

## The Parish of St. Thomas, Lymington with All Saints: Parish Profile



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## WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in coming to work in the Diocese of Winchester where we are committed to serving people and communities across Hampshire and East Dorset. Our vision is to 'Live the Mission of Jesus' and in doing so we want to make a difference and see lives transformed through the love of God. We serve a range of diverse communities, from rural to urban, with our Cathedral being sited in the historic city of Winchester. From coastal Bournemouth to Andover, Southampton to the villages of the Pastrow benefice, ministry takes place through our churches, chaplaincies and schools and we are delighted to encourage lay ministry in all its varied forms.

We are also committed to being a truly representative diocese and we recognise our need to develop in diversity. We welcome applications from the full range of those under-represented amongst us.

The Diocese of Winchester is an exciting place to be and we look forward to receiving your application.

**Debbie Sellin**  
**Acting Bishop of Winchester**



## Deanery – LYNDHURST DEANERY

The deanery has a mix of suburban, market town and village parishes and is located in the south of the diocese, within the archdeaconry of Bournemouth. The life of the deanery includes an active Synod and a friendly and supportive Chapter. We work together to find ways to enable all the people of our parishes to live out their calling in our shared mission and ministry and encourage all our stipendiary clergy to be active within the deanery so that their skills and gifts can be used to build up the whole deanery.



Simon Newham  
Area Dean



Alison Bennett  
Assistant Area Dean



Bill Andrews  
Lay Chair





## Introduction

Lymington is a colourful market town situated in the New Forest district of Hampshire on the west bank of the Lymington River, on the edge of the Solent. It has a rich maritime history and is now a major yachting centre. The church of St Thomas the Apostle occupies a prominent position at the top of Lymington High Street, its unusual exterior being dominated by the 17th century tower surmounted by an impressive Georgian cupola. The High Street is a busy commercial area with independent shops as well as some national chain stores. The Saturday market brings in traders and shoppers from a wide area and attracts many visitors.

The estimated population of the civil parish of Lymington and Pennington in 2020 was 16,303 with 25% over the age of 70 and 57% of working age. The population is predominantly white, UK-born with 73% of adults identifying as Christian but with 26% professing no religion. Property prices are high as the town is popular with retirees and those interested in enjoying the recreational opportunities in the New Forest and the Solent although there are also pockets of deprivation within the area.

Public transport is good with trains to Brockenhurst with fast mainline connections by train to London, Southampton and Bournemouth.

Local schools have been rated either Excellent (Lymington Church of England Aided Infants School) or Good (Lymington Junior School and Priestlands School, the local state 11-16 comprehensive.) At 16, many students travel the short distance to Brockenhurst College, a tertiary college offering A levels, Vocational and Professional courses and Apprenticeships.

## Our Vision

Our Vocation is “**to be the town church in Lymington offering prayer and hospitality in Jesus’ name**”. Many of our current activities, as described in this profile, demonstrate how we fulfil this vocation. Yet we know there is more we need to do and are excited about the possibilities that exist for us to grow and develop. We updated and re-issued our Parish Mission Action Plan (PMAP) in May 2022 and have set ourselves some challenging objectives:

- **To build our links with younger people**

Introducing new people to faith in Jesus is crucial and we need young people and new families to energise us and be the future of our church. We have a team looking at ways to realise this including reviewing the most attractive times, locations and styles of worship for younger people. We recognise this may mean taking our worship outside the church to engage people in other settings: we are currently piloting Messy Church at Lymington Infants School and will explore other venues as opportunities and resources allow. This will be a priority for the proposed Children and Family Worker when appointed and we look forward to our new Vicar leading us in this key area of work

- **To tell the Christian story through our land and buildings**

Our church is a greatly loved building and throughout the year we host a number of events which enable many people to enjoy its flexible space and spiritual ambience. We are committed to finding new ways to bring people into our church where they can not only appreciate its beauty but also learn about Jesus and see his love in our welcome and activities.

