



THE PARISH OF MALDEN, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

11.00am (or as soon thereafter as possible after 9.45 service)
Sunday 21st May 2023 at St. John the Baptist Church

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. Election of two Churchwardens

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL MEETING (AM) **(Immediately following the Vestry Meeting)**

1. Minutes of the AM held on the 22nd May 2022
2. Matters arising from the minutes
3. Electoral Roll report
4. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church report
5. PCC committee reports
6. Deanery Synod report
7. 2021 Financial Accounts of the Parochial Church Council
8. Acknowledgement of other written reports
9. Election to the PCC
10. Elections to the Deanery Synod
11. Election of sides people
12. Mission Action Plan
13. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Church accounts
14. Vicar's report
15. AOB plus questions
16. Closing Prayer

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN

Registered charity no – 1145155
Minutes of the 185th Annual Parochial Meeting
Held after the morning service on Sunday 22nd May 2022 and live-streamed.

1. Fr Michael welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened the meeting with Prayer.

2. Present: 27 in the church and others on-line.

3. Apologies were received from Franklin Barrington, Richard Barrett, Anne Beales and Janet Jeal.

4. Election of Churchwardens

Lynn Sanger and Mike Broome had agreed to continue and were elected unanimously.

5. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

The Minutes from the May 23rd 2021 Annual Meeting were compiled from the video recording of the meeting. Thanks to Sally, our Parish Administrator for taking these. There being no corrections, the Minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and signed by Fr. Michael. Any matters arising will be covered in this meeting.

6. The Electoral Roll Report

The Roll stands at 121 – no change from last year. However, 4 people are no longer on the roll, 2 of whom have died and 2 have moved away. 4 new people have joined. Therefore, the final number remains the same. The appropriate certificates will be sent to the Diocesan and Deanery Secretaries to inform them of the numbers on the revised roll. A new Electoral Roll will be compiled in 2025. Thanks were expressed to Steve Clark for maintaining the Roll.

7. Churchwarden's Report

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church 2021/2022

Quinquennial Inspection Works

Following the identification that water ingress and damp was the number one priority for preserving the Church, we contracted with a company to remove material close to the outside walls on the South and East sides of the Church. This has had a positive result in reducing the problem. In addition, we commissioned a CCTV survey of our drains, which showed that they were in significant need of repair. Our architect Charles Sheppard recommended that we should employ a drains expert to give us guidance on how best to proceed. To that end, we are now working with a water environment consultant, and expect to have clarity on the way forward by the late summer.

We are also expecting to receive during May a detailed package of works to address the other fabric issues including outside rendering and internal decoration. We have a small team ready to help us raise the expected £700/800k required for these essential works.

Our next Quinquennial inspection will take place during this summer. The last one was carried out in 2017. This will be carried out by Alex Veal of ART Architects who has been appointed as our Quinquennial inspector.

Considering the restrictions of Covid, our Maintenance Committee has done an excellent job in keeping the building and surrounds in good order. They have had significant challenges with both boiler issues and water leaks as well as the ongoing challenges in maintaining a Church as old as ours. We are grateful and must thank them for their time and commitment.

CCTV/Lighting Project

We can report that we now have CCTV and appropriate lighting in place around the Church. This has been quite a challenging project due to the need to ensure that the installation meets the needs of the Diocese and our requirements. We must thank Richard Burkett for his work on this project.

Annual Church Inspection

Our annual Church inspection was held on 19th March by Robert Stanier, our Area Dean. Robert was very impressed with our record keeping and church administration. He confirmed that our Fire Risk and Health and Safety Assessments were complete and our policies were up to date.

Summary

Another year when the challenges of Covid have been very much in our minds as we seek to do all we can to keep the congregation safe. Maintaining the use of masks while ensuring we have maintained a good airflow has been the key. We have moved from restricted seating to a more relaxed approach while still recognising the high level of covid infection in the community. Concerns that Church attendance might not recover has turned out to be unlikely, and we have seen a growing number of people returning to St John's.

We continue to stream our services and are particularly grateful for the expertise and time which Harvey Howlett, Sally Josolyne and Franklin Barrington have put into this task which has been welcomed by so many people.

Janet Flemming has taken over from Janet Whaymand as Sacristan ensuring the upkeep of our supplies needed for our services is maintained e.g. wafers and candles etc. We also thank Janet Whaymand for her years of service as Sacristan.

We would also like to thank everyone else who has helped us during the year, in particular the Duty Wardens and Sidespeople who help to make each service run like clockwork, and who help each week to ensure everybody is fully welcome at St John's.

Mike Broome and Lynn Sanger May 2022

8. *PCC Committee Reports* were available in the handout and were duly acknowledged.

Milly spoke for the Children's Work Committee: Our thanks to Ro King and her helpers for organising Little Fishes. Charlotte Budd has now offered to take over from them in September but she does require additional helpers.

Deanery Synod Report: Tony Pullen explained the importance of Deanery Synod in its role at parish level. Every church finds it difficult to recruit representatives but it has an interesting and important role in the governance of the church. Anyone interested? Future topics for discussion will include Education and the Environment.

9. Finance

The Church Treasurer, Alastair Harris, presented the 2021 Financial Accounts. 2021 was his 5th year as Treasurer.

Alastair guided us through the accounts and pointed us to the Statement of Financial Activity ('SOFA') on pages 2,6,7,& 8 of the accounts with the Balance Sheet on pages 3-5.

At the end of 2021 there was a surplus of £8,074 and the SOFA analysis on pages 7 & 8 explains how that was achieved. Our Stewardship income was broadly the similar to 2020 and dropped marginally. The latest Stewardship Campaign was launched in late 2021 and the results will become evident in 2022. Thanks were expressed to all those who responded to the appeal as we are very reliant on generous giving. St John's is also able to claim 25% Gift Aid on those donations made under the Government's Gift Aid scheme.

Trading Activities reflect our fundraising and thanks must go to our Fundraising Team. We are still over-reliant on fundraising.

Appeal Income: this is the second year that we have included our Appeal Income which is a core part of our Outreach.

Expenditure: as we continue to try and hold down our costs, our expenditure has been fairly stable as in 2020. We have undertaken a lot of repair work and we express our thanks to Geoff Little and the Maintenance Committee.

Parish Support Fund: our contribution has remained the same for several years and we are not yet in a position to increase it.

Office hours for our Parish Administrator have increased since last year.

General Fund: this has dropped from £61,429 to £58,963, a loss of £2k, within the overall surplus of £8,074. We continue to be grateful for donations and we received £15,000 from one donor, which the PCC designated to our Major Building Works Fund.

We are still not paying our way from these figures – but hopefully we will in 2022!

Q&A

Alastair was asked about the £60k in unrestricted reserves. Some of that will need to go into our Major Building work in due course.

