

The church is dedicated to St. Margaret of Antioch, virgin and martyr, who was honoured in the Eastern church from an early date, and from the 7th century in the West. She is believed to have been martyred during the persecutions of the 4th century but nothing is known for certain about her life. Many legends describe her perseverance and suffering in the cause of the Christian faith, which in some respects illustrate a role for women in withstanding injustice. The ordeals she suffered are of the most fabulous description, including being swallowed by Satan in the form of a dragon. Through her prayers she was released only later to be beheaded. This is why her emblem is traditionally in the form of a cross piercing the mouth of a dragon or beast. Her feast day is 17th July.



The Dedication of St Margaret's

The original dedication of our Parish Church was lost sight of for many years but was rediscovered in 1927 when a 13th century document came to light. The deed granted land to Sir Amfrey, the Rector of the "Church of St. Margaret of Hothegehe."

The foundations of this church were laid over 900 years ago, when a Norman baron ordered it to be built here in 1090, a few years after the Domesday Book was compiled. He gave the church to Lewes Priory, which was in charge of both church and people living here for over 400 years. The first building was a small rectangular one, perhaps with an apse. Directly opposite the entrance is the North Wall, which is part of the Norman Church. The sturdy round pillars were made when the building was enlarged a hundred years later. Nearly 200 years later the chancel was extended. Then the chapel was built on the South side, and made into a full aisle at the end of the 14th century. The tower appeared in the 15th century. Extensive restoration work took place in about 1870.

St Margaret's Church Today

Our Mission Statement

*To do justice,
love mercy
and walk humbly with our God*

People have been worshipping God in our church for 926 years. Our aim is to continue this tradition of faith and service, reaching out to the community in a relevant and meaningful way today.

For many years the people of St Margaret's have felt restricted by the lack of facilities within the church site. With no hall within easy reach there has been no space for our children and young people who have to use the tiny vestry during the Sunday Services. Church office facilities, photocopying and the like, are also in the Vicar's Vestry. Whilst we have some area at the back of church for tea and coffee we do not have any kitchen capability and our toilet facilities are non-existent.

In order to overcome the lack of good space for our church to grow, we are now fundraising at St Margaret's. The new building will consist of two toilets, (one disabled), kitchen facilities and a first floor meeting room.

St Margaret's is a grade I listed building and the journey has been a very long one regarding planning etc. The design is ingenious, sympathetically building up against the tower so as not to alter the ancient building and although still a way off, with prayer and guidance from an enthusiastic leader, we are confident that we will succeed. St Margaret's will then have the facilities so desperately needed in a modern world for our church members, the village community and for the many visitors who pass through the door each year.

This is a very exciting time for us!



Proposed building works for St Margaret's

Our Fundraising Events

We have a small, enthusiastic and dedicated fundraising team who are constantly coming up with original ideas for events that will help to raise the money we need for our church to grow. These events are always enjoyable and fun, using the church building and bringing the community together.

Some of these fund raisers have been:

Barn Dance
Medieval Evening
Talks

Our local pubs are very supportive and have quizzes
Flower Demonstrations
Concerts
Sponsored walks

TEA & MUSIC

SUN 25th SEP
MARGARET'S

St. Margaret's Church, West Hoathly

TALES OF MY GRANDFATHER

An evening of reminiscences and memories recalled by

Rt. Hon.

Sir Nicholas Soames MP

Thursday, 19th
June 18th 2014

West Hoathly & Sharpthorn Garden & Art Trail

11am-6pm
Last Entry

12.30 pm
Margaret's

AFTERNOON CONCERT
WITH HARPIS



'CHURCH FLOWERS

Flower Arranging
Demonstration and Workshop
by Sue Flight, Chelsea Flower
Show Gold medallist

Margaret's Church, West Hoathly
Saturday, 15th October
9.30 - 1.00pm



by the Greenwood Folk Band

STREET FAIR
SAT 16th JULY 12-5pm



The Slinfold Concert Band





Medieval
Evening
at
St Margaret's Church
Saturday 19th November
7.30 pm—11 pm
Entertainment, Supper and lots of fun!
Bring your own goblet and mead.
Dress appropriately.
All proceeds go to
The Church Building.
Tickets £15.00
Kindly Sponsor



Sunday Worship at St Margaret's

The life of St Margaret's is centred in our Eucharistic worship. We enjoy both traditional liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer to the middle ground of Common Worship and also the Family service with modern expression using Power Point and our music group. A new Vicar would need to be familiar with and open to a variety of worship styles.