- **To help people discover their gifts and vocations**

We are God’s voice, hands and feet in the world. We will explore how we can use and develop the gifts people have to further his work in both the church and the community.

- **To care for our church community**

The pandemic lockdown showed how vulnerable people can be, and also indicated new ways in which they can be supported. We now want to develop this further, as a church family, so that everyone feels connected and supported.

There is much to do within our PMAP, but we cannot do God’s work without engaging with others. Lockdown, and now our vacancy, has made us more aware of the need for collaboration. We will seek out collaborative opportunities with other churches and agencies locally and particularly with the other Anglican Church within our town, St Mark’s, Pennington (see page 17).



## **Our Church Life**

### **Worship**

We are blessed with being able to offer a variety of services on a Sunday. The morning starts with the Book of Common Prayer Communion service, after which the choir and organ join the congregation for Choral Common Worship (CW) Communion. The St Thomas' Worship Band leads the third service of the morning, Life and Soul, which is a more informal and interactive service. There is an opportunity for both congregations to meet over coffee between the services. There is a regular communion service on Wednesday mornings and a full choral Evensong every six weeks.

Other ways to engage in prayer and study include a daily on-line morning prayer meeting with St Mark's, Pennington; the Saturday weekly 'Prayers for the Parish' and attendance at House Groups which meet regularly to discuss material written and aligned to the church calendar of readings and worship themes. There is also a confidential "prayer chain" which operates to pray for urgent matters with requests sent out by the church office and a home communion team for those who are unable to attend Church. Parishioners are encouraged to take part in the BCM (Bishop's Commission for Mission) programmes. At present, several members of the congregation have participated in courses on Pastoral Work, Children and Youth and Creation Care.

The church had until February 2023 a professional organist, and currently enjoys a Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) 4-part choir and a Worship Band.

The organist and choir lead the more formal services and participate in RSCM events as well as performing in the local area. The Worship Band leads the informal services (Life and Soul and Messy Church) and has played at community events such as the 2022 Jubilee Party organised by the Town Council.

The organist and Choir Director, Martin Penrose ARCO LTCL, retired after 25 years of dedicated service and we are in the process of securing a replacement at the timing of writing.

### **Outreach and social engagement with the local population.**

- A lunch club provides high quality food at an affordable price in the Church Hall every Monday as well as organising special event lunches.
- The hall is also the venue for a thriving Toddlers group every Tuesday morning.
- Vistas café meets every Thursday and, like the lunch club, enables church goers and local people to meet socially. The profits from the café are sent to specific charities chosen by the helpers.
- A Good Samaritans Group offers friendship to the homeless and needy and helps them in contacting appropriate bodies who can provide further support. The Church also actively supports the New Forest Basics Bank and regularly holds a Traidcraft Stall in the church and at Vistas Café.

- St Thomas' is used for civic services, for example on Remembrance Day, when poppies are released from the tower and at Christmas when a Blessing the Town Crib service is held before the town's Christmas Lights are switched on. St Thomas Church hosts the annual Christmas Tree Festival when local schools, shops, charities and businesses decorate a sponsored tree. This is organised by The Friends of St Thomas Church, a separate organisation formed to support the PCC with repair and maintenance of the buildings, fixtures and fittings.
- St Thomas' is an active member of Christians Together in Lymington and Pennington and hosts the annual service.
- The church magazine, Parish News, with both secular and devotional features, is produced monthly and delivered by hand throughout the parish.

<https://lymingtonchurch.org/parish-magazine/>

- The Church received the A Rocha ECO Church gold award in 2021 for its efforts to 'go green' in all aspects of our church life.
- Donations to charities are made each year ( currently, Mission to Seafarers, the Leprosy Mission, Mission Aviation Fellowship and Restored Lives) and the church welcomes annual representatives to speak at services.
- There are many opportunities for parishioners to participate in social groups (poetry reading, music appreciation, book club etc.) as well as volunteering to join the flower arrangers, bell ringers, flag raisers and brass polishers.
- The Church has a website, Facebook page and YouTube channel: See appendix for URLs.

