

**The Parish of
St John the Evangelist
Great Stanmore**



**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended
31st December 2023**

Contents

	Page
Annual Meeting of Parishioners	
Agenda for Meeting 28 th April 2024	2
Minutes of Meeting 30 th April 2023	3
Annual Parochial Church Meeting	
Agenda for Meeting 28 th April 2024	4
Minutes of Meeting 30 th April 2023	5-8
Reports	
Electoral Roll Officer's Report	<i>Verbal</i>
Deanery Synod Report	A6-A7
Church House	A7-A8
Parish Administrator's Report	A9-A12
Mission Action Plan	A13-A15
Financial Review	A15-A18
Church Workers Pension Fund	A18
Fabric Report	9-12
Groups and Activities' Reports	
Bereavement Visiting Team	14
Café St Jean	15
Churchyard Gardeners	15-16
Engage	16-17
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	17-18
Flowers	19
Great Stanmore Bell Ringers	19
Home Groups	20-21
Junior Church	21
Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group	22
Music	22-23
New Wine	23
Old Church Working Group	24
St John's Church of England School	25-30
Safeguarding	30-32
Tea and Chat	32
Welcome Team	33
Youth Group	33
Assistant Curate's Review	33-34
Rector's Review	34-36
Appendix (separate booklet)	A1-A29
Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts	

**The Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the election of churchwardens**
Sunday 28th April 2024, 10.45am in Church House

AGENDA

1. Opening prayer
2. Apologies for absence
3. To receive the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners (30th April 2023)
4. Election of tellers (if required)
5. Election of two churchwardens to serve 2024/2025
6. Date of next meeting (27th April 2025)
7. Closing prayer

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on
Sunday 30th April 2023 at 10.45am
in Church House**

Chair: The Revd Matthew Stone	Minutes: Karen Stirrup
Attendance: 62 parishioners (of which 57 on the Electoral Roll)	

Introduction	
1.	<p>Opening prayer The Rector, the Revd Matthew Stone, welcomed parishioners and prayed for the meeting, the purpose of which is to elect two churchwardens to serve 2023/2024.</p>
2.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from: Lisa Bertie, Danny Curran, Louise Gregory, Carolyne Johnson, Susan Jones, Valerie Kershaw, Shaun Knevett, Ian Mackie MBE, Daniel McKeon, Andrea Nicholson, Jackie Peters, Jack Prentice, Edit Rees, Victoria Ward and Sue Wright.</p>
Administration	
3.	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 24th April 2022: to agree the minutes as a true record. The minutes were signed by the Rector as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>
4.	<p>Election of tellers It was not necessary to appoint tellers.</p>
Election of two churchwardens to serve 2023/2024	
5.	<p>The Rector reported that two nominations had been received as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Pam Curran</u> proposed by Jane Prentice, seconded by Sylvia Daniels. • <u>Graham Nicholson</u> proposed by Sylvia Daniels, seconded by Beverley Singleton. <p>Pam Curran and Graham Nicholson were unanimously elected to serve as Churchwardens across 2023/2024.</p> <p>Pam and Graham will be readmitted to office by the Archdeacon of Northolt, at the Visitation taking place at St Anselm's Belmont on 27th June 2023. They were thanked for their work.</p>
Miscellaneous	
6.	<p>Date of next meeting The next Annual Meeting of Parishioners will take place on Sunday 28th April 2024.</p>
7.	<p>Closing prayer The Rector closed the meeting in prayer.</p>

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 24th April 2024, 11am in Church House

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. To receive the minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting (30th April 2023)
3. Matters arising
4. Reports
 - 4.1 Electoral Roll Officer's report
 - 4.2 PCC Secretary's review
 - 4.3 Presentation of accounts and Treasurer's financial review
 - 4.4 Fabric report
5. Election of tellers (if required)
6. Elections and appointments
 - 6.1 Election of 4 PCC Members to serve 2024/2027
 - 6.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024/2025
7. Group Reports
8. Assistant Curate's Review
9. Rector's Review
10. Mission Action Plan (Listening to London, Listening to God)
11. Any other business
12. Date of next meeting (27th April 2025)
13. Closing prayer

Advance Notice of PCC Meeting – Sunday 28th April 2024 at 11.45am

*Immediately after the close of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, there will be a very short meeting of the newly elected Parochial Church Council to appoint the Church Officers: Vice-Chairman, Deputy Wardens, Secretary, Treasurer and Electoral Roll Officer.
Also, to appoint members to the Standing Committee.*

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday 30th April 2023 at 10.55am in Church House

Chair: The Revd Matthew Stone	Minutes: Karen Stirrup
Attendance: 62 parishioners (of which 57 on the Electoral Roll)	

Introduction	
1.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from: Lisa Bertie, Danny Curran, Louise Gregory, Carlyne Johnson, Susan Jones, Valerie Kershaw, Shaun Knevett, Ian Mackie MBE, Daniel McKeon, Andrea Nicholson, Jackie Peters, Jack Prentice, Edit Rees, Victoria Ward and Sue Wright.</p>
Administration	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 24th April 2022: to agree the minutes as a true record. The minutes were signed by the Rector as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising – none.</p>
Reports	
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• 4.1 Electoral Roll Officer’s report The Rector presented a report that had been prepared by Electoral Roll Officer Andrea Nicholson, based on the revision which took place between 26th March 2023 and 14th April 2023.</p> <p>The revised roll still stands at 181 which is made up of 66 residents (who live within the parish boundary) and 115 non-residents (who do not live within the parish boundary). 16 new people were added this time, 24 were removed – 19 because they had moved away or were no longer attending. Parishioners restated their sadness at the deaths of Ronnie Cormack, Jenny Gurdon, Mick Oliver, John Pay and Peggy Simpson since the last APCM.</p> <p>• 4.2 PCC Secretary’s review PCC Secretary Karen Stirrup had prepared a report based on the work of the PCC in 2022. See pages A8-A13 of the 2022 Accounts Booklet. There were no questions.</p> <p>• 4.3 Presentation of accounts and PCC Treasurer’s financial review Treasurer Jennifer Neve had prepared a report which is on pages A13-A17 of the 2022 Accounts Booklet. The Rector gave an overview of the income and expenditure during the year and highlighted the surplus of £30,495.</p> <p>The Rector thanked all those who support the church through their regular giving. Other income streams include the rent from Hollond Lodge and 16 The Chase. Parish Administrator Karen Stirrup was thanked for all her work managing the regular and one-off bookings in Church House. 2022 had been a very busy year and income of £67,951 has been generated from Church House bookings. It was pleasing to note that St John’s had paid, for the third year running, full Common Fund costs of £85,200.</p>

	<p>In the absence of any questions, Jean Orpwood proposed the 2022 Accounts be adopted. Michael Carmody seconded the proposal. The 2022 Accounts were unanimously adopted by the meeting.</p> <p>The Rector thanked Jenny for her work as Treasurer.</p> <p>Jenny thanked Becky Stone for her help preparing the accounts booklet and for the work she does behind the scenes preparing the laptop for the services. The Rector was also thanked for his pastoral ministry and ongoing help with the finances. Jenny presented 'thank you' gifts to Becky and the Rector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.4 Fabric report The Fabric report was prepared by Churchwardens Pam Curran and Graham Nicholson. The fabric of our various buildings remained in good order (apart from the Old Church). The latest Quinquennial Inspection report was received last autumn, and the various action points are being prioritised. <p>The PCC continues to consider the larger projects which include: tower stonework repairs, introduction of disabled facilities and the replacement of the oil-fired heating system. Significant funds are required to undertake these projects which currently remain out of reach. The works to refurbish the organ and being undertaken on a modular basis.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
--	--