Traditional

Worship according to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer is offered first thing in the morning (8am at Saint Margaret's, 9am at All Saints) twice in each place each month, together with services of evening prayer or evensong once a month.

Common Worship ~ 2nd and 4th Sunday

Our main 10am worship is of a formal nature but in a modern idiom, with organ accompaniment to better-known hymns and a preached sermon.

Contemporary ~ 1st and 3rd Sunday

On the first Sunday in the month, the music group lead our singing with modern worship songs and well known hymns. Our monthly Family service is also led by the music group with more energetic worship and family songs, Often we arrange chairs in a semi-circle for this more informal service.



Music at St Margaret's

Music is an important and special part of worship at St Margaret's. Its purpose is always to create a space into which God can enter. We have a Director of Music, responsible for all music in the church, who is also our organist.

There is no robed choir as the congregation enjoy leading the singing during our Sunday services, be it with organ or music group. The Music Group plays for our more contemporary and Family Services. Instruments include: piano, flute, clarinet, guitar and harp.

We have a small number of talented singers from our congregation who join together to perform at services and festivals throughout the liturgical year. The repertoire ranges from the sixteenth century to the present day and is in four part harmony, with or without accompaniment. We like to involve the children from our local primary school to take part in some of these services which are always very special and often moving occasions.

Secular concerts and events also take place at St Margaret's ~ these are not always for our fundraising. The church doors are open to all sorts of free performances, be it music, drama, school productions, music students from local colleges etc. for the community to come and enjoy.



The Organ



The Organ is a great asset to our church and worship. It is a two manual built by William Hill & Son in 1899 which has been well-maintained. It is used on a regular basis at our services and is well suited to the building.



The Bells

St Margaret's has a ring of six bells. We have an active band of ringers, many of whom are members of the congregation. The bells are rung regularly for morning service and festivals. Weekly practices are on Thursday evenings .



Our Children and Youth Groups



Sunday club

We welcome children of Primary school age to join us for our Sunday Club held in the vestry during the service on 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Led by DBS checked volunteers from our church, the children enjoy songs, games and craft activities based around a Bible reading for that Sunday.

The Emmaus Club

The Emmaus Club is for young people of school years 6 - 9. It meets weekly in the Village Hall during the Winter terms and includes outdoor activities in the Summer term.

Below is this terms Programme

January 13th: Games

20th: Tanzanian Trip, presentation by Rory Duncanson

27th: Film night at Sharpthorne Hall

February 3rd: Dodge Ball

10th: Night Walk, Start & Finish at W.H. Village Hall

February 17th & 24th Half Term no meeting

March 3rd: Pancakes

10th: Balloon Games

17th: Mystery Guest

24th: Wide Game at The Goat Car Park.

31st: Family Curry Night Fundraiser for Tanzanian School Project (www.championchanzige.com) and Church Building Fund 6.30 - 9.30 p.m.

April 7th: Egg Decorating & Rolling, Start & Finish at St. Margaret's Church

West Hoathly Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Controlled)



The village is blessed with a long established, modern and up-to-date primary school. As a Church of England school, it has a distinctive Christian character, meaning that the school has a strong, caring ethos. This is shown in the way that pupils, parents and staff relate to and encourage one another.

The school has three main Christian values:

Love – unconditional care and respect for all members of the school family

Hope – high but not unreasonable expectations for success for everyone

Forgiveness – a fresh start for everyone, every day.

The daily collective worship has a clear Christian flavour, reflecting the beliefs and practices of the Church of England. The act of collective worship (known as Assembly) is not a Service but clearly reflects the values of the school. One of the weekly assemblies is taken by a member of the clergy, and this regularly includes the vicar of St Margaret's Church.

The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in visible and practical ways around the school, including displays, art work and symbols.

The school has an annual programme of events which take place in St Margaret's Church. These include the Harvest Festival, Christmas Carol Service, and the Easter Service. The school participate in Church Services also, including the Advent Service, and the Mother's Day Service.

The whole school attends the Leaver's Service for pupils in Year 6, at which the Church presents them with their own Bible.

The current Head teacher, Mr Adam Earle, has a strong Christian background, as do all of the Senior Leadership Team, and many of the staff.

The vicar is a member of the Board of Governors, and one of the foundation governors is also always a representative of the Church. Currently this is Ms Christine Graystone, who also takes an active role in the education of the pupils, supporting pupils in learning how to read, and attending some assemblies.