## Music

St Thomas' has the largest, most versatile space in the area and so is regularly used as a concert venue and hosts international artists as well as local choirs and orchestras. It is the home of the annual Solent Music Festival when world class musicians perform for a full week to a packed church.

### St. Thomas' Choir



### St. Thomas' Worship Band



## Schools

St Thomas' has close links with Lymington C of E Infants School and the previous incumbent, as an ex-officio member of the Governing Body, used to lead the worship sessions each week. The Foundation Governors have an important role to play in supporting the school through the Board of Governors meetings and in their participation in school activities. The children visit the church for special services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Mothering Sunday.

**Lymington C of E Infants School**



**Lymington C of E Infants School Robins Choir**



**Eco Award Presentation**



**Monday Lunch Club**



**Crib Blessing Service**



## All Saints Lymington

**All Saints Exterior**



**Tops Nursery in All Saints**



In 2013, the PCC took the decision to cease holding regular services at All Saints and began to seek ways in which to use the building, hall and grounds for the benefit of the community of Lymington whilst holding to the buildings' original religious and educational purposes. After much research, the PCC discovered that there was no all-day 52-week per year nursery/pre-school provision in Lymington. Tops Day Nurseries were identified as a suitable childcare provider and, in 2015, the PCC sought a Church Commissioner's Scheme whereby All Saints would be closed for regular public worship and for the buildings and land to be appropriated for use as a children's nursery and pre-school, whilst also retaining the chancel area for use as a chapel for occasional Christian worship e.g. weddings and funerals. There then followed 6 years of discussion with the neighbours and with the New Forest District Council (NFDC) Conservation and Planning officers about the essential building works (new central heating and children's toilets) needed to enable the nave to be used as a pre-school. Planning permission was finally granted in October 2020, which enabled the Church Commissioners' Scheme to be made and on 1 January 2021 the buildings and grounds were leased, for 30 years, to Tops Day Nurseries.

## Meet Our Team

### Rosie Ward – Retired Priest



After being an Editor I was ordained in 1994. I ministered in both the Bristol and Ely Dioceses, along with

training LLMs and working with CPAS. I am passionate about environmental issues and lead the church Eco group. I am married to Malcolm.

### Richard Morrison – Retired Priest



Born in Fareham for my first fourteen years I lived in Hampshire. My early career started in Suffolk where I was in credit control. I was

ordained deacon at Lincoln Cathedral in 1989 and priested in 1990. I served in very rural areas of Lincolnshire until my retirement in 2017.

### Ron Swan – Retired Priest



My clergy career has been long and varied from Hospital chaplain to rector in a number of London parishes. I have

been Area Dean in both Harrow and Ealing and Prebendary at St, Paul's Cathedral. I now share my time between London and Lymington. I am married to Celia.

### Linda Lee – Hospital Chaplain



I have been Hospital Chaplain at Lymington for 14 years and have worshipped at St Thomas' for approx. 17 years - helping in

a leadership capacity where I can. I have been a Christian for over 40 years with a wide and eclectic spirituality. I am married to Peter and have a cat called Heathcliff.

### Chris Stroud – Churchwarden



I was born and brought up in Surrey, married in 1990 and confirmed in 1992. I moved to this area in 2010. I am a Server at St.

Thomas' and produce some of the House Group material. I am a retired financial markets and risk management specialist. Interests are music and the outdoors.

### Maureen Harris – Assistant Churchwarden



I was born in London, then lived in Surrey where I taught primary level, followed by two overseas postings and further years abroad

with my husband and young family. My return to the UK led to Diocesan lay courses. I was a Pastoral Assistant in Rochester Diocese, which has been a support in my current pastoral role alongside assisting the Churchwarden.