Elections and appointments	
-----------------------------------	--

5.	<p>Elections of tellers It was not necessary to appoint tellers.</p>
-----------	---

6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.1 Election of 3 Deanery Synod Representatives to serve 2023/2026 The Rector reported that three nominations had been received as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Beverley McKeon</u> proposed by Jackie Peters, seconded by Marianne Wright. • <u>Lauren McKeon</u> proposed by Sylvia Daniels, seconded by Valerie Banger. • <u>Frederick Oshunniyi</u> proposed by Pam Curran, seconded by Nigel Bayliss. <p>Beverley, Lauren and Frederick were duly elected to serve as Deanery Synod Representatives for a period of three years until 2026. Their term of office will begin on 1st July 2023.</p> <p>The Rector thanked the retiring Deanery Synod Representatives: Sylvia Daniels and Daniel McKeon. Susan Jones stood down in January 2023 owing to personal reasons. Beverley McKeon stood for re-election to the Deanery Synod (see 6.1 above).</p> <p>Our scale of representation on the Deanery Synod is based on the size of the Electoral Roll. The number of permitted representatives does changes from time to time. In 2020 we were permitted to elected four representatives. This time we are permitted to elected three representatives (in spite of our Electoral Roll figure remaining largely static).</p>
-----------	---

- **6.2 Election of 4 PCC Members to serve 2023/2026**
The Rector reported that four nominations had been received as follows:
 - Sylvia Daniels
proposed by Pam Curran, seconded by Graham Nicholson.
 - David Galt
proposed by Corinne Capozzi, seconded by Aldo Capozzi.
 - Tony Murphy
proposed by Kelly Kehn, seconded by Becky Stone.
 - Lorna Wyon
proposed by Maureen Davter, seconded by Pauline Ball.

Sylvia, David, Tony and Lorna were duly elected to serve on the PCC for a period of three years until 2026.

The Rector thanked the retiring PCC Members: Maureen Davter, Frederick Oshunniyi, Jack Prentice and Marianne Wright. Frederick Oshunniyi will be staying on the PCC having just been elected to serve on the Deanery Synod (see 6.1 above).

- **6.3 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2023/2024**
Derek Taylor-Mew was unanimously re-appointed for a further twelve months.

Group reports

7. The 2022 Annual Report and Accounts were published on 31st March 2023. Rather than comment on each report, the Rector invited additional comments from the various authors and questions from church members. The following comments were made:
- **7.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (pages 17-18)**
In 2021 the Church of England published a report titled 'From Lament to Action', which proposed a suite of changes to bring about a change of culture in the Church of England to tackle racism and inequality. The PCC appointed Frederick Oshunniyi to ensure that St John's is, and continues to be, a welcoming and inclusive community where everyone is given the opportunity to flourish. If anyone has any concern about inequality existing within St John's Church, please speak to Frederick.

Carole White spoke about her overwhelming feeling of inclusion at St John's for which she is very grateful.
 - **7.9 Junior Church and Youth Group (pages 20-21)**
Beverley McKeon spoke of her delight that the number of children attending Junior Church continued to rise. In January 2023 all high school aged children were invited to The Rectory in order for a conversation to take place about what they would like the church to provide for them. The young people wanted a place to occasionally meet (sometimes with an activity) where they could simply be together. It was agreed that the youth group would meet every half-term, and so far the meetings have been well attended.
 - **7.10 Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group (page 21)**
Edit Rees was thanked for her leadership of this important outreach group which meets in Church House every Wednesday afternoon. Philip Rees, in Edit's absence, mentioned that extra help was needed, if only on a monthly or occasional basis. If anyone can lend a hand, please speak to Philip or Edit.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.11 Music (page 22) Director of Music Philip Rees was thanked for his music and coordination of the choir. It was acknowledged that Philip generously gives his time for free, in spite of this role usually attracting an honorarium/salary. • 7.15 Safeguarding (pages 26-28) The Rector commented that safeguarding remains a top priority for the PCC and at each meeting there is a substantive agenda item to ensure the necessary appointments, policy reviews and other work are undertaken during the course of a year to ensure we always have appropriate measures in place. • 7.16 Tea & Chat (page 28) Tea & Chat continues to serve the community and, along with Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group, remains an important part of our outreach to the local community. Sylvia Daniels and Sheila Oliver were thanked for leading this group.
Assistant Curate's review	
8.	<p>Assistant Curate Wendy Wall had written a report (pages 29-30). Wendy spoke about the warm welcome she and her husband Shane had received last year, and how much they enjoy being part of the St John's Church family. The Rector thanked both Wendy and Shane for the contributions they make to the life of St John's Church.</p> <p>The Rector was pleased to announce that Wendy will be ordained priest, alongside four other Deacons from the Willesden Episcopal Area, at a service to be held at St John's Church on Saturday 24th June (3pm). It is hoped we will all be able to attend this special service.</p>
Rector's review	
9.	The Rector had written a report (pages 30-31) which explained some of his work in 2022.
Mission: Listening to London, Listening to God	
10.	The work of the PCC Mission Action Groups covering children & young people, discipleship, environment and outreach was recorded in the PCC Secretary's Report (pages A12-A13).
Any other business	
11.	None.
Miscellaneous	
12.	<p>Date of next meeting The next Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 28th April 2024.</p>
13.	<p>Closing prayer The Rector thanked the members of the church for all they contribute to the mission and ministry of St John's Church. The Rector went on to explain that we need to be a church that is on the move as we seek to grow as disciples of Christ and put our faith into action as we seek to share the good news with others. The meeting was closed in prayer.</p>

4. Reports

4.1 Electoral Roll Officer's report

A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

4.2 Parish Administrator's Report

See pages A9-A12 of 2023 Accounts Booklet.

4.3 Treasurer's Financial Review and Accounts

See pages A15-A18 of 2023 Accounts Booklet.

4.4 Fabric Report

During 2023, the following work has been undertaken:

Church

1. The organ blower and humidifier were serviced in January and July. Cost £210 (each time).
2. Annual service of the tower clock. Cost £357.60.
3. A repair to the portable light switch was necessary. Cost £174.
4. The halyard on the flagpole was released as it had become stuck. Cost £594. The repair was undertaken in time to fly the Union Flag for the Coronation of King Charles III on 6th May 2023.
5. The annual asbestos monitoring took place and the register duly updated. Cost Nil.
6. The organ was tuned and a number of minor faults corrected. Cost £493.20.
7. An additional bulkhead light was fitted to the tower staircase. Cost £135.
8. The oil-fired boiler was serviced and safety tested. Cost £160.
9. Annual service of the lightning protection system. Cost £168. A repair was needed as the reading was too high. Cost £594. The reading is now within the prescribed limits.
10. The fire extinguishers were serviced. Cost £107.74 (included the cost of a new extinguisher for the Ringing Room).
11. The insurance policy was renewed on 3rd October 2023 (covers the Church, the Old Church, Church House and Church House Cottage). Premium £10,045.32. Excess £250.
12. The biennial check for evidence of 'live' woodworm activity in the ringing chamber and bell chamber was undertaken (the fourth check that has taken place, the first being in 2017). Cost Nil.
13. A new lamp was fitted in the projector. Cost £408 (the new bulb replaced the original that was fitted in 2017).
14. New safety de-reelers were fitted to the screen mechanism. Cost £568.
15. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected. There were no actions arising from this visit. Cost £247.50.

Churchyard

1. The churchyard was regularly maintained throughout the year by the London Borough of Harrow. Cost Nil.
2. Works to a cherry tree next to the lych gate were undertaken (a dead limb was removed, the crown was balanced, the overall height was reduced and the ivy removed). The London Borough of Harrow arranged this work for which there was no cost. The Archdeacon of Northolt authorised these works under a List B Faculty.