**Do visit the school website:
www.westhoathlyschool.co.uk**

The Churchyard at St Margaret's

St. Margaret's Churchyard is still 'open'
It is extensive with lovely views to the South Downs.



It consists of a Churchyard around the Church, seven terraces for the interment of ashes and a lower burial ground. The maintenance is managed and paid for by the PCC with a grant from Mid Sussex District Council.



A Churchyard Trust founded 55 years ago supports the PCC with improvements and grant giving. The Churchyard was awarded a Silver Gilt certificate from the RHS in Bloom Competition in 2016.

Participation in this scheme has prompted a greater awareness in creating wildlife habitats and involving the local community and youth organisations in working in this special environment.



Other Activities

The Church Flowers

We are blessed with a with a team of volunteers who ensure that the church flowers are arranged every week (often sponsored by members of the congregation for a special occasion) with festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas bringing all members of the team together to ensure that the church flowers are at their best



Food For Thought

On the second Tuesday of each month, we hold a 'Food for Thought' lunch to which all are welcome. After a soup and sandwich lunch, an invited speaker gives a short talk in some way connected to our Christian faith. This is also a chance to catch up with friends and make new acquaintances.

Heart and Soul

Once a month some also gather at Church for 'Heart & Soul,' a time of extended prayer for God's world and the people of our community. A prayer cross stands in Church so that visitors may leave their requests . All are prayed for, all remembered.

Reaching Out to the Community

Here at St Margaret's, pastoral care has a high priority among us. Visits are regularly made to a local nursing home (Horncastle at Plawhatch) and to two neighbouring special needs units, Willow and Maple Lodge. We are also involved with Family Support Work (FSW) providing food, clothes and Christmas gifts for families in need in the Sussex area. Looking to the wider community, one of our congregation visits immigration detainees at the Gatwick detention centres and supports local refugees through the Refugees Welcome Crawley group. Church members collect clothes for both groups and have attended events in support of refugees. A scheme offering car lifts to local surgeries and hospitals is in operation.

Mission and Charity Work

Japan - One of our congregation has been serving in Japan with OMF for many years. We support him through prayer and a small contribution his ministry.

Cameroon - We maintain personal links and pray for the church congregations in Cameroon, following the visit of some of our members to churches there and a return visit by the Bishop to St. Margaret's.

Kenya - Members of the congregation also sponsor pupils through the Loiyangalani Trust, set up by one of our members to support children's education in this remote village in Kenya. Personal visits to Loiyangalani take place every few years with members of our church taking part.

The United Benefice

West Hoathly and Highbrook are separate ecclesiastical parishes each with its own church, churchwardens and PCC. However together they are a United Benefice and share a single incumbent. The pattern of Sunday worship at Saint Margaret's is shared through the month with our companion church, All Saints at Highbrook, two miles away. The Vicar ministers to the two churches and parishes. All Saints have contributed their own profile which more fully describes their area, needs and objectives which is included in full later .

The PCC and Electoral Roll

The PCC meets six times a year and has four elected, lay members currently. In addition, the Church Wardens and a co-opted Treasurer and Secretary attend meetings and are occasionally joined by a Deanery Representative. Usually the Vicar chairs PCC meetings in an atmosphere of supportive discussion and shared decision making. The Electoral Role currently stands at 105, with 16 living outside the Parish. All people on the electoral role are invited annually to volunteer to serve on the PCC if they express an interest.

Our Finances

Saint Margaret's generally balances its budget each year although it is accepted we have lost a number of key givers through age and moving out of the parish. Care is given to expenditure and regular Stewardship campaigns plus with the support of other related organisations such as The Friends of West Hoathly Churchyard Trust. Making and keeping the congregation aware of their responsibility to God, the upkeep of Saint Margaret's, gift aiding and outreach mission will ensure the finances to continue ministry in this place. We are also blessed with some savings through the foresight of previous treasurers and kind legacies. With this all capital and maintenance projects are funded out of these accumulated funds rather than from regular income.

Sharpthorne Hall

The PCC were offered the Sharpthorne Hall as trustees in 2010. The building is used for PCC meetings, Food for Thought, The Emmaus Club and hired out to organisations and individuals in the community as it offers facilities useful for many different purposes. The building will hold approximately 40, has a fully functional kitchen , good heating system and on site parking.