### Malcom Ward – Assistant Churchwarden



I am a retired ex - Royal Air Force electronics engineer. Rosie and I were married in 2002. In my previous role as LLM (now Emeritus)

I had the privilege of working alongside her in ministry. I also worked for many years as a volunteer prayer minister at the Harnhill Centre for Christian Healing.

### Andy Clapper- Worship Band Leader



I have been lucky enough to play in bands with my wife Barbara for over 30 years and was delighted to take on the leadership of the

St Thomas Worship Band in 2012. In addition to music, I am looking at new ways for the church to engage with young people and families and studying for a BCM to help with this.

## Our organisation

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) currently consists of 9 elected members, 3 elected members of the Deanery Synod plus 5 co-opted members which include the Treasurer and the Secretary. The Churchwardens are members ex officio and the current one is also the Lay Chair. The Churchwarden has similar power and responsibility to the incumbent in the current vacancy and the PCC has overall responsibility for the running of the Parish. The PCC meets 6 times a year with additional meetings when necessary. There are 237 on the Electoral Roll.

Additional committees deal with the management of the buildings, the finances, the Vacancy and the Good Samaritans charity work and report to the PCC. There is a Health and Safety Officer and a Safeguarding Officer. Administrative support is provided by a part-time administrator.

The Church is responsible for four buildings, three of which are listed (St Thomas' Church, All Saints' Church and All Saints' Church Hall)



## Finances

### Background

Our finances are in good order thanks to the meticulous care and generosity, over many years, of those who went before us.

### St Thomas' Church – a Christian community

It is our responsibility to use our financial assets wisely to support and encourage all aspects of the Christian work we carry out together in the name of St Thomas' Church.

### Income and Expenditure

In 2021 our income was £211,695 and expenditure was £292,600. Income was to some extent adversely affected by Covid and expenses included major works at St Thomas' Church and All Saints' Church of £19,946 and £59,511 respectively. If these figures are taken into account, our 'regular' expenditure exceeded income by £1,448. Included in expenses is charitable giving of £16,660.

Year on year our regular income and regular expenditure pretty much balance.

Hiring is another source of income. During 2021 we received £4,708 from St Thomas' Church and Hall, with £22,800 from All Saints Church and Hall.

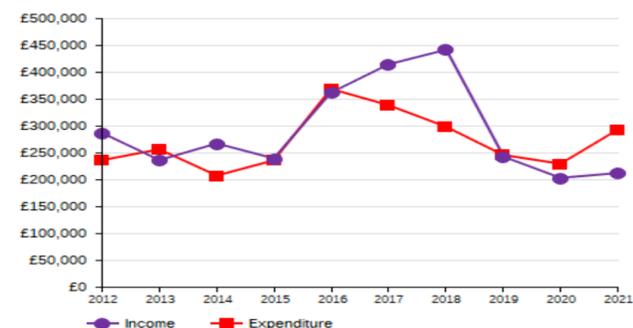
We received £2,000 from grants.

There are several items of capital expenditure due in 2023. The current expectation is that these could total around £90,000.

Our church has been blessed over the years, and continues to be, by the generosity of those who make donations, including the Friends of St Thomas, and those who leave legacies.

Income from those who give regularly, mainly through the Parish Giving Scheme, is so very important to us. In 2021 this planned giving amounted to £99,756, with a further £25,662 Income Tax being recovered through Gift Aid.