3. The damaged sections of the boundary fence (north-west corner of the churchyard) which fell during Storm Eunice on 25th February 2023, were finally repaired. The London Borough of Harrow arranged this work for which there was no cost. The transfer of the "common areas" around the churchyard on the Stanmore Park development have now been adopted by the London Borough of Harrow from Taylor Wimpey.
4. A Faculty was obtained for the "Restoration works to the Snoxell Tomb entailing the dismantling, reinforcement and rebuild of the top, the reinstatement of missing brickwork to the base, repointing of brickwork and stonework, the repair of two small indents, mortar repair and cleaning." This work will cost c. £3,500 and is being paid for by the family not the PCC.

Old Church

1. The insurance policy was renewed (see '11' under The Church above).
2. The safety access equipment in the tower was serviced and tested. Cost £571.20.
3. The weeds were cleared. Cost £110.

Church House

1. A new thermostat was fitted in the Wolstenholme Hall. Cost £210.
2. All windows (including Church House Cottage) were cleaned inside and out on two occasions. Cost £408.
3. The annual asbestos monitoring was undertaken and the register updated. Cost Nil.
4. The Wolstenholme Hall heaters were hoovered to remove the dust. Cost Nil.
5. The gas-fired boiler and cooker were serviced and safety tested. Cost £100. The smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were also checked.
6. The fire extinguishers (and fire blankets) were serviced. Cost £268.64 (included the cost of a new extinguisher in the Micklem Hall).
7. The annual test for legionella was undertaken. Cost £52.50.
8. The insurance policy was renewed (see '11' under The Church above).
9. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected (including Church House Cottage and the Micklem Hall). Cost £168. Roofing works were identified (see '10' below).
10. Various roofing works were undertaken which necessitated the erection of scaffolding outside Church House Cottage. Cost £6,300.
11. A new noticeboard was fitted to the double gates. Cost £198.12.
12. The Micklem Hall was decorated. Cost £2,300.22.
13. The glass was replaced in six windows in the Micklem Hall because the seals had failed and there was condensation in between the panes of glass. Cost £828.
14. New blinds were fitted in the Micklem Hall. Cost £1,472.33. Stanmore Montessori kindly contributed £472.33 towards the cost.
15. New Bell fitted by the double gates for access to Tea and Chat and Little Fishers. Cost. Nil.

Church Field

1. Church Field was maintained throughout the year. Cost £5,214.07. The cost included a number of unexpected tree works which had become urgent. A tree surgeon was needed for one of the trees at a cost of £960. Permission was sort in advance of these tree works being undertaken from the London Borough of Harrow's Arboricultural Officer (necessary because of the Conservation Area).

Church House Cottage

1. The boiler was serviced and gas safety tested on 11th May 2023. Cost £100.
2. The insurance policy was renewed (see '11' under The Church above).
3. A new fridge-freezer was purchased. Cost £334 (which included the removal of the 'old' fridge-freezer).
4. The central heating system was serviced. Cost £304 (which included a new zone valve costing £79).
5. A Ring Pro Doorbell was fitted. Cost £109.98.

Hollond Lodge

1. The boiler was safety and gas tested on 25th February 2023. Cost £100.
2. The buildings insurance policy was renewed on 3rd October 2023. Premium £1,062.03. Excess £25.
3. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected. Cost £82.50.
4. A leaking pipe was repaired. Cost £90.

The Chase

1. The buildings insurance policy was renewed on 4th January 2023. Premium £1,319.67. Excess £25.
2. The boiler was safety and gas tested on 25th February 2023. Cost £100.

The Rectory

1. A bedroom was decorated and worn carpet replaced. Cost £899.97.

The PCC continues to place a high priority on undertaking the routine maintenance and repairs in an efficient and cost-effective fashion with known/reliable contractors with whom we enjoy a good relationship.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was undertaken in 2022. On top of the ongoing maintenance, the current priorities are the stonework, organ refurbishment, church heating and disabled access. These are all very costly projects and are being progressed as far as is financially possible. Brief summaries follow:

Stonework

The PCC appointed Arta Architects to proceed with RIBA Stage 1 survey which covers a number of works to establish the scope of the stonework project. Their fee for this work is £3,540. A survey of the windows has taken place at a cost of £768. It is pleasing to note the windows are generally in good condition. Only one window needs some relatively minor attention. A drone survey has also been undertaken of all high level areas to consider the state of the stone (cost £3,592.80). These works are gathering the evidence to submit an application to the Diocesan Advisory Committee in 2024.

Organ Refurbishment

The organ is being refurbished on a modular basis. The PCC agreed the next tranche of works which will be undertaken by Bishop & Son in 2024 at a cost of £27,806. The Archdeacon of Northolt authorised these works under a List B Faculty.

Church Heating

The current oil-fired heating system remains well-maintained and the level of warmth generated is usually satisfactory for most of the heating season. Owing to its size, construction and large windows, it is a challenge to warm the church building to a satisfactory level in the very cold weather, in spite of the heating being switched on 48 hours ahead of a service. Despite any wish to do so it is not cost effective to keep the heating on all the time, even on a low level. For context the cost of the oil was c. £4,500 in 2023 (an average of c. £150 every Sunday).

The PCC is keen to explore a replacement to move to an environmentally friendly system. This is in line with the Diocese of London Vision to cut carbon emissions of all 470+ churches to Net Zero by 2030. This effort forms part of the Church of England Environment Programme, to which the Diocese of London is committed. For now, we remain very mindful of our carbon emissions.

Graham Denman and the Assistant Curate have been visiting various churches who have had their heating systems replaced recently to see how effective they are and what lessons can be learned. It will be necessary to commission the services of a heating consultant in due course for this significant project.

Disabled Access

The PCC takes its responsibilities very seriously in this regard and it is a desire to make St John's Church 'disabled friendly' with fully accessible facilities. As a contribution towards this, there is ramped access, white lines on all steps, a hearing loop system and a dementia friendly toilet seat/grab rail all in place. An Accessibility Audit was undertaken in 2020.

Miscellaneous

The General and the Fire Risk Assessments for the Church and Church House were reviewed and updated. The Risk Assessment for the Old Church was also reviewed and updated. Actions arising from these reviews will be undertaken during the course of 2024. The Health & Safety policy was updated and a copy is on display in the porch.

The Church was burgled overnight on 12th December 2023. Various items were stolen - all the silver was taken from the safe, cash totaling £450 (collected two days earlier at the confirmation service) and a set of keys. The silver cross and one of the candlesticks used on the chapel altar were taken. The Metropolitan Police were contacted and issued a Crime Reference Number 2018716/23 and the Archdeacon of Northolt to alert other churches. Nine other churches were either burgled or suffered an attempted burglary. A suspect was arrested but as there was no forensic evidence found at St John's Church, there is no chance of any charges being brought for our burglary. We are keeping in contact with the police in case any of our stolen items are recovered. The police were given photos and full descriptions of what was stolen. The locks were replaced and the window repaired. New silver is being purchased. All costs will be covered by the insurance claim apart from the £250 excess.

Finally, we remain very grateful to those who help look after our building, especially Shaun Knevet, Cristian Tomoiaga and Shane Wall who work quietly behind the scenes doing all sorts of jobs.

**Pam Curran and Graham Nicholson
Churchwardens**

The following elections/appointments will now take place:

5. Election of tellers *(if required)*

6. Elections and Appointments

6.1 Election of 4 PCC Members to serve 2024/2027

6.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024/2025

7. Group and Activities' Reports

7.1 Bereavement Visiting Team

In 2023 our visitors continued to offer listening support for the bereaved within our community, and in so doing become part of the outreach of the church. We have again seen fewer clients than in previous years, which equates with an ongoing reduction of calls requesting help and support to the Bereavement Care (BC) Office. Some clients prefer visiting by telephone, but equally, others appreciate meeting their visitor in person.