Alastair expressed his thanks to the Finance Committee, and to Richard Burkett in particular. The Committee has continued to meet monthly to monitor our finances.

Thanks were also expressed to Tony Davies, Pat Sutton, Sheri Davies and the Stewardship Committee, Amy Chan and Sally Pusey, our Parish Administrators and to Janet Flemming and the OMN Committee. Thanks also to Deborah Harris, Fr Michael and the Ministry Team.

Our accounts have been independently examined with thanks expressed to Nilkunj Dodhia as our Independent Examiner who is willing to be appointed for another year. He was duly appointed and the accounts for 2021 were received as presented.

Fr Michael thanked Alastair for his report on St John's finances and reminded us that we have to give more so as not to be dependent on the generosity of previous generations.

10. Elections

Three PCC members have completed their term of office. As no nominations have been received, it will be necessary to co-opt additional PCC members to meet our legal requirement. We still have three Deanery Synod Representatives: Anthony & Elizabeth Pullen and Margaret Barrington but an additional volunteer would be welcome.

Debra Barrett is willing to continue to be responsible for the sidespeople; our thanks to Debra, Jane Bransgrove, Kay Gouud, Jackie Parker, Alison Eggitt, Richard Barrett, Pat Sutton & Malcolm Sutton for continuing in their role. Two additional volunteers are required.

11. Vicar's Report

Thank yous Ministry Team, Churchwardens, to Richard Burkett for spearheading the security project. Graham Burley and Geoff Little for sorting the leak. Vanessa Spreckley for Safeguarding. And to everyone who has worked so hard to keep St. John's open and moving through the difficult times we've faced.

The Past- the previous year has been one of starts and stops. The momentum for moving forward has faltered due to the continued presence of Covid. Until very recently we have been afraid and concerned coming to Church in number, and that has had a knock on effect with so many areas of Church life. Although we have increased week on week, we are still short compared to the number of people attending services pre-pandemic.

The Future- we are entering another period of challenge: economic uncertainty, status of Covid come the autumn, and our ability to find volunteers to do all the things we need to do in our parish life together. The lack of fully functioning PCC due to numbers is a major concern. The success of the new Stewardship scheme has slowed the burning of our financial reserves, but we have just over two years' worth of resources to meet the ongoing shortfall between our costs and our income. We also face years of much needed building repair work and the chasing of grants to secure the future of our historic church building.

Initiative 2022 is feeding into the revamp of our Mission Statement that will take up time and energy for the new PCC this coming year.

Children and Young People- It is vital that we have a full complement of children's leaders for Little Fishes and Children's Ministry. Ro King and Becky Horton are stepping down this summer, with Charlotte Budd offering to take on Little Fishes. We still need other volunteers for this and Margaret Barrington has been asking for help with Children's Ministry for ages. If we are unable to facilitate both of these within our own people resources, then I will need to absent myself from some Sunday morning services in order to pick up the slack, which I am very willing to do as it is that important. We have all noticed what a difference both of these make to the number of children and families in Church on the Sundays they happen. I also need help delivering Messy Church monthly. A group for our youth apart from Sunday morning would be very helpful to keep them engaged and help equip them as they transition from Children's Ministry towards plans for university and work. What we give them now will determine whether the Christian faith remains an important part of their lives in the future, or whether it is discarded later.

Alongside Tea and Chat and our Sunday Lunch Club, I count the **Bereavement Café** as a moderate success. We don't have many people attending, but my feeling is that those who do find it useful. Numbers are set to increase as it is more widely advertised. As so many people have found dealing with all the legal and social issues around the death of a loved one, we intend to have the Pullen's lead us in a session of Death Talk, a programme designed to get us thinking about and learning how to deal with the multitude of issues raised for our families when we die, as well as understanding what needs to be done when someone close to us dies.

How many of us want All Things Bright and Beautiful at our funerals? Well unless you specify your family may just rely on the default hymn choice. I have made it clear that I will haunt Benjamin forever if he chooses that! Hopefully once the congregation have had a taster we can roll it out for the wider community.

St. John's is good at supporting Traidcraft and giving money for good causes, but I'm not sure we are any good at bringing Good News to the poor on our own doorstep. With the current economic woes and increasing inflation, many local people are going to find it very hard to put food on the table, pay the heating bills, and manage day to day. We are a relatively prosperous community, but we do have pockets of significant deprivation. Our first port of call is to increase our weekly gifts to the Food Bank, they are the first port of call for hungry people locally. It has also been suggested that we could be involved in a Community Fridge whereby we facilitate the sharing of perishable goods locally that are donated by supermarkets. We will explore this with the Community Church and the Hub on the Manor. Smiths Charity has long supported good causes locally and we can work with them and other community partners to make a real impact, but like everything else it will require volunteers.

Finally, I want to highlight that in the year ahead we will be looking at worship. I am acutely aware now that the way we worship on a Sunday is fairly unintelligible to our newcomers and young families. I see week by week parents sitting through a service that is hard to comprehend as they fulfil the requirements for a school place. There is scope for an educational opportunity so that worship can be more meaningful. But we also need to re-examine what we do and why we do it. Milly and I dress like Fourth Century Roman gentlemen, we prance about and swing loads of smoke, but I'm not convinced anyone really understands what it means. I intend to conduct a worship survey soon to discover what people find useful and what they don't so that we can make worship more accessible. Peter Knight made the comment that worship hasn't really changed in the twenty years since he left, which made me pause and think that it's high time we moved on. I don't envision massive change, but I am aware from things I've been told that our worship has become a bit fossilised. The monthly Parish Evening worship would be a great start to open worship up and be more creative.

It is also important that **we pray together** more often than just Sunday mornings. At St. Barnabas the charismatic evangelical strain there fostered a culture of praying for so many things, many I thought were insignificant to bother God with, but the truth of the matter was that God often delivered because we bothered to ask. With a massive fundraising and building project ahead, we could use some quality time praying as a small group on a regular basis. Prayer reminds us of our dependence on God, that we don't accomplish big things in our own strength. It also opens up the possibilities and helps us make a greater impact. So do look out for developments on that front as well.

Q&A

Steve Clark raised the issue of the state of the lane which continues to deteriorate. Residents of the Manor House and the cottages have complained to Merton College. Geoff Little has organised some quotes and sent them to the Bursar at Merton College. The residents of the cottages are pursuing legal consultations about access. This occurred after a funeral when the refuse collectors could not reach the cottages. St John's has contacted the Diocese about it. Although we have made minor repairs over the years, Merton College now need to take responsibility for the lane.

12.AOB

Lynn thanked Fr Michael for enabling all of us at St John's to emerge from lockdowns and look forward to the future. We know that he has lots of ideas. Fr Michael reminded us that we had come through lockdown as 'us – together' and that this is the way forward.

We aim to make the wearing of face masks optional after Pentecost, at least until the Autumn.