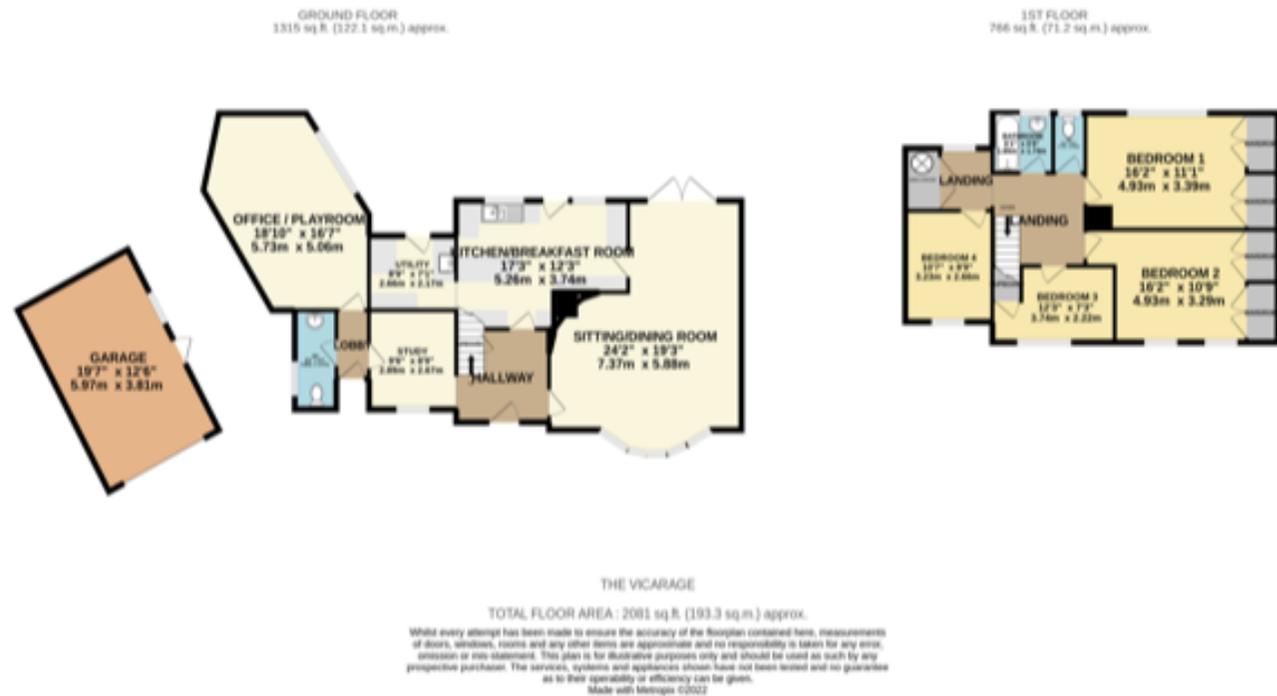
Total Income & Total Expenditure, (2012-2021)



# The Vicarage



St Thomas' Vicarage is situated in a popular residential area south of the High Street and within a short distance from shops and the station. It is a ten-minute walk to the church and an equal distance to the harbour and the Solent. It has four good sized bedrooms, a separate office and study and a very attractive garden. There is ample parking at the front of the house.



## **Vicar Role Description**

We are looking for a person who will:

### **Spirituality**

- Make Jesus the centre of our worship and work in the parish.
- Be a prayerful and imaginative spiritual leader with a strong personal faith.
- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, especially through prayer.

### **Worship and preaching**

- Bring the Bible to life and make it relevant and meaningful for people's lives today.
- Value and support diversity of worship and music in the parish.
- Lead in different styles and content with confidence, creativity and warmth.

### **Leadership and Collaboration**

- Direct the parish and determine the most effective and sympathetic form of partnership between Lymington and Pennington parishes.
- Be a team leader and player who inspires confidence and empowers others.
- Encourage people to use their gifts and participate in the life of the church.

### **Discipleship, Leadership and Nurture**

- Encourage the church membership to develop their spiritual life through small groups and discipleship courses.
- Provide direction encouragement and training to clergy and lay teams.
- Enable individuals to discern their gifts in ministry and be committed to develop and use these in worship and leadership.

## **Evangelism and Social Engagement**

- Maintain the close relationship with Lymington C of E infant school and strengthen and develop links with other local schools.
- Engage with young people and families with creative ideas to help them build their faith in Jesus.
- Embrace the power of technology as a way to share the message of Jesus with those who might not otherwise hear it.