Reduced numbers of such support has also been seen by other groups too. At the time of writing our visitors are compiling their own statistics of the hours of commitment they give to the work.

Our current visiting team remains small due to ongoing bereavements. As St John's is a corporate member of Bereavement Care, we work within their Code of Practice, that states that bereaved visitors should stand aside from visiting clients for a period of around two years. This protects them as well as our clients. On a more positive note we welcomed a new visitor to the group at the end of 2022. Some of us were able to attend our annual conference, whose main speaker was Rabbi Jonathan Romaine from Maidenhead, and well known to Radio 4 listeners. He spoke movingly about his experience of the recent death of his son by drowning.

We continue to support each other in regular meetings by *Zoom*, on darker winter nights and in person, at other times. In November, at All Souls' tide, we welcomed a number of families for the annual Memorial service, followed by refreshments in Church House, (thanks to Bev and the team). It offers us the opportunity not only to remember the loss we have suffered, but all those funny, pleasurable little things that brought that person alive again in our hearts and minds. Those attending contributed generously to a retiring collection for Bereavement Care. Parishioners are reminded that this service is open for all to attend.

As corporate members of Bereavement Care our parish is entitled to reduced fees for training and attendance at our annual conference. The team also acknowledges the ongoing generosity of the PCC to cover such expenses for all our visitors.

Bereavement Care Charity is dependent upon individual donations and grants from organisations. The effects of the pandemic and the wider economic downturn continue to affect its overall finances and urgent help is needed. If you, or your place of work would be interested in supporting them, do please look at their website for further information - www.bereavementsupportandcare.co.uk - or speak to me.

At the recent AGM, a new Board of Trustees was appointed, who are keen to take the charity forward, to make it better known and its work to be more effective. This includes the possible expansion into new areas of work. It sounds like there may be interesting times ahead.

We look forward to another year of supporting those needing a listening ear during difficult times. Do please contact us or the clergy, in confidence, if you would like to receive such support, or are interested in exploring the opportunity to be a bereavement visitor.

**Jean Orpwood
Group Leader**

7.2 Café St Jean

The French themed Café St Jean is our regular weekly pop-up café following on from every 9.30am Sunday service. Less than a minute walk from the church, the congregation and any visitors can enjoy a warm welcome from our dedicated team of volunteers in the homely comfort of Church House.

Fresh ground filter coffee is served alongside a selection of teas. Fruit squash is also provided for the children. The weekly assortment of biscuits is often bolstered by cakes, pastries, sometimes wine and fizz, as parishioners celebrate special occasions.

Children are able to congregate safely to enjoying the wonderfully enclosed field, along with two other separate rooms in the building as parents relax, enjoying a hot drink in the Wolstneholme Hall.

We thank your dedicated team of volunteers for this congenial Sunday morning café. Without their efforts, the café would not be possible. The café serves around 60/70 people each week.

On behalf of everyone at St Johns, I'd like to say a huge thank our team of 20 volunteers, as well as those managing the tables & chairs, for all their ongoing hard work & support. It really is appreciated.

Bev Singleton
Café Co-ordinator

7.3 Churchyard Gardeners

The gardening year started at the end of March when the roses had their first feed and the weeding and tidying started. With so much rain it was not until May that weeding could continue and the edge of the grass around the Fuchsia was more defined to prevent the Fuchsia being cut down again by a wayward strimmer! The Fuchsia did manage to recover but the Michaelmas Daisies alongside the church were not so fortunate. Two other beds with plants left to self-seed were mown over during the year!!

After a few weeks weeding the long borders, in June Carlyne Johnson, Rosemary Mackenzie-Corby and I planted them with 43 Cosmos and 6 Lavatera raised from seed and 36 Geraniums. Maga Nicholl kept these plants well-watered to help them establish and produce a good display.

The roses had their second feed in July after the first flush of flowers. By dead-heading the roses they continued flowering until late November when they were all pruned back and surrounded with farm manure.

The rose beds were edged and weeded, and the graves in that area kept reasonably tidy and weeded. During the year, Bill Wyon replaced a few more rose stakes and planted 3 new standard roses in the autumn to fill in some gaps. This time we tried out some metal stakes to see if they last longer than the wooden stakes. Many thanks to Michael Carmody for his very generous gift to pay for these roses.

The steps down to the boiler room were cleared of moss, debris and self-seeded weeds.

The Rector and Peter Williams continue to pick up the constant supply of rubbish which appears in the churchyard and Rectory Lane.

We are grateful to the London Borough of Harrow for keeping the grass cut and the hedges trimmed and to St Luke's Hospice for taking away the Christmas Trees for recycling.

Anyone who would like to take on responsibility for one or more beds around the church would be very welcome. We are a small team and would like to expand a little!

Carole White

7.4 Engage

Our contemporary service continues to play an important part in our church life. The service enjoys a dedicated attendance, as well as welcoming some who come occasionally when a particular speaker interests them. We are grateful to all members of the band, some of whom attend other churches in the mornings, for their unstinting commitment to sharing their musical talent and leading great worship.

The speakers are invited to choose their own themes, bringing whatever they feel is on their hearts for us to hear. Last year we enjoyed hearing from:

MONTH	SPEAKER	THEME
January	The Revd Wendy Wall	Standing at the Crossroads
February	The Revd Sam Brazier-Gibbs Vicar, The Priory Church of St. Laurence & St. Peter & St. Paul, Stondon Massey	All You Need Is Love
March	Nila Suriakumar Deacon, Stanmore Baptist Church	The Power of Prayer
May	The Revd Ian Downsett, Vicar, St Paul's, South Harrow	Hearing God's Voice
June	The Revd Elaine Weaver St John's, Greenhill	Care of God's Creation
July	The Ven Catherine Pickford Archdeacon of Northolt	Prayer and ways to pray
September	The Revd Steve Newbold Vicar, St Stephen's, Ealing	Spiritual Gifts
October	Karen Omisore	A Time for Everything: Navigating Life with Faith
November	The Revd David Varcoe Minister, Trinity Church, Harrow	Follow Me

(We do not have an Engage service in April or December because of the United Stanmore services for Good Friday and Advent respectively. We also take a break in August).

Average attendance is between 30-40 and it is a privilege to be able to offer a contemporary service as a contrast to our morning 'diet'. Refreshments are always served afterwards, and many stay to enjoy further fellowship. If you haven't yet tried an Engage service, do come along and see what it's like!

Becky Stone

7.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality Diversity and Inclusion in St John's strives to ensure all members of our church family are treated Equally (enjoy the same rights and opportunities), that everyone is unique and can be different (Diversity) and the differences are embraced by all (Inclusion).

EDI in St John's is considered to be in a good place. Rationale for this judgement is outlined below:

In 2023, the following actions were undertaken:

- Informally held conversations with a spectrum of church members about their perspective on inclusion;
- Assessed St John's performance against relevant Diocese of London objectives to fulfil the 2030 Vision aspirations;
- Assessed Racial Justice in St John's against Diocese of London's 10 Point Action Plan.

Conversations

Positive sentiments were expressed about individual's experience of inclusivity at the church. Everybody participates in Church life. More could be done, however, about meeting the needs of the older members of the congregation (listening posts perhaps).

Meeting Diocese of London's Vision 2030 Aspirations

The Bishop of Willesden ran roadshows in 2023, elaborating on the Diocese's aspiration "*for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Jesus Christ*" and for the church to "*become younger, safer and more racially diverse*". He emphasised the following values for the Deanery:

- **Inter-Generational** – every generation is participating in church life. Everyone present, celebrated and valued uniformly. Children participating in telling the story of Christ and everyone enabled to serve and worship in Church and feel fulfilled.
- **Inter-racial and Inter-cultural** – to be encouraged as church ethos. Aspire to develop a space of neutrality, where everyone regardless of background thrives. Every community is represented in the church community and every story can be told.
- **Missional** – We are called to be missionaries. Live a life that reflects the church community and engage with those often disengaged.