For reasons of safety, intinction (dipping of the wafer into the chalice) is not permitted.

Milly closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting ended at 12.25pm.

MCB

9th. July 2022

Electoral Roll Officer's report for the Annual Meeting 2023

The Electoral Roll was revised with five people completing enrolment forms and therefore whose names were entered on the roll and there were also two people whose names were deleted from the electoral roll leaving the total number of electors of 124.

A copy of the revised roll, together with the notice, is displayed in the Church entrance

The appropriate certificates will be sent to the Diocesan and Deanery Secretaries to inform them of the numbers on the revised roll.

A new Electoral Roll will be completed in 2025.

Steven Clark
Electoral Roll Officer
4th May 2023

Julian Meeting Report April 2023

The St John's Julian Meeting continues to meet for thirty minutes of contemplative prayer, usually on the second Monday of the month at 8pm, either in the Lady Chapel if it's warm enough, or in the coffee lounge if it's not. We are affiliated to the national Julian Meetings organisation (<https://thejulianmeetings.net/>).

Our meeting begins with lighting a candle to remind us of Christ's presence among us. Whoever has volunteered to lead us that evening then gives us a few brief words, perhaps a poem or meditation, and we then spend half an hour in silence. At the end we say the Grace together, and then enjoy refreshments and a short time of chat.

We have tended to be advertised as the Julian "Group", which implies we have "members"; it is true there are about 15 people who receive my email reminders, some of whom are "regulars", others "occasional", and some who for various reasons haven't been able to come for a while, but I would stress the Meeting is open to all – there is no "membership" involved! We welcome anyone who wants to try out contemplative prayer, or just wants to have a brief "time out" in fellowship with others. Some of those who attend are from other churches, or are on the fringes of the Church – by no means all attend St John's regularly – but we can all find common ground in the silence of the Meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested and would like to know more.

Chris Benson
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St John's Church Hall 411 Malden Road Worcester Park KT4 7NY

Registered Charity No. 240542

Chair's Annual Report

Hon. Chair	Beth Owen
Hon. Treasurer	Brian Whaymand
Secretary	Pat Lovegrove
Bookings Manager	Pat Sutton
Committee	Chester Chan
	Peter Wickenden

2022 was a quieter year at the hall as we had few regular evening tenants and at the end of the year Slimming World moved on, looking for a hall with more parking.

Pat Sutton looks after all the tenants and the weekend bookings and would like to hear of anyone looking for a regular venue.

During February half term, new windows were fitted in the larger hall and we thank Peter for his diligence in finding the best value for us.

He has also spent a lot of time chasing grant making bodies as we need to relay the forecourt.

Most of the day to day maintenance has been carried out by the committee, especially Brian and Chester.

Brian has also meticulously looked after the accounts for many years and is about to hand over to Peter as our new Treasurer.

Words cannot express our gratitude to Brian – as job well done.

The church fundraising committee make good use of the hall and the social activities run for the community are flourishing, especially the Christmas Day Event, organized by Pat Lovegrove. Do drop in any Thursday between 2pm and 4pm for Tea & Chat.

Our thanks as usual to Nukunji Dodhia for auditing the accounts and to Rosemary McCann, our cleaner.

My thanks for the support of the hall committee who all play a significant part in keeping the old building functioning as a part of St. John's on the edge of the parish.

Beth Owen – April 2023

Choir Report for the 2023 APCM

As we resumed our 'normal pattern of services last year, it was so rewarding to be able to contribute once again to our worship at St John's at our weekly 9.45am Sung Eucharist. We were able to come together for our Services at Patronal Festival, Harvest, our services of Remembrance and also for our Service of Nine Lessons & Carols. In addition, we marked the death of HM the Queen with a special Vigil Service. Following our Evensong for Candlemas, Lent & Easter seemed to arrive all too soon and we now look forward to the Coronation. We have experimented with singing in the Lady Chapel during the administration of Holy Communion and the acoustics are an added bonus. I wish to thank all choir members who remain so loyal and hardworking and also thank Barry and Marie.

I have yet to re-start Junior Choir but hope that will be possible in the near future. Our youngsters are gradually returning to church after lockdown so I hope that there will be some enthusiasm to join. You need to be 7+, able to read well, hold a melody and be able to attend choir practice on Friday evening (6.30pm-7.30pm) and sing at the 9.45am service every Sunday. Our Junior Choristers follow the RSCM 'Voice for Life' courses which enable them to learn to read music with basic theory. However, it does also require commitment from parents to give their support.

We thank you for your support and kind comments and we hope that we shall continue to maintain the strong musical tradition at St John's which enables and enhances our worship.

Marilyn Burkett
Choir Director

St John's Reading Group Report for the 2023 APCM

Our Reading Group continues to thrive and we have welcomed some new members. We were so pleased that with the new Wi-Fi installation for the Coffee Lounge, we have been able to share our meetings on zoom so that Faith and Brian are able to join us.

Our book titles this year have continued to be varied and I know that a number of people follow the reviews in the OMN and read along with us. Since the last APCM we have read:

The Heron's Cry Anne Cleeves
Songbirds by Christy Lefteri.
Fair Stood the Wind for France by H E Bates
'A Three Dog Problem' by S J Bennett
The Night Tiger by Yangsze Choo.
The Lincoln Highway by Amor Towles.
Still Life by Sarah Winman
Orphans of the Storm by Celia Imrie
The Christie Affair by Nina de Gramont
Snow Country by Sebastian Faulkes
Godmersham Park by Gill Hornby
The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak
Instructions for a Heatwave by Maggie O'Farrell
Some popular – others not so!

As is our custom, we rounded off the year with a Christmas feast – and the annual Quiz. Another enjoyable year!
Marilyn Burkett

St John's Crochet & Knitting Group Report for the 2023 APCM

We continue to meet on the last Thursday of each month at 2.00pm in the Church Extension Coffee Lounge. We celebrated our 15th 'Birthday' in January with cake, card and balloon! (Thanks to our trusty tea-maker.) Our numbers are depleted since lockdown for several reasons – and we are particularly sad that during the past year we have lost Maureen 'Granny Mo' and Janet Eggitt. However, we enjoy coming together to knit and crochet and enjoy each other's company. Seven large black sacks of blankets, knitted children's hats, gloves etc. were collected from us by The Romanian Aid Foundation which St John's has supported since about 1992. Sadly, this is about to change as due to Brexit and the new customs regulations in Romania, the Foundation is unable to send certain goods to Romania, even though the need is so great. I am exploring new charities to support and have a few suggestions to pursue.

We welcome many from the wider community as well as from our own congregation so it is a good example of outreach and welcome. If you would like to learn to knit or crochet – then come along and join us. There will always be someone here to help you become more creative and there is always plenty of tea and biscuits (and sometimes cake too).