## **Pastoral Care**

- Minister with love to all parishioners and ensure a system of pastoral care is in place to support all church members.
- Ensure that the church is a welcoming and caring church for the whole population of Lymington and its environs.

## **Stewardship and Parish Organisation/Finance**

- Work with the Parochial Church Council and parish administration in managing day to day activities and long term goals of the parish.
- Have knowledge and experience of good governance and financial management.
- Demonstrate strong guardianship of buildings and grounds, encouraging the already successful work of Eco Church and the Church of England's net zero commitment.

## **Ecumenism and Links with Others**

- Develop links and further our work with other local churches and organisations.
- Participate in and contribute to the ministry of the Deanery and Diocese.

## St Thomas' Lymington and St Marks' Pennington

For some time, the Diocese of Winchester has encouraged a formal collaboration between St. Marks' Pennington and St. Thomas' Lymington. The issue has been brought into sharp relief recently, particularly given that both Parishes are in vacancy. The PCCs of both Churches have voted on whether they would like to pursue the proposition. A majority vote to investigate some form of formal collaboration between the two Parishes was taken by both PCCs. The current situation is summarised below from the viewpoint of St. Thomas'.

- St. Thomas' PCC would like to proceed with recruiting a new Vicar as soon as possible. A short vacancy period would be highly desirable.
- St. Thomas' PCC is open to exploring collaboration opportunities with St. Marks' Pennington which, if productive, are expected to result in either a combined parish or a united benefice arrangement.
- Senior officials from the Diocese of Winchester have agreed that once the Lymington Vicar has been recruited and if collaboration talks are still positive, the new incumbent will be heavily involved in the recruitment of a full-time associate for St. Marks' Pennington.
- The associate recruited would be expected to have complementary skills to the Vicar of St. Thomas'.
- The two priests would work together to service the aggregate area of Lymington and Pennington.
- There is an expectation that collaboration between St. Thomas' and St. Marks' will take place and that the formal integration of the two will be a primary responsibility of the new Vicar. The PCC / Churchwardens / Parishioners will assist as appropriate.
- Lymington PCC has chosen to delay any moves to combine formally or to unite the two parishes until the new incumbent is in place. The proposal will be reviewed by the new Vicar in conjunction with the two PCCs and progressed if still appropriate.

## St Marks' Pennington



**Our Victorian Parish Church of St Mark, Pennington, is a single Parish Benefice, being the only church in the centre of the village of Pennington, serving a small but expanding community of about 6,000 with a Church of England junior school at its heart. There are two small shopping centres for the convenience of the two areas of high population with many young families living near the centre of the village square.**

St Thomas and St Marks have very differing and individual characters, and equally congregations. The PCC is very aware of the essential character of the Pennington Community. The people of Pennington are very attached to their church which features largely in the momentous events of their lives – especially baptisms and funerals. Many generations of the same families have chosen to stay in the area and can be seen supporting each other. Pennington is a small parish which has the potential to grow and develop with the right leadership and support. It is noted by the New Forest District Council that Pennington has been singled out as one of deprived areas within the New Forest and we are surrounded by various affluent parishes – including Lymington, Milford, Sway and Brockenhurst.



At present we hold 2 services on a Sunday – 8am BCP Communion and 10am Common Worship Communion alternating with Morning Praise, currently led by a variety of retired priests and our trained BCM's / LLM in training. Both these services are live streamed. We have close links with the largest care home in the village and take communion into the residents monthly. On Monday mornings we have a Bible Study group online and every weekday morning we have a joint prayer group online with St Thomas. Our congregation enjoy a mixture of traditional and contemporary services. We would like to continue building upon the links made by previous priests with the Pennington Junior and Infant schools.

Our Community Hall is the base for much of our outreach activities within the community. A community hub is hosted at the Hall and run by the local Citizens Advice Bureau which includes the Fareshare Larder running alongside this on a Thursday lunchtime, for which the church provides volunteers. The church runs groups such as Friendship Teas and a crafting group from the St Mark's Hall. We also hold 2 fairs in the church grounds through the year for the community; one in the Spring and one in late Summer which are well attended by the community.