The Chronicle (parish magazine)

The Chronicle, printed and distributed bi-month, is a means of reaching out to the community. Over 500 households subscribe and the vicar writes a personal message for the first page of every issue. The materials and printing are funded by the PCC and some income is generated from advertising.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is within the village of West Hoathly, the entrance to the drive being across from the village school. The accommodation comprises of a large reception / dining room, large kitchen, 2 full bathrooms upstairs, a toilet downstairs and 4 bedrooms. The vicar's study is located at the front of the vicarage accessed through the front door. There is a separate garage.

Relationships with Neighbouring Churches

Through our deanery (Cuckfield), area churches join together in what are called cluster groups. Those concerned / involved with Youth Ministry meet to share ideas and also to provide a Deanery Cluster Youth Service a couple of times annually. These services are a good witness to the youth attending, broadening their awareness of others out there that share the same faith.

During Christian Unity Week we have shared a service with the Roman Catholic church of Saint Dunstan's in West Hoathly. In previous years ecumenical study groups and lunches have been held during Lent. We also cherish the joint services we hold for our Patronal Festivals and during Holy Week - bringing the churches and wider community together in fellowship and worship,

In summary

The appointment of a new vicar comes at a very exciting time as we are fundraising for new facilities which will improve our mission especially with young people and local residents.

We are looking for a vicar who, with support from the congregation, is able to lead us in meeting these and other challenges that will be heading our way.



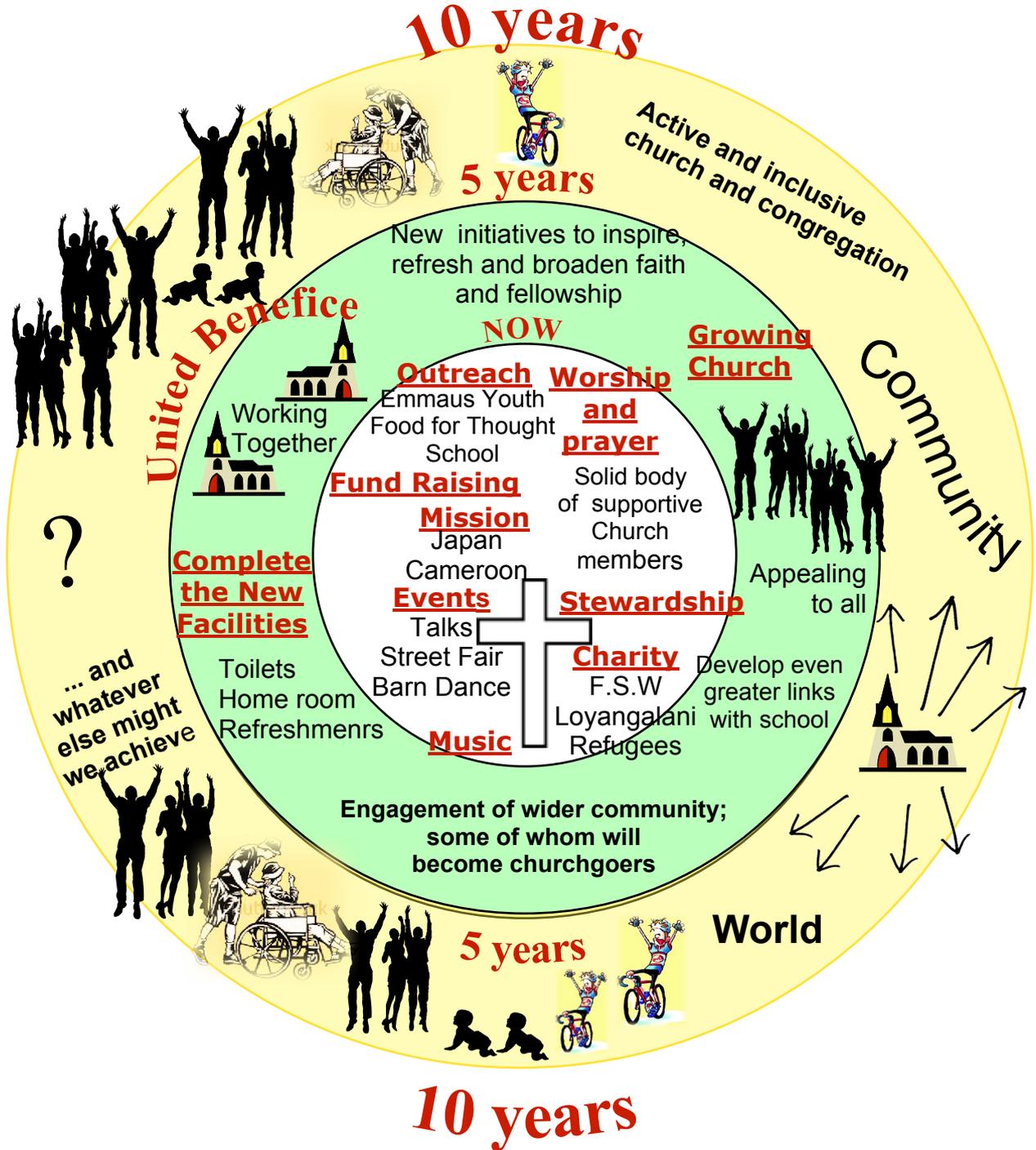
We are looking for someone to lead, guide and inspire us in our worship, to nurture us and help us grow numerically and spiritually.