St John's is judged to be high performing in all these areas with heavy involvement of all generations in church life, a diverse congregation and the PCC Mission Action Groups.

The Diocese of London Church 10 Point Racial Justice Action Plan Assessment

The Diocese of London's Vision 2030 Racial Justice initiative acknowledges there are over 250 different languages spoken in London and only when the church is truly diverse can it represent the Body of Christ in all its richness and hence grow.

Action Point	Definition	St John's Performance
1. Acknowledgement	Acknowledgement of the issue of racial justice and its systemic and institutional nature	Evident in church profile and leadership outlook
2. Audit	Honest look at our Church and progress with the issue of racial justice	To be confirmed
3. Conversation	Facilitating conversations by creating a space for open, honest and frank dialogue	Requirement for a forum to be considered
4. Education	Bridging the knowledge gap – what is it like to be an individual from a minority group today	Not relevant to St John's
5. Speaking Up	Using our platforms to speak up against the evil of racism	Specific action for St John's to be considered
6. Advocacy	Using our influence and reach to be advocates for racial equality	Not relevant to St John's
7. Representative Leadership	Creating systems, structures and processes that encourage representative leadership in Church	Specific action for St John's to be considered
8. Practical Action	Developing short, medium and long term plans for action	Specific action for St John's to be considered
9. Prayer	Encouraging sustained prayer as individuals or group over the issue of racial injustice	Specific action for St John's to be considered
10. Prophetic	Discerning the mind of God clearly	Specific action for St John's to be considered

Frederick Oshunniyi
EDI Officer

7.6 Flowers

In 2023 the small, faithful team of flower arrangers provided weekly fresh flowers for the altar arrangement when appropriate. People continued to be generous and gave to the flower fund for an arrangement on a particular Sunday special to them.

Floral decorations for the festivals were organised by Rosemary & Marianne (Easter), Michelle (Harvest) and Sue & Sheila (Christmas). On these occasions there were pedestals and window decorations enhancing the church. At Pentecost (Valerie) there was an extra pedestal. Gary & Valerie once again had responsibility for the outside Christmas tree.

In May, to celebrate the Coronation, Michelle made a special pedestal arrangement.

We had our yearly meeting in November to prepare for 2024. We have encouraged our 2 newcomers to practise their skills and they are gaining confidence. We need, and will warmly welcome, more volunteers to show an interest in trying their hand with arranging flowers.

Sheila Oliver

7.7 Great Stanmore Bell Ringers

We had our AGM in June which was followed by a meal at the Cannons Tandoori.

We rang for Easter Day and Remembrance Sunday and continue to practise on Thursday evenings. We have also rung for weddings.

During the year several bands have visited. We were pleased to meet a Bell Master from New Zealand who taught us how to ring the hand bells and to do call changers. We have also welcomed occasional visitors who have asked to see the bells and try their hand at ringing.

A bell ringing workshop has taken place on some Saturday mornings to give youth group members the opportunity to have a try at ringing. This will continue into next year. A few members of the congregation have had a lesson but sadly were unable to commit to our Thursday evening practices.

The regular maintenance throughout the year has taken place (ropes and bells) and the clock chimes have been adjusted when necessary.

We had an outing in December to see 'Beauty & The Beast' in Radlett thanks to Victoria Ward.

The total funds belonging to the Bell Ringers (held by the PCC) were £7,585 as at 31st December 2023.

Shaun Knevet
Tower Master and Deputy Steeple Keeper

7.8 Home Groups

The Bushey Home Group

Our group has been enjoying meeting in Maureen's house in Bushey on a fortnightly basis (weekly in Lent) at 2.30pm on Tuesdays. Thank you, Maureen, for your hospitality and especially for the delicious homemade cakes and biscuits! Recently we have been pleased to welcome a new member into our group which now numbers 8.

From January to July, except during Lent, we continued our study of the women of the Bible, alternating between the women of the Old and New Testaments. We studied Eve, Rahab, Jezebel, Ruth and Esther from the OT and the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, Lydia, Dorcas, the woman of Samaria and the woman with an issue of blood from the New Testament.

During Lent, we studied various characters of the Cross and Resurrection, using An Easter Book of Days by Gregory Cameron as our starting point. In September, we began our study of the Gospel of St Matthew which is ongoing.

This is an informal group with everyone contributing to the discussions. If anyone would like to join us, you would be very welcome.

Frances Westcott

The Hatch End Home Group

Following discussions at our home with the Rector, the Hatch End Home Group finally started and met for the first time on Thursday 27th July 2023, and we have been meeting each month ever since. The December meeting was held pre-Christmas as a social event when we shared food and drinks together.

The group meets monthly on the last Thursday of each month from 10.30am-12 noon. Each meeting opens with a prayer with whatever is placed on our hearts and closes with the Grace. At the end of meetings people can and do stay on for a fresh coffee and a chat.

There are 10 group members including the two hosts. We decided together on the topics that we would like to discuss so that we can pray for different situations. Our topics to date are Forgiveness, Peace, Faith Persecution, Free Will and Predestination (led capably by our Assistant Curate), Protection of Children and we had an open session when we met in December. In advance of the meetings a list of Bible passages is sent out via our WhatsApp group or handed out in paper form, so we can look at relevant scriptures before we meet.

As we look ahead to 2024, we shall continue to pray for the Protection of Children and look forward to the Rector joining us later in the year to lead our meeting on Praying for the Church.

Lorna & Bill Wyon

The Rectory Home Group

We began and ended this year by continuing our exploration of St John's Gospel.

We have a very relaxed approach of reading a short section at a time, opening up discussion on anything which strikes us, and having commentaries available to refer to for language or background questions which arise out of what we read. We have found this gives scope for contributions from everyone, without need for prior knowledge.

We took a break for Lent to do a course called *From Now On* based on the film *The Greatest Showman*. We really enjoyed the course, but found the sessions were very long so in the end decided to break each prescribed session into two. This meant we continued with this course past Easter and up to the May half term break, before returning to John's Gospel in June and again in September.

Newcomers are always welcome - please speak to me.

Becky Stone

7.9 Junior Church

It is pleasing to report that Junior Church numbers have continued to grow over the past year, and we have welcomed several new families. We continue to use the same *Searchlights* material as a basis for our teaching and this is supplemented with craft, games and sometimes drama. The Junior Choir continues to sing during the service on the third Sunday of the month and this is followed by games in Church House in the afternoon.

Our usual monthly format is as follows:

First Sunday – All-Age

Second Sunday – Junior Church

Third Sunday – Junior Choir (9:30am), Games (2.30pm)

Fourth Sunday – Junior Church

This year for the first time we joined with Stanmore Baptist Church for a joint Pancake Party. The event was well attended by lots of our families, and the children (and parents!) enjoyed pancakes, games and craft. We also repeated the Light Party on Halloween with food, games, craft and a disco. This is a really exciting partnership that we hope to continue and build upon.

In September we had an outing to Amazon Golf in Edgware, followed by a drink or ice cream at McDonalds. This outing was very well attended and enjoyed by everyone. In December we took a large number of children to The Radlett Centre to watch 'Beauty and the Beast', which was very entertaining. Thank you to all those who made it possible for these outings to take place.

On Christmas Day we presented (along with some parents and grandparents) our Nativity 'The Day That Baby Jesus Came to Town' which was very well received. Thank you to all those who take part and learned lines!

Beverley McKeon
Commissioned Children's Minister

7.10 Little Fishers & Toddler Group

Little Fishers has had a busy year, operating 50 weeks in the year, so we were open for the children and their older siblings during school holidays.