It should be noted that the parish of St Mark's has been in suspension for 15 years which has had a detrimental effect on any consistency regarding development of the church and the community as a whole. The PCC has worked really hard to encourage development through BCM's and one member of our church has worked through to attain his Bishop's Permission to Preach (BPP) and we now have an LLM in training. We are looking for someone who would be able to take our efforts further.

We are encouraged that the Diocese has taken the view that once the Lymington vicar has been recruited the new incumbent will be involved with the PCC of St Mark's in the recruitment of a full time Associate Priest for St Mark's and that the two priests would work together, using their complementary gifts, across both communities as appropriate for each.



## General Information

Characteristic	Information
Number of buildings.	St Thomas's Church, St. Thomas's Church Hall, All Saints Church, All Saints Church Hall.
Originally founded.	13 <sup>th</sup> Century.
Capacity.	500 Approx.
Church Bells	A fine ring of 8 bells with the tenor weighing about one tonne.
Organ	1831 Walker organ, rebuilt and enlarged in 1911 by Brindley & Foster. Later conversions and modifications by Griffiths and Cooper.
Heating System.	Gas central heating. Radiator based.
AV Capabilities.	Multiple screen and projector-based video. Church is equipped with extensive audio capabilities. Internet streaming capabilities available subject to appropriate consent.
Date of last Quinquennial report.	November 2018.
Church state of repair.	Good. Significant expenditure challenges are not anticipated.
Current works.	Work to address damp issues.
Responsibility for buildings upkeep.	Fabric Committee a subgroup of the PCC.
General Church Finances	No current concerns.
Hall finances.	ST. Thomas's Hall rentals cover expenses and provide additional income. All Saints is used as a nursery generating significant income. Final renovation expenditure at All Saints is being settled at the time of writing.
Hall state of repair.	Good. No current remedial works.
Churchyard availability for burials.	Churchyard is closed for burials.
Churchyard maintenance responsibility.	Lymington and Pennington council are responsible for one section and St. Thomas' are responsible for the remainder.
Electoral roll numbers (2022).	237
Baptisms (2022).	13
Marriages (2022).	1
Funerals and Ashes (2022).	33
Church website address.	<a href="https://lymingtonchurch.org">https://lymingtonchurch.org</a>
Church Facebook address.	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/stthomaschurchlymington">https://www.facebook.com/stthomaschurchlymington</a>
Church YouTube address.	<a href="https://youtu.be/t2TaktMhi6c">https://youtu.be/t2TaktMhi6c</a>
Sep 2022 Streaming.	33 views, Video.
Oct 2022 Streaming.	42 views, 3 Sundays Video, 1 Sunday no stream, 1 Sunday Audio only.
Nov 2022 Streaming.	30 views, Audio only.
Dec 2022 Streaming.	26 views, Audio only.

<b>Service Statistics</b>							
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Children 2022</b>	<b>Children 2019</b>	<b>Adults 2022</b>	<b>Adults 2019</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>Total 2019</b>
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	8 am BCP Communion.					19	20
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	9:15 am Choral Communion.					70	102
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	11:00 am Life and Soul Informal Service.					36	53
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	Messy Church.	6	18	14	31	20	49
<b>Occasional Services</b>							
Nov Annually	Remembrance Day Civic Service.	104	300	276	300	380	600
Dec 2022	Walhampton School Carol Service.	110		440		550	
Dec 2022	Lymington Infants School Nativity Play One.	130		120		250	
Dec 2022	Lymington Infants School Nativity Play Two.	140		185		325	
Dec 2022	Lymington Junior School Carol Service.	264		174		438	
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	Christmas Eve Crib Service.	66	135	173	135	239	270
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	Midnight Communion.		15	165	240	165	255
Oct, Nov, Dec Averages.	Christmas Day Communion.	8	9	125	248	133	257