Marilyn Burkett

Finance Committee Report 2022

The Committee members are Richard Burkett (Chairman), Alastair Harris (Treasurer), Fr. Michael, Sheri Davis (Gift Aid Officer), Jane Bransgrove (Stewardship Officer) and Geoff Little. The function of the Committee continues to be setting the budgetary strategy for St. John's and then managing this for the PCC.

The Committee met every month, mostly by Zoom, to consider the financial implications in another difficult year. With the lifting of Covid restrictions, St. John's was opened up from late January onwards, and congregations started the long recovery which is still in progress. It is sad to report that there was a deficit of some £9,000 for the year 2022. Whilst St. John's benefited from the Red Envelope Campaign run in Autumn 2021 to boost regular income, total income actually fell, largely as a consequence of fewer one-off donations: one cannot expect to always receive the very generous donations that occurred in 2021 at the height of the pandemic. We were very fortunate to have the welcome return of the Maeldune Fair, which was an enjoyable occasion and contributed over £3,000 towards income. Our thanks to the Fundraising Committee who organised the Fair and also other activities through the year which brought enjoyment as well as making a very significant contribution of almost £7,000 to our income. Their efforts are much appreciated. On the expenditure front, we have maintained our Pledge payment of £72,000 to

Southwark Diocese, as we have done since 2018. However, it is disturbing to note that the Diocese would like us to increase this to something nearer £84,000 per annum which represents the real cost of maintaining a priest in office: at the moment this is outside our financial capability.

There were other very significant factors that were not apparent when the 2022 budget was prepared in the Autumn of 2021: firstly, the war in Ukraine significantly increased the cost of gas and electricity, and this became very evident in the winter months after September. Unfortunately St.John's has not received any Government Energy rebate, but instead received an energy support grant of £1,400 from the Diocese, which although welcome, is not enough to offset the large increases. Clearly the large rise in utility costs has fed into general inflation which has affected almost every expenditure that St.John's has to make, and will continue to do so for some time. Another unexpected large expenditure occurred when an oak tree fell down in the church yard in September, and cost some £5,500 to remove. This cost could not be met by insurance, and is the main reason for the larger than usual cost for Maintenance in 2022.

It is tempting to think that the deficit of £9,000 is almost totally explained by the fallen oak tree and rise in utilities. But the fact is that for some years, our level of giving, has been lower than it should be. In St.John's the average giving is about £12 per person/couple/household per week compared with a National Average for the Church of England of £15.50/week and £20.40/week for Southwark Diocese. In 2020 we had an overall deficit of about £1,000, the next year it was £2,500 and in 2022 it was £9,000. These deficits have had to be paid from our Reserves: our easily accessible cash Reserves are now about £53,000 and draining away.

To help with Giving, we now have two Contactless machines in place as well as more facilities for giving on the St.John's website. The Church of England Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) has been rolled out to the PCC and Committee members, and will be offered to members of the Congregation in 2023. This scheme provides for regular monthly giving with the great advantage that Gift Aid is recovered monthly and automatically. The scheme also allows the option for future donations to be increased in line with inflation.

A great boost to our income would be if new people joined: this was evidenced in the last 2021 Campaign when 6 new people joined and raised annual giving by £4,000. More people has the obvious advantage that the financial load of running St.John's is spread further and therefore more evenly.

Looking to the future, it was hoped that 2023 would be the first year after the pandemic that would be a "normal" year, with the prospect of a balanced budget with income being equal or greater than expenditure. With the cost of living crisis, and continued rising prices, 2023 looks to be another "difficult" year. Furthermore, St.John's needs regular work to maintain the building, but also is in need of very significant work for restoration, in particular to counteract dampness and repair defective and missing pointing. Some important preparatory has been done by the wardens, and will require large grants for the actual projects needed to complete this

work. It is important that St. John's can show a sound financial establishment to acquire these grants with adequate Reserves in place.

I must thank all my fellow Committee members who have worked hard during this further difficult year with unexpected surprises. Thanks to Fr. Michael for his continuing oversight and directional guidance. To Alastair Harris as Treasurer who takes on many thankless tasks, keeping us regularly informed, and completing the large annual task of preparing and producing the Year End accounts. To Jane Bransgrove who has taken on the role of Stewardship Officer and has done a great deal to promote the Parish Giving Scheme. Thanks also to Sheri for continuing the Gift Aid recovery from HMRC which forms such a significant part of our income. Also to Geoff Little for his help and providing a good link to the Maintenance Committee. Also to all those on the Fundraising Committee who have helped greatly in growing the income for St. John's, as well as giving us some enjoyable social events in the year ! I also want to thank those who have helped greatly with the St. John's webpage, the growth of digital and contactless giving as well as the collection of cash through the more conventional ways. The work of the Finance Committee would not be the same without you – you know who you are. If you would like to join the Committee, if you have financial or spreadsheet skills you would be especially welcome, then please contact any Committee member. If you have any questions, then please contact, Jane, Sheri, myself, Alastair or the Wardens.

Richard Burkett

20th April 2023



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK: REPORT FROM THE KINGSTON DEANERY SYNOD ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN, APCM 21 MAY 2023

Deanery Synod Representatives: Margaret Barrington, Elizabeth Pullen, Anthony Pullen

Kingston Deanery Synod brings together representatives from 17 parishes within the Kingston area to promote the work of God's Church. It is St John's only direct means of being informed about Diocesan matters, and for St John's congregation to have a voice on Deanery, Diocesan, and Anglican Communion matters.

Deanery Synod met three times since the last APCM. Each on-line meeting has been chaired by the Area Dean, the Revd Robert Stanier and Lay Chair John Dewhurst.

06.07.22

A Kingston Minster. All Saints, Kingston town centre, was proposed by diocesan synod as Kingston Minster. The proposal was deferred pending the arrival of the new incumbent and next Bishop of Kingston. The proposal may be addressed further when both are in place.

Ethical Investment. The Revd Hugo Foxwood (St Peter's, Norbiton) put forward two proposals for consideration to go to Diocesan Synod. Both, derived from Christian principles relating to ethical investment. One requesting divesting in organisation associated with selling arms (e.g. to Saudi Arabia), the other proposal to dis-invest in companies *that derive more than 5% of their turnover from the production or*

extraction of fossil fuel. A lively discussion resulted in both proposals being supported and forwarded to Diocesan Synod.

Parish Updates: St Paul's, Hook hosed a group of young Kenyans. St John the Evangelist has an interim minister. St Mark's/St Andrew's holds monthly lunches to support Ukrainians. Christ Church, Surbiton Hill, is without an assistant priest. Iranian refugees at St Peter's, Norbiton, are being housed in the premises next door formerly used by the Joel Community, while KCAH is still operating from the adjacent building.

18.10.22

Ethical Investment: While not agenda items for the November meeting of Diocesan Synod, they will be a focus on environmental and energy matters at the February '23 Synod.

