



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

St Philip Howard Centre
4 Southgate Drive
Crawley RH10 6RP
E: Gareth.Zaver@abdiocese.org.uk

Date: 11 May 2026

Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: St Stephens Roman Catholic Church, Hamsland, Horstead Keynes

We provide this letter to clarify the background to the closure of St Stephens Church, Horsted Keynes. St Stephens Church, part of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, served a small local congregation which had seen a consistent fall in numbers in recent years, consistent with declines in congregation numbers across the parish and more widely across England and Wales, particularly following the Covid 19 pandemic.

The ongoing maintenance to the Church was becoming unmanageable. The building was in need of significant investment. Broken tiles on the roof needed to be repaired and the flat roof on the front entrance lobby and single storey extension to the west needed to be replaced. The timber fascia, soffit and bargeboards and the external guttering all needed to be replaced or there would be further damp penetration into the building. All of the windows were in a poor state of repair and there was wet rot in the timber window frames and cills and in the timber door frames. All of the windows and doors needed to be replaced. The Church was warned that the electrics and drainage needed to be assessed and works might be needed. This was unviable for the Church, particularly given the low congregation numbers and capacity at other churches across the parish.

Following the closure of the church in the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, the Bishop made the decision to permanently close St Stephens Church in 2020 due to the cost of repairs to the building, low congregation numbers and wider issues around the shortage of priests to service mass across the parish. The nearby St Paul's Catholic Church was an accessible alternative facility and had the capacity to accommodate St Stephen's small congregation.

Yours faithfully


Gareth Zaver
Head of Property

www.abdiocese.org.uk

The Arundel & Brighton Diocese is a Registered Charity No. 252878