As well as our traditional Christmas party (with an appearance from Father Christmas) and Easter egg hunt, we introduced "Monday Funday" during the October half-term holiday, which went well.

At our regular Wednesday sessions we now have families coming to us from Pinner and Bushey areas, which is good for us, but it demonstrates that there is a need for toddler groups like ours in our local community, and parents/grandparents/carers of young children really appreciate having somewhere safe where their children can interact with other children.

Our aim for the future is to replace our existing, quite small, bouncy castle with a larger one (that can be used inside or outside, depending upon the weather). We would also like to raise money to buy a shed for our equipment – presently, our toys and other equipment are stored in three different places, which makes setting up and clearing away more time consuming than it could be.

During the year Belinda Burnand has joined us and she is giving very valuable help and support. It would be a great help if anyone else could volunteer to help on a Wednesday afternoon. You don't need to commit to coming every week, just as and when you can. You don't need any childcare qualifications or experience, just a willingness to help, and an ability to be enthusiastic towards young children. A DBS check and references would be required prior to starting.

I would like to say a big thank you to Belinda, Elza, Karen, Lisa, Matthew and Wendy for their continued help and support.

Edit Rees

7.11 Music

I'm glad to say that we are back to pre-covid levels of music at our Parish Communion, having a variety of communion hymns as well as the normal congregational music.

A fairly recent innovation to our choir has been having some of our children singing alongside the adult choir once a month (on the Sunday morning when there is no Junior Church), with a short (15 minutes) rehearsal after the 9:30am service the previous week and a 9:15am rehearsal on the day. This has proved to be enjoyable for the children, encouraging for the older members of the choir, and not too onerous or time-consuming for the children. If you have 6-15-year-old children, please ask them if they would like to join us. They do not have to come every month, just as and when they can. Please speak to me, Edit or Nancy if they might like to join us to sing in the choir.

As usual, I will issue my annual appeal for more singers. If you are 'soprano' voice you don't need to be able to read music, just be able to sing in tune. If you can sing alto, tenor

or bass then this is even better. Please talk to any member of the choir if you think you might be interested - an informal chat will not result in any commitment, I promise! You do not have to come every week, just as and when you can.

Regarding the organ, not much has changed since last year. Whilst a large number of faults were fixed before the lockdown, there are still a lot of bits that either don't work at all or don't work properly. Given that the cost of parts and labour is likely to increase much quicker than the value of savings, the PCC have agreed to carry out the next stage in the long-term repair project, using money that has been set aside for the organ over many years but we are still waiting for the organ builders to have time to do this (the PCC agreed the next tranche of expenditure totalling £28,000 in May and we are still waiting for the organ builder to confirm a start date). It would be very beneficial for the church if we could possibly obtain a grant towards the repairs, but we would need someone with time and the right skillset to pursue this. Do any of you think that this might be you, or do you know anyone who might be able to do this? If so, please speak to me or Matthew, without any commitment to undertake this.

I must record my gratitude to Lydia, and latterly Pam, for suggesting the hymns month by month and to Nancy, Matthew and Wendy for their input into this selection, and I would also like to thank everyone who contributes towards the music in church, even if this is just joining in with the singing in the congregation, and this includes the band members who play for our monthly Engage service.

Philip Rees
Organist and Director of Music

7.12 New Wine

New Wine's summer conference 'United '23' was held at The Kent Event Centre near Maidstone and was another wonderful week with friends. This special time of worship, teaching and prayer along with thousands of other Christians always seems to 'restore my soul'.

During the week we were blessed with sunshine when we needed it most, ensuring our annual BBQ with friends from St Paul's South Harrow was a fun filled success. High winds did make for a couple of eventful nights, however, launching our gazebo over Matthew and Becky's tent in the early hours and planting it nicely in the neighbouring campsite, requiring a pyjama clad rescue mission!

What we as a family are always most impressed with is the children's and youth work. The noise level coming out of the youth venue during their worship time was truly a joyful sound to behold. Two of our young people volunteered on 'team' this year working in the 0-4s venue and both found the experience very rewarding. There are hundreds of volunteering opportunities for young and old if you feel moved to serve at this event.

United '24 will be held at Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, from 25-30th July and we would love you to join us. Do get in touch with Matthew, Becky or myself for booking details.

Fiona Hussey

7.13 Old Church

A working group was formed in 2015 made up of certain PCC and church members who were interested in the Old Church. This group met several times that year to consider what opportunities there might be to secure the future of Old Church given its ruinous state and ongoing deteriorating condition. The group held meetings with several 'stakeholders' with a view to formally exploring whether there was an appetite to reinstate the Old Church as a community facility.

In spite of a significant amount of work and time invested, the London Borough of Harrow advised that an Optional Appraisal was required in order for them to consider our proposal, but this would need to be prepared by an architect at a cost of £25,000. Regrettably, this sum was out of reach of the PCC not least because there was no guarantee that the Local Authority would support any such proposal. It would not have been money well spent.

Fast forward to 2022 when Mick Oliver and the Rector managed to secure a meeting with the Head Properties Curator at English Heritage. The purpose of this meeting was for English Heritage to assess whether there was a possibility of them addressing the ongoing issues of maintenance and operation, by taking the Old Church into their guardianship as part of the national heritage collection.

The representative from English Heritage felt the Old Church had merit on both historical and architectural grounds and undertook to prepare a paper for the consideration by their Senior Management. The paper was to set out the significance of the building and its associated history, and an outline of issues around its maintenance and management. These matters were to be considered together with an estimate of costs for repair and maintenance and other operational matters. This seemed very encouraging.

Frustratingly, the representative then went quiet and did not respond to various chasing emails until the middle of 2023 when an update was finally received. The update explained that English Heritage were no longer receiving direct funding from the Government and were in a period of financial retrenchment. They are now anxious about taking on new "sites" where the annual maintenance would be more than £25,000 per annum as would easily be the case with Old Church.

The representative advised that the next step was for him to contact Historic England to ask whether they would consider the Old Church with a view to providing some sort of assistance. Sadly, nothing further has been heard since.

By the end of the 2023, the PCC felt they had exhausted this attempt for support from English Heritage/Historic England and decided to ask the Quinquennial Inspector, Daniel Benson, for advice in case he had any suggestions as to what next.

The only actions were the annual service and test of the PPE in the tower (£571.20 incl. VAT) and the Old Church was cleared of weeds in December which cost £110 (no VAT).

In closing, the Old Church has very little money to its name (£4,956 as at 31st December 2023) which is woefully inadequate to address the enormous list of actions arising from earlier Quinquennial Inspections. It is not possible to divert funds from the 1850 Church because it has its own ongoing maintenance and improvement works which have to take place as the priority.

Matthew Stone

7.14 St John's Church of England School, Stanmore

This report is based on the last full school year which covered 2022/2023.

1. What do Governors do?

Governing Boards are key strategic decision makers and vision setters in every school and play a major part in the school's accountability. They have a vital role to play in driving up school and pupil performance by making sure the resources are used well to ensure every child receives the best possible education.

Often, visitors say of St John's School that it has a 'good feel', and this is said after only a brief time on the premises. The children are polite, confident and friendly, and they demonstrate good behaviour for learning. When issues occur, they are robustly dealt with in line with the published Behaviour Policy.

We are blessed with dedicated and hardworking staff who constantly deliver over and above the norm. This has been demonstrated in recent times in how they coped with the Covid-19 pandemic and continued to teach the children making use of online technology where necessary. The staff are a credit to their profession and are ably supported by highly skilled learning support assistants.