Kingston Team Ministry. The Revd Joe Moffatt is now Team rector and Vicar of All Saints.

Energy costs & Warmer Spaces initiative: Synod members were asked to consider ways of helping people, while also ensuring that churches could meet heating bills. One Churches Together group planned to open a different church each weekday, providing warm spaces and meals. Another planned offering after-school meals and a Street Café. Others reduced their church heating and used eco-light bulbs.

Deanery Funerals Scheme. Started in 2015. Southwark Diocese had made a grant available to finance the project until 2022. In the deanery, some churches had joined resulting in a larger number of church funerals relative to those who had not joined because clergy had good relationships with local undertakers and felt these might be jeopardised by joining the scheme. It was an advantage for undertakers to have a central point of contact such as the Administrator in order to make arrangements for funerals where families might not have a church connection;

Kingston's Church of England Secondary School planned to open autumn of 2024.

Parish News: St Andrew's, Ham reported increased attendance, and a "Sacred Space" event opened to all had begun on Sunday evenings. St James' Malden hosted The Civic Service of Remembrance.

07.02.23

'Open Doors' Advocacy for the Persecuted Church: Ron Cross from Open Doors' explained that 1 in 7 of practising Christians worldwide are forbidden to worship openly. Open Doors worker smuggle Bibles and supporters into countries where Christians are persecuted. Christians risk everything in North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Sudan.

Hope in Depression: Denise Morris (Christchurch, Surbiton Hill) introduced a course held in her church which is part of a nationwide series of courses. The course, held weekly over 6 weeks, is designed to support and inform adults with mild to moderate depression and anxiety and those who care for them. Different speakers and topics covered each week include a psychiatrist, a counsellor, a fitness instructor and a nutritionist. The next course will be in September. For more information email Denise at hopeindepression@ccsurbiton.org

Thank you for giving us the opportunity of representing you on Deanery Synod.
20.04.23

Maintenance Committee Report 2022

Members of the Maintenance Committee

Geoffrey Little (Chair)

Graham Burley (Sexton & acting Secretary)

Richard Burkett

Mike Broome

People

We've again been fortunate to retain the existing members of the Maintenance Committee throughout the period following Covid and this has provided both continuity and stability.

A number of others, including Chris Benson and Charles Sheppard (Architect) continue to help and guide us with advice and input on some of the more complex long term jobs and projects we are addressing including issues arising from the two most recent Quinquennial Inspections.

The (Places of Worship Scheme) camera(s) and light(s) system have helped to improve the security of the Church (people and building). Richard Burkett continues to oversee the operation of the systems.

We continue to look for new committee members, and the female perspective would certainly add to the quality of our deliberations BUT we would welcome **anybody** who would like to join us. DIY skills are certainly not a requirement although useful on occasion.

So, please do come and talk to any of the committee members - Mike Broome, Graham Burley, Richard Burkett, or to me, Geoffrey Little - and if you'd prefer to keep a lower profile then **please join our list of volunteers**.

The Maintenance Committee

We meet a minimum of four (4) times a year. The primary purpose and responsibility of the committee is to maintain the fabric of our buildings and plant and the surrounding land within the limits of our personnel and annual budget (2022) of circa £6,000 plus.

An inventory is kept of all equipment belonging to the Parish together with service records and instruction manuals for all parish equipment. Members of the committee and others oversee the regular scheduled servicing and maintenance of equipment as required.

We continue to emerge from the effects Covid has had on our collective worship and communal life; normal scheduled maintenance and work has continued throughout 2022.

We have to ensure that we maintain all the equipment used at St John so that we comply with statutory inspection and safety requirements and regulations. We conduct or arrange for tests and inspections on plant and equipment to comply with statutory inspection and safety requirements and regulations, including:

- ~ Electrical circuits every five (5) years and PAT testing of St John's equipment, including plugs and earth.
- ~ Annual Boiler inspection and servicing (two boilers)
- ~ Annual Fire extinguishers safety and efficacy checks.
- ~ Water pump - inspection and sump testing.
- ~ Lighting inside and outside the Church and the emergency lights that we hope you'll never have to see or rely on.
- ~ Periodic lightning conductor (tests and service).
- ~ Twice yearly inspection and servicing of our venerable Church clock, now well over a hundred years old

This is just a sample, the list goes on.

This schedule of work is split between committee members, volunteers and a number of other volunteer helpers over the course of the year and we use a number of contractors as and when needed.

Churchyard: A lot of work is also involved in maintenance of our rural-style church yard: cutting grass, pruning hedges, clearing blocked drainage etc. Graham Burley, St John's Sexton, has looked after this and many other aspects of ongoing maintenance for a number of years with input from the members of the committee, and a number of others too numerous to list.

There are a number of "working parties" called throughout the year and these are a great opportunity for everyone and anyone to get involved in maintaining the fabric of St John's.

We will be having a few organised work parties in 2023 and we'd love to see you at these events, and you will meet new people and have a great time.

In September Graham Burley organised a work party to pick up the hay/grass he had previously cut in the two "fields" of the churchyard (North Yards) cut, a big thank you to all those who came and helped Graham to complete this job.

Cleaning: The Committee has responsibility for helping the cleaning team who organise themselves and the cleaning schedules for the church and extension. Our thanks go to Claire Baptista and Janet Jeal.

Claire Baptista leads and runs the Church cleaning team - Saturday mornings.

Flower team: Under the leadership of Lynn Sanger, you know who you are – and thank you for making the church so beautiful.

You don't often see all these vital people at work at St John unless you happen to work with them or visit on a Saturday cleaning or flower arranging morning, but we all see and enjoy the benefits and beauty of all of their work every Sunday and during the week too.

We are always keen to recruit more people to join one or other (or both) of the cleaning teams. You can commit to being one of a designated cleaning team weekly

or as infrequently as once a month or even once every other month; it depends entirely on how much time you are able to give them.

Please talk to or contact Claire or the Church Wardens at Church, or email if you'd like to find out more about what's involved and/or to help.

Saturday morning - Church cleaning team, contact Claire Baptista.
Email: clairebaptista@live.co.uk

Sunday and Monday mornings - Extension (coffee lounge) cleaning team, contact Beth and David Owen.
Email: bethanddavidowen@btinternet.com.

Come and make new friends or team up with old friends.

2022 Review (Some Events)

2022 has been another busy year for the Maintenance Team and I would like to thank committee members and the many volunteers who have helped us to look after our place of worship. It is not possible in this report to list every job that was completed; the full list is available in the Log Book.

Upkeep of the church is always going to be expensive, but help from a dedicated team of volunteers and the work parties hugely reduces the cost.

Church Lane (work party)

Postponed in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid, this was long overdue and complicated by a leak in the lane which was eventually repaired by Thames Water authority on 26th April 2021.