Our vision is to improve our presence in the St Margaret's area, so that all people can feel comfortable with their local church.

We need a vicar who relates well with young people, and is accepting of our different backgrounds.

We are all at various stages on our journey of faith, and are welcoming to all people.

Our Vision



Statement

The Parish Church of All Saints, Highbrook



Parish Profile
January 2017

All Saints and Highbrook

Parish Background



Highbrook, as its name reflects, is a hamlet on a ridge (350' high) running north/south between two streams which run into the river Ouse. It has an ancient history. One house can trace its origins to the Domesday Book. For much of the Middle Ages it had "halls" or dwelling houses. Highbrook was originally called Hammingden, meaning swine pasture. In the mid nineteenth century the Stephenson-Clarke family came to live in Brook House. Two sisters, Mrs Kirby and Miss Weguelin also came to Highbrook at about the same time.

The Church

The building of the Church began in 1884. It was opened by the Bishop of Chichester in 1885 and dedicated to "All Saints". The Clarke family gave the land and the sisters financed the building. The Church can seat up to 200 and is in a good state of repair, save that we need repairs to porch and rainwater goods and some further lower priority high level work recommended in our last Quinquennial inspection.

The Hamlet and Community

Highbrook is a hamlet consisting of c150 inhabitants. It is set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with views south to the South Downs, east to the Bluebell Railway in the valley below and towards Ashdown Forest, west to Ardingly and north to West Hoathly. There is no shop nor pub.

Highbrook has a village hall. In 1875 it was built as a school by Mr and Mrs Kirby. It has been the village hall since the early twentieth century. Between 1999 and 2002 it was completely refurbished.



Highbrook is a thriving community. There are several young families, a few recent/imminent arrivals as well as those who have lived here for several decades. It has a remarkable community spirit. The church works closely with the Village Hall Committee to outreach to the community to promote events for fund-raising, fellowship and fun. A remarkable 60/70 % of the community become involved in the Christmas Market and Tree Festival held in the Church and Village Hall in early December. There is warmth and support for the Church as a strong central focus for our tight knit community. In the poignant words of John Moore in the Brensham Trilogy, Highbrook “hangs together”.



The Congregation

We have a small faithful congregation with festivals playing a central role in the life of the community such as our Christmas ‘Carols By Candlelight Service’ which attracted 150 people.

Services at All Saints

We have a traditional service structure of Eucharist and non Eucharist. The Congregations are encouraged to put faith into practice through prayer, scripture, music and sacrament.



Finances of the Church

Finances are healthy but we are not complacent and we work very hard at securing the funds we need.

Development of the Church

We are fortunate to have our small community some talented singers and musicians who provide a nucleus to convene impromptu groups of singers, small choirs, readers and to involve people and families outside or on the fringes of regular worship, especially younger members of the community. In the past year two concerts have taken place in the church, and in our Statement of Needs and Significance we have plans to develop toilet, kitchen and parking facilities to enable further development and use of the church.



The PCC

The PCC consists of the two churchwardens and four others. The meetings, which are held about four times per annum, are held in a spirit of real Christian fellowship and a united purpose to keep and sustain the church in Highbrook as a place of worship. The Churchyard is kept in good order with the assistance of a part-time professional, and a small team of ladies from the community, supplemented by the occasional working party. We pride ourselves on being ecumenical. One of our PCC converted to Catholicism but continues to regularly attend our meetings, and we share with St Margaret's an annual service with the RC Chapel of St Dunstons in West Hoathly.

Priest Profile

The parish of Highbrook needs a priest who will faithfully care for the community and continue to build on the links that have already been established.