As the Governing Board of St John's School, we are proud of the school and its warm, welcoming, inclusive and strong family atmosphere. We fully support the school's aims, ethos, vision and values:

2. School Aims

- To work together and be the best you can be,
- To care for and support one another,
- To respect and value one another and the environment.

3. School Ethos

We believe that the distinctive characteristic that gives our school the 'good feel' factor is due to the Christian ethos which underpins and permeates all we do at St John's. It is this highly valued and widely shared ethos which makes our school special to us.

4. The School Vision

The school has emphasised the following key Bible verse, vision statement and Christian values:

'I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength' [Philippians 4:13]

"Our ethos is deeply rooted in the Bible, underpinned by faith and committed to educational excellence. In our community we respect that everyone is uniquely made in the image of God. We grow together in wisdom, compassion, strength and instil a sense of hope for all to flourish. We make a difference."

- Faith - Is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see,
- Strength – God presents us with the strength to build and progress in our life and the lives of others,
- Compassion - We are fair, we care and show understanding towards others,
- Wisdom - Building confidence, discipline and knowledge to fully develop our talents in all areas of our lives,

- Hope - Coping wisely with situations that will help guide us into fulfilling our aspirations.

The RE Ambassadors (two per class from Year 1 to Year 6) have taken the words of the vision and made them into a song, even composing the melody line. All children know this song which can be viewed [here](#).

5. Purpose of Governance

In accordance with the Government's requirements, the Governing Board at St John's School provides strategic leadership and accountability in the school. It has three key functions:

- ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

School governors are all volunteers and give their time for the benefit of the children. Apart from the Rector and Headteacher who are ex-officio, all Governors are elected democratically and serve a four-year term. Governors are independent, have equal status to each other and, while they may represent the views of their appointing board, they act first and foremost in the best interests of the school.

6. How we are organised

Our Governing Board is made up of **14** governors as follows:

- 2 Parent Governors appointed by ballot of the parents at the school,
- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Authority,
- 1 Staff Governor appointed by ballot of the staff,
- 1 Headteacher (Ex-Officio)
- 8 Foundation Governors:
 - 1 The Rector of St John the Evangelist, Great Stanmore (Ex-Officio)
 - 2 appointed by the PCC of St John's Church Stanmore
 - 3 appointed by the Harrow Deanery Synod
 - 2 appointed by the London Diocesan Board for Schools
- 1 Co-opted governor appointed by the governing board.

The PCC appointed governors are Tracey James (appointed in October 2020) and Jon Stephen (appointed in September 2021). Other church members also serve as governors as follows:

Kelly Kehn (Parent Governor)
Graham Nicholson (Harrow Deanery Synod)
Clemey Pagano (Harrow Deanery Synod)
The Rector (Ex-Officio)

Our Governors have a wide range of skills and experience which are used fully as they discharge their duties. Any vacancies are filled promptly but only after a rigorous selection process. All Governors have up-to-date DBS checks in place to enhanced level, they have undertaken the governor safeguarding training course as well as The Prevent Duty.

7. Governing Board Changes

- Lysandra Dwyer was appointed by the London Borough of Harrow with her term of office commencing on 1st September 2022.
- Edwin Afeku's term of office came to an end on 14th February 2023. As Mr. Afeku was elected by the parental body, a ballot was held which saw a number of parents stand for election, including Mr. Afeku. He was successfully re-elected and the new term commenced on 9th May 2023.
- Chris Tapp's term of office was due to expire on 16th September 2023. As the Co-opted Governor, the Governing Board re-appointed Mr. Tapp on 12th July 2023.
- Andrew Morgan's term of office was due to expire on 4th February 2024. As Mr. Morgan was anticipating a house move to Oxfordshire, he resigned with effect from 31st August 2023 to enable a successor to be appointed by the Harrow Deanery Synod in time for the start of the new school year. He has served as a governor for 24 years and we owe him a debt of gratitude. Clementina Pagano was duly appointed by the Deanery Synod on 15th June 2023, with her term of office commencing on 1st September 2023, helpfully at the start of the new school year.

In September 2022 Matthew Stone was re-elected to serve as Chair. Kelly Kehn was elected Vice-Chair. Both work closely with the Headteacher. Amanda Adamis, a professional Clerk, was re-appointed. She organises meetings, takes minutes and coordinates the follow-up on any actions. The Clerk works closely with the Chair and Headteacher and advises on procedural matters, thus playing a pivotal role in the work of the Governing Board. One of the Assistant Headteacher and School Business Manager were reappointed as Associate Members.

8. Committees

During the school year 2022/2023 the Governing Board delegated most of its work to five committees:

- Admissions
- Christian Ethos
- Finance & Premises (incl. Pay & Review)
- Staffing (incl. Headteacher's Performance Management)
- Standards & Achievement

Governors serve on one or two committees where their skills, interests and experience enables them to play a full part. This information is gathered from the completion of a skills audit which is updated annually. The Governing Board and the committees all have clear terms of reference which are reviewed annually.

Most governors are also linked with a specific subject or area within the school, often connected to the improvement priorities (see below). In 2022/2023, the subject/areas were: Child Protection, Equality, Health & Safety, Maths, Mental Health & Well-being, Music, Pupil Premium, Reading, RE, Safeguarding, SEN and Writing.

9. Monitoring

Formal monitoring by governors allows the opportunity to observe and communicate with staff and pupils. After each visit the governor prepares a follow-up report which is presented at the next Governing Board meeting. Monitoring visits are especially useful as they help governors understand more about their specific subject/area and, over time, the progress/impact can better be measured.

Governors also visit the school informally, supporting events such as assemblies, concerts, the Year 6 production, School Services held in St John's Church and Parents' & Friends' Association events.

10. Meetings

During 2022/2023 the Governing Board met routinely on five occasions (September, December, March, May and July). The Admissions Committee, Staffing Committee and Standards & Achievement Committees usually met once each term. The Christian Ethos Committee and Finance & Premises Committee meet more regularly.

The Headteacher's Performance Management Committee met once, and the Pay Committee met once. All committees meet during the school day. The Headteacher's Performance Management Committee is supported by an external advisor. Additionally, there is a facility to bring together small panels/committees (eg exclusions) although this was not needed in 2022/2023.

The Chair of Governors met the Headteacher regularly and is willing to meet parents as and when necessary. There were no formal complaints. The Chair of Governors and Vice-Chair are visible and accessible members of the school community and at no stage did any parent raise even a concern.

11. School Improvement

The Governing Board takes part in the annual cycle of school improvement by its interpretation and analysis of school data including, SATS results, Local Authority data, government data, Phonics Screening Check, Baseline Assessment, Ofsted Data Dashboard and regular internal school assessment data. Through data analysis, pupil progress and attainment are scrutinised and vulnerable groups including pupil premium children are closely monitored. Data monitoring together with external reports such as Ofsted mean that the Governors play an active role in the development of the annual School Improvement Plan.

12. Training

Governors are also expected to undertake training to fulfil their role and enhance their contribution. During 2022/2023 various training opportunities were offered to governors including induction training run by the Local Authority. We are also able to attend training courses organised by the London Diocesan Board for Schools.

All Governors undertook up-to-date governor safeguarding training and attended the Government's 'prevent' course. One governor was congratulated by the London Borough of Harrow for attending more courses than all governors in the borough!

13. Ofsted

The school was inspected last by Ofsted in January 2019. This routine one-day visit took place almost four years since the previous inspection and included three key lines of enquiry: progress made by disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 in reading and writing, pupils' achievement in mathematics and improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. The inspector commented that the school's self-evaluation was robust and had already highlighted these three areas and implemented strategies which were being evaluated regularly. Speaking about the school, the Inspector noted that *"St John's is a welcoming, vibrant and nurturing place for pupils to learn and thrive. The school recognises that pupils'*

personal development is at the heart of academic success. Almost all parents are appreciative of the school's work, as reflected in the Parent View online questionnaire".