We sought and received professional advice and quotations to rectify its condition from F.L. Beadle & Sons Ltd., however, commencement was postponed for a number of reasons until 2022.

Urgent work was completed in the week leading up to Christmas 2022 which enabled a safer approach to St John's on Christmas Eve and over the Christmas and New Year period.

F.L. Beadle & Sons Ltd. continued work in January 2023 to level and refill the many depressions and potholes in the lane.

The results have been mixed, largely due to the time of year when the work was done. The Maintenance Committee and St. John's are continuing to liaise with F.L. Beadle & Sons Ltd.

The elusive leak in the downstairs WC (and unexplained kitchen boiler pressure drops:

Eventually diagnosed in April 2022, this problem was resolved and the heating circuit pipes repaired in April 2022 by PJE Contractors.

Accessibility Project

Following a Report in November 2014, which included advice and recommendations and work done, accessibility to the upper meeting room was improved by the installation of the chairlift in 2018 (Associated Stair Lifts).

In 2019 we bought a wheelchair/mobility vehicle ramp to improve accessibility to the main body of our church and this has been successfully deployed for weddings etc.

This work will continue as funds and circumstances permit.

N.B. You will I hope have noted the work done to improve St. John's Wi-Fi and streaming of services. Our thanks to the Barringtons, et al.

Church Notice Board on Plough Green

GB and GL replaced the errant numbers/information during the warmer weather in June 2022.

Emergency Lights and In-Ceiling Lights in the Extension/Coffee Lounge

Two battery packs and two emergency lights have been replaced in the course of 2022.

All nine ceiling lights in the Extension have been replaced with LED panels improving lighting levels and providing cost savings over their designed lifetime. This is part of St John's policy to introduce LED lights throughout the Church over the next few years.

Trees – Fallen Oak and the Holme Oak (Autumn storm)

We suffered the destruction of one of our oldest oaks in the lower field which necessitated its professional removal. This highlighted the vulnerability of the Holme oak and the work required to reduce and stabilise the crown, which was undertaken at the same time. The unexpected total bill for this exceeded £5,000.

Quinquennial Inspection (July, 2022)

Every Church of England building must be inspected every five years by an architect or chartered building surveyor approved by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The purpose of the review is to ensure that church buildings are kept in good repair.

The Maintenance Committee, Fr. Michael and Church Wardens are reviewing the initial/urgent requirements, some of which have already been dealt with.

Charles Sheppard's earlier Condition Report (2021/22) helped us to focus on the most urgent problems and to plan, prioritise and estimate the costs of the most necessary remedial works into coherent/related projects or packages.

The more complex and expensive problems St John's faces will continue to be considered with the help of external professional advisers and consultants wherever necessary.

The Funds raising team have been, and are continuing to be, hard at work identifying and targeting available sources of grants and funds.

If you have experience in this area or would like to commit to helping St John's progress this long term project please talk to Fr. Michael, the Church Wardens or any member of the Maintenance Committee.

Finally, may I commend to you the work of all the members of the committee and of all those volunteers who have done a fantastic job over the last 12 months with whom it has been both rewarding and a pleasure to work.

I hope very much we will all continue serving as members for 2023.

E&OE

Geoffrey Little (Chair of Maintenance Committee)
March 2023

Children's Ministry 2022/23

Children's Ministry, which restarted in September after the Covid restrictions were lifted, brings the worship and weekly gospel reading to the children who attend the sessions in the Upper Room during the 9.45am service - unless there is a family service on that Sunday. The aim is to make the worship enjoyable, memorable and thought provoking so the children can better understand their faith and know that they are loved by God.

We currently have just over 20 children on the register. However, they rarely all come on the same week so the group tends to be small; about 4-8 children on average. I am hopeful the group will grow back to pre-Covid numbers in the near future.

Each week, children who are in church, aged between 5 years old and 12 years old, are invited to come up to the Upper Room at the beginning of the service. The children group then explore the gospel reading through drama, puzzles, a wide range of craft activities and games - the noisier the better! The children also continue to keep in touch with our sponsored children through cards, letters and drawings.

In the past, many of the children who come to Children's Ministry have become fully involved with a wide range of church activities: joining the serving team and/or the choir; helping with welcoming and book collection; reading in church; helping out at

events and on special occasions. We are beginning to rebuild this involvement with the wider church activities as the year goes on.

In December, the children did an amazing job leading the crib service which they thoroughly enjoyed and they are looking forward to joining in many more of the family services.

Since Covid the team of adult helpers has dwindled somewhat and it would be great to have some more volunteers coming forward to support this great group of children and bring some fresh ideas to the table. My sincere thanks to few adults who have been helping me with Children's Ministry sessions this year. I also thank both Milly and Father Michael who have been extremely supportive and take a keen interest in what we do and how we could evolve!

Margaret Barrington

Little Fishes report for the 2023 APCM

In May 2022, Becky Horton and Ro King stepped down from running a monthly Little Fishes session at which point, Alison Woodhouse and I continued running a single session once a month until the summer break. Number remained steady around 12-15 attendees.

At the summer break, Alison stepped back and so I agreed to run a monthly session on my own using the curriculum of content & resources that previous volunteers kindly passed on adding to them with some additional activities of my own. This new arrangement began after the summer break and my husband - Ian Budd - has undertaken a CRB check with the safeguarding team so that he can help me when required. Numbers in the Autumn term started low with around 5-6 regular attendees but have steadily grown to approximately 10-12 attendees. I have observed that many of the attendees from before the summer break - including my own children - have made the choice to participate in Children's Ministry on a regular basis so I suspect that the slightly reduced numbers of LF attendees are counter-balanced with an increase in CM attendees. I note that there are a number of younger children between 12-24months who join the session with their parents/carers and siblings but are too young to participate fully so I expect those attendees will participate in due course.

I fully intend to continue supporting the church by running a monthly Little Fishes session and I look forward to working closely with the ministry team with this in mind moving forward.

Charlotte Budd

Toddler group has been very busy on a Tuesday and Thursday morning. We have enjoyed running a few extra activity mornings for the older children in the holidays too. We are very grateful of the money that has been allocated to us and are busy looking at what Christian resources we can get. Our aim is to have a Bible story theme each Tuesday, with a story and activity based around it.

Thanks

Jo

OUTREACH ANNUAL REPORT 2022

The Outreach Committee has been in abeyance this past year. However, St. John's activities which reach outside the congregation in acts of service or witness have continued.

- **Sunday Lunch Club.** This continues to thrive thanks to volunteer cooks, Pat Lovegrove and others who regularly help.

- **Tea and Chat.** Good attendances & appreciated by those attending, thanks to the small team that regularly run them.

- **Christmas Day Event.** To mark its 50th anniversary, it was good to all be back in the hall. Once again, thanks go to cooks Jemma Stedman, Kate Willoughby & Gill Holditch, all the drivers and those who donated gifts and all other helpers. As ever, a special thank you to Pat Lovegrove who managed the whole event as well as the day! Pat has organised this event for many years, originally overseeing a committee, but now much of the work has fallen to her. St John's members now need to step up to spread the load for this event to continue in 2023.

- **Fairtrade Stall.** This continues to be a permanent presence in the coffee lounge thanks to the Fairtrade Team. Our child support with Action Aid has changed this year. Junior from Zambia has grown up and little Mara from Afghanistan can no longer be sponsored owing to the difficulties in that country. We now have Amrisha age 6 from Nepal to support with funds from the Fairtrade Stall. The children from Childrens Ministry will be writing to her. We had donations of Fairtrade goods from our local Co-op to sample at our Coffee Bonanza at the end of Fairtrade Fortnight. Together with homemade biscuits and cakes using Fairtrade products, we were able to send £50.00 to Transform Trade.

- **Kingston Food Bank** continues to be supported from St John's congregation. All Harvest festival goods plus Malden Parochial School donations went to the Foodbank

- **Bereavement Café.** The café continues to meet on the third Tuesday of every month, thanks to those trained by the Princess Alice Hospice, and it is much appreciated by those attending.

- **Old Malden News** continues to be produced, thanks to all contributors and to Sally Pusey, who edited, prints & emails it out. Thanks also to the small collation team and all the deliverers, who distribute to 140 plus houses.

- **National Heritage Open Days.** The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II having been announced the day before Heritage Open Days, only a few visitors came on day one but they were pleased to have the church open, not only to pray and reflect on the life of her Majesty, but to view the church and learn its history. Over the next three days there was a steady stream of visitors totalling 106.

Thanks are due to Pat Lovegrove, who coordinated the open days, all the volunteers who helped over the weekend, Anne Beales, who provided tea and biscuits whilst running the Traidcraft Stall, to Chris Beales & Steve Clark, who put up the history boards, to David Henry, who gave 2 interesting talks, & to Dr Alastair Daniels, who lead a Storytelling Walk.

- **Mission Giving.** In light of the difficulties facing many families in the Kingston area, it was decided Mission Giving be shared between Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) and Kingston Foodbank each receiving £750. During 2022, the congregation of St John's generously responded to appeals, donating £2175 to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal, £286 to the Bishop's Lent Appeal, £730 to Christian Aid, raised mainly at our annual Big Brekkie, £300 for the Year 6 MPS Bible Appeal and £2169 for the Christmas Angel Appeal.
April 2023

Mothers Union report for the 2023 APCM

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, MALDEN, MOTHERS' UNION BRANCH

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 14 FEBRUARY 2023

BRANCH LEADER'S REPORT

We remember with gratitude the three members who have sadly died during the year. Maggie Edwards has long been an Indoor Member, unable to attend meetings, but her prayerful and financial support for our work have been invaluable. Granny Mo will long be remembered for her gifts of knitting, with bunting in the church and in the Cathedral and cot blankets at the hospitals. Janet Eggitt was a stalwart at our meetings, behind the hatch or during the meeting, her positive attitude to life was exemplary. All three have been remembered during MU Midday Prayers at Southwark cathedral.

Members continue to meet regularly each month and have listened to several interesting talks; some secular and some faith- or Mothers' Union-based, since all we do is underpinned by our faith and wish to support families while furthering God's Kingdom. Members also meet monthly for a chat followed by Midday Prayers, then go into the church for Holy Communion.

Members work together as a group but also as individuals, to help those families "whose life has met with adversity" or to help "bring up children in the faith of the Church." To this end, members have given financially towards the worldwide Mothers' Union Make a Mother's Day, Summer of Hope and Christmas Appeals and have also donated a considerable sum towards the Southwark MU Diocesan Away From It All. This project pays for holidays for those who are experiencing stress within their family life and cannot otherwise afford a break.

A branch project funds Bibles to be given to those who are baptised at St John's: this is often the only Bible within the family. Baptism families are supported during the service by MU members and cards are given at baptism and on their anniversaries. A similar project involves giving MU wedding cards and candles to all couples at their wedding, representing the support of the MU throughout their married life. Teddies

for Tragedies, octopuses, cot blankets and baby's cardigans and hats are knitted for the children at the Evelina Hospital and Crosses in Pockets are stitched for the adults at St Thomas's Hospital. Now that the Tea@2 initiative has resumed post pandemic, one member of the branch is part of the MU team offering support to parents of very sick babies. Three branch members are part of the team facilitating the Bereavement Café at St John's.

Prayer is the basis of all we do in the Mothers' Union. Every member prays daily for the work of Mothers' Union worldwide, remembering each day members in different dioceses throughout the world. In August we came together as a branch to a special service of the Wave of Prayer where the dioceses linked with Southwark are specifically remembered and prayers are offered to God for their work. At the very same time, the members of these same dioceses in other parts of the world are praying for members in Southwark. Members also attend the monthly Cathedral Prayers at Southwark Cathedral.

Though small, the Mothers' Union branch at St John's is nevertheless working hard to further the work of the worldwide MU to achieve its vision: a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.

Pauline Armour

Branch Leader

8th February 2023

The Fundraising report for the 2023 APCM

The fundraising team hold events that bring the congregation and the wider community together while raising much needed funds for the church.

During the past year fundraising efforts have included an Autumn fair, Jumble sale, the Maeldune fair and a Quiz night with Claire Moore as quiz master. Along with a well attended vintage tea on St George's Day, these also add to the social life of the parish.

The online shop also brings seasonal offerings and we hope that this will continue to be supported by the congregation and local community as an additional source of income.

The funds raised would not have been possible without those who have helped us in so many ways during the year. Thank you to everyone that has helped to run, donated items and attended these events.

We look forward to welcoming more volunteers during the coming year to support the efforts of the fundraising team.

Debra Barrett

Chair of Fundraising Committee

Communications Committee Report for 2023 APCM

Members of the Communications Committee met for the first time in July 2022. The Committee will oversee the methods by which St John's communicates internally, with members of the congregation and with the wider parish.

One of the Committee's first priorities is improving internal communications. To that end, a non-public calendar has been set up which can be accessed by the Ministry Team, committee chairs and the Parish Administrator. In time, access to the calendar will be expanded. A cloud-based system for sharing internal documents has been successfully trialled by the Finance Committee in response to security concerns about sharing via email. It is hoped that during this year, all committees including the PCC will transfer to this system.

Last autumn, a congregational survey of attitudes towards worship, led by Fr Michael, provided the Ministry Team with much food for thought. A further *Time & Talents* survey is in the pipeline.

A generous donation last year enabled the Wi-Fi system at St John's to be updated: a series of wireless access points have been installed in the church and coffee lounge. Such is the improvement that a member of the Reading Group was able to join a recent meeting from Australia!

Looking ahead, members of the Committee will be working to improve St John's presence on Facebook and to develop a new website.

Deborah Harris
Chair of Communications Committee
April 2023

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church – 2022/23

Author – Mike Broome - Churchwarden

Restoration Project

As mentioned in our last report, the Church requires a significant amount of work to address the fabric issues identified by our previous architect Charles Sheppard. These works have now been turned into a detailed package of requirements which are shortly to be presented to the Diocese for planning permission. It is not anticipated that this will be an issue as there have already been initial discussions.

We have a team looking for the availability of Grants to support the cost, estimated to be around £450k. They have been approaching various grant making bodies,

and we are hopeful that they will be able to raise a substantial amount towards these essential works. Details of the Restoration Project will shortly be made available to the congregation so we all can have the opportunity to support the costs.

Our Quinquennial inspection took place this summer. It was carried out by Alex Veal of ART Architects our appointed Quinquennial inspector. The report did not find any new issues over and above the items we need to resolve in our Restoration Project.

Once again, our Maintenance Committee has done an excellent job in keeping the building and surroundings in good order. They have had significant challenges with both the maintenance of the lane, and the lighting improvements etc. as well as the ongoing challenges in maintaining a Church as old as ours. We are grateful and must thank them for their time and commitment.

Annual Church Inspection

Our annual church inspection was held on 22nd April by John Kiddle our Archdeacon. John was very impressed with our record keeping and church administration. He confirmed that our Fire Risk and Health and Safety Assessments were complete and our policies were up to date.

Summary

The year has been all about St John's emerging from the challenges of Covid and rebuilding our services and other activities. Concerns that Church attendance might not recover has turned out to be misplaced with the numbers at our services now close to pre-Covid days. We are also seeing a good number of new people which is very encouraging.

Our Fundraising committee continue to produce very enjoyable activities such as the recent afternoon tea which was very well attended and raised a significant amount money. We are very grateful for all they do.

We continue to stream our services and are particularly grateful for the expertise and time which Harvey Howlett, Sally Jocelyn and Franklin Barrington have put into this task which has been welcomed by so many people. A good number of people watch each week, and it has now become an essential service to members of our congregation who are unable to attend St John's.

Janet Fleming has taken over from Janet Whaymand as Sacristan ensuring the supplies needed for our services are maintained e.g. wafers and candles etc. We are grateful for her support. We also must thank Janet Whaymand for her years of service as Sacristan which has been very much appreciated.

We would also like to thank everyone who has helped us during the year, in particular the Flower team who produce such beautiful flower arrangements. We must not forget our cleaners who keep our church looking so presentable. And last but not least, our Servers, Duty Wardens and Sides people and who help to make each service run like clockwork, and who help each week to ensure everybody is fully welcomed at St John's.

Mike Broome and Lynn Sanger. April 2023

Vicar's Report AGM 2023

Before Covid we were working our way through discussing and implementing some of the proposed ideas of Initiative 2022, a document I produced for the PCC to aid our thinking about where we wanted to be as a parish and what we wanted to offer. It wasn't rocket science and largely built on our Mission Action Plan from Fr. Kevin's time. At the heart of that were three aims: to be a Eucharistic community welcoming all ages, to care for the Environment and become sustainable, and sort out our communication, both within the congregation and to the wider world through print and electronic means. I deliberately broadened these to include new possibilities in serving the wider community, especially those in need locally, building on Chris Beales' work protecting nature in our churchyard, and creating new opportunities for children and families to feel part of St. John's family through worship and activities aimed at children. There has been a limited success all round, but we haven't quite harnessed the energy and drive within the wider congregation to bring these to fruition yet. On top of these has been the relentless drive to increase the number of people engaging with the Gospel message in Church, vital in the losses experienced during the pandemic.

Numbers have improved and are almost back to normal. The All-Age services and Messy Church have welcomed new children and their families into St. John's and have proven an attractive option for our baptism families in particular. The four Parade services are improving and helping build those bridges between our children's uniformed groups and the Church. My feeling is that our young people are comfortable being here for these services and are not here under sufferance. Sustainability has focused our minds on how to reduce our impact as a Church and as individuals on the environment, with Richard Burkett and Geoff Little investigating the options to meet our energy needs without relying on fossil fuels so heavily. We have also joined Eco-Church to assess where we are with our environmental impact and how to reduce that. The Season of Creation will see more of that informing our worship and preaching.

We continue to support people with our Tea and Chat, Sunday Lunch Club, our two toddler groups, and the Bereavement Café. All meet real needs in the community and extend the love and care of St. John's beyond our membership. The Angel Project was successful again this year with your support enabling over 120 children to enjoy Christmas, especially during this very difficult year. The feedback from families locally has been very uplifting. There is room to do more, to start new initiatives and revisit old ones as we serve our community. I welcome new ideas from you to help us determine what we can and should be doing to make a difference.

As you will know we are facing very serious financial challenges, burning through our limited reserves at an alarming rate in order to pay our Parish Support Fund and meet our financial commitments. If this state of affairs continues we will have exhausted these reserves by 2025-26 and no longer be able to pay our way. The Restoration Project would also have to be shelved. A large question mark hangs over our future, but the Stewardship Team and I are meeting this challenge with another campaign to attract 20 new givers to the Parish Giving Scheme and help us onto a more stable footing. As we derive no income from our physical assets (the Church Hall and the Extension rooms), we are almost totally dependent on what you give and what the Fundraising Team raises. Currently we depend on 15 donors for 80% of our stewardship income.

This means that time is running out for St. John's unless we can share the load and increase our income to meet our financial obligations.

It's not all about money. Many give of their time and energy instead of, or in addition to their financial support. The AGM also is an opportunity to encourage new people to volunteer for crucial roles across the Parish. PCC has yet to reach the number of members we can have, meaning that responsibilities fall on a few who wear many hats just to keep us legal and the show on the road. We would be thrilled to welcome new members on the PCC and encourage you to consider joining us for our monthly meetings and sharing your perspective. Safeguarding is a vital part of keeping St. John's safe and legally compliant in working with children and other vulnerable persons. It is incumbent on us to make St. John's a safe place for everyone and we do need a volunteer to join the team to keep us on top of the legal requirements and make sure everyone who needs a DBS clearance has one and is up-to-date with the required training.

As always there are a number of opportunities to serve either on Sundays by reading the Bible lessons, doing the intercessions, or serving at the altar with the team. Other interests either with our outreach activities or around the areas of sustainability and inclusion offer a chance to make things happen. The Bereavement Café is especially restricted in scope due to a lack of enough volunteer listeners, though training is available from our partners at Princess Alice Hospice. Everyone has a gift to offer and a part to play, if you would like to help or have any questions please speak to me or another member of the Ministry Team.

Michael