Looking ahead the inspector asked the school leaders and governors to ensure that:

- all the recommendations of the pupil premium review are implemented swiftly
- there is greater consistency in the guidance pupils are given in mathematics, particularly to move pupils on to more challenging work when they are ready.

14. School Improvement Priorities

The Headteacher reported regularly on (and the Governing Board duly monitored) the five areas that formed the 2022/2023 School Improvement Plan:

- **Writing, Reading & Phonics** to continue to embed,
- **Maths** - reasoning and continue to embed multiplications tables,
- **Assessments of foundation subjects and DT,**
- To continue to develop the **curriculum,**
- **Leadership** development across the school.

The Governing Board annually approves a 3-year school budget and the Finance & Premises Committee regularly monitors the in-year budget. It works closely with the School Business Manager and the Local Authority Schools' Financial Services. Close scrutiny of the budget during the financial year 2022/2023 meant that the year-end outturn resulted in a positive balance which is a significant achievement given the pressures on school budgets.

Governors also monitored the spending (and impact) of the Pupil Premium, PE & Sports Premium and Catch-up premium: coronavirus (COVID-19).

Governors remain concerned about the falling pupil roll which negatively impacts the school budget. Whilst of little comfort, many primary schools in Harrow, in London and across the country are in the same position owing to there being an excess of reception places compared to the actual demand. As there is no additional funding to cover any shortfall, Governors (with significant help from the School Business Manager) marketed the school premises for external lettings at weekends which has been successful in generating a new income stream.

In the 2023/2024 school year the following school improvement priorities have been agreed:

Priority 1 - Quality of Education

- To continue to implement the new EYFS reforms and develop quality outdoor provision
- To raise standards of writing across the school through a focus on the analysis of internal data especially in KS1
- Develop quality adaptive teaching to support 'Great Expectations' for all pupils
- Continue to raise standards in maths for all pupils especially for higher ability pupils
- To further develop reading skills for those middle ability pupils and those identified groups

Priority 2 - Behaviour and Attitudes

- Develop quality playground opportunities
- Continue to build on positive relationships between the school and wider community

Priority 3- Personal Development

- To increase opportunities for outdoor learning and use of forest school to support pupil progress and mental health/well-being.
- To continue to develop mental health and well-being for all staff and pupils through the developed use of Zones of Regulation
- Develop British Values across all curriculum areas
- Achieve Arts Mark Status

Priority 4 - Leadership and management

- Develop all subject leaders as effective middle leaders
- To ensure a healthy work/life balance for all
- To encourage a culture of coaching and mentoring within the school to support growth both for adults and pupils
- Continue to develop Pupil and Parent Voice

15. Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAMS)

On 9th February 2023, the school underwent its SIAMS (Section 48), which should happen every five years, but owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been eight years since the last inspection.

This inspection asks the question, *"How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?"*

The inspection was robust and detailed and after a full day of interviews, observations and difficult questions, the school was given the highest mark of "excellent" in both parts of the inspection: Impact of collective worship and the effectiveness of religious education (RE). The [report](#) was so overwhelmingly positive. Do read it!

**Tracey James, Kelly Kehn, Graham Nicholson,
Clemey Pagano, Jon Stephen and Matthew Stone
Members of the School's Governing Board**

7.15 Safeguarding

The PCC continues to place the highest regard on safeguarding to ensure the children, young people and any vulnerable adults who attend our services, participate in our activities, attend our groups or use church premises are kept safe. We take our responsibilities seriously and follow the recommended practice contained within the [Church of England's Parish Safeguarding Handbook](#).

'Safeguarding' remained a substantive item on every PCC meeting agenda. This enabled the PCC to monitor the implementation of the recommended practices. During the course of the year, the PCC monitored/approved/undertook the following:

1. DBS checks are now renewed every three years in line with the Diocese of London's policy. In 2023, 25 DBS checks were obtained (9 new and 16 rechecks).
2. PCC Members and all those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are asked to undertake The Church of England's Safeguarding Training Courses

- at the appropriate level for their role (eg Basic and Foundation and in some cases Leadership) when they receive a DBS check.
3. Updated the Church of England's Safeguarding Dashboard set up for St John's Church which reviews the policies and procedures that are in place using a helpful traffic light system.
 4. Reviewed and re-adopted The Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' publication (and completed the accompanying statement).
 5. Reviewed and re-adopted The Church of England's 'Parish Safeguarding Handbook'.
 6. Reviewed and re-adopted The Diocese of London's 'Safeguarding Policy'.
 7. Reviewed and re-adopted 'The Safeguarding Policy Statement' (updated copies were displayed in the Church, Church House and on our website).
 8. Reviewed and re-adopted The Diocese of London's 'Safeguarding Checklist'.
 9. Adopted The Church of England's 'Code of Safer Working Practice'.
 10. Considered the guidance 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse'.
 11. Reviewed and re-adopted the 'Policy Statement on Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse'.
 12. Reviewed and re-adopted 'The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement' (updated copies were displayed in the Church, Church House and on our website).
 13. Re-appointed Mark Lynch and appointed Nancy Newton as Parish Safeguarding Officers.
 14. Re-appointed Sue Wright as Children's Champion.
 15. Re-appointed Sheila Oliver as Vulnerable Adults Champion.
 16. Re-appointed Karen Stirrup and Matthew Stone as DBS Evidence Checkers.
 17. Re-appointed Matthew Stone as Lead Recruiter.
 18. Made sure all posters/contact details were on display in the Church, Church House and on our website (and up-to-date) and there were copies of the information flier about Domestic Abuse in the Church and Church House in carefully chosen locations.
 19. Updated the Role Descriptions for: Bereavement Visiting Team, Commissioned Children's Minister, Director of Music, Junior Choir, Junior Church, Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group and Youth Group. Many of the Role Descriptions now include safeguarding prompts (in the form of do's and don'ts) which replace the need to obtain annual Volunteer Agreements.
 20. Obtained updated Declarations for those working with the Junior Choir, Junior Church, Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group and the Youth Group
 21. Reviewed the Group Risk Assessments for Junior Church (incl. crossing Old Church Lane) and Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group
 22. Updated the General and Fire Risk Assessments for the Church and Church House.
 23. Reviewed the Risk Assessments which are completed when church services, school services/visits have more than 150 people in the church at any one time.
 24. Updated the Health & Safety Policy.
 25. Reviewed the hiring agreements for Church House to ensure that the groups that work with children who hire the premises on a regular basis have their own safeguarding policies in place. Copies of these policies, together with their insurance, are obtained from each group annually and filed in the Parish Office. These groups are also sent a copy of our Safeguarding Policy.
- When people hire the premises on a one-off basis, such as a child's birthday party, they are also sent a copy of our Safeguarding Policy and sign a clause on the Booking Form to say they have received a copy and undertake to follow the guidelines within it. The Terms and Conditions of Hire reflect the importance of our safeguarding procedures being followed and key messages are given to the hirer when Church House is handed over to them.

26. The safeguarding section on the church website was reviewed and updated as necessary.

Safer Recruitment

We do not permit anyone to work with our children and young people unless they have an up-to-date DBS check in place, and for all new applicants two written references are always obtained as part of the safer recruitment process. A self-declaration form is also completed.

Once a DBS check has been issued, applicants undertake the Diocese of London's online safeguarding training and the pass certificate is handed to the Rector. New applicants are then asked to sign a Declaration on Safeguarding.

If a safeguarding incident or concern is reported, it is investigated immediately by the Safeguarding Officer and appropriate action taken. All incidents or concerns are kept confidential at all times.

In conclusion, the PCC continues to demonstrate due regard to House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children (as is our duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016). Safeguarding should be viewed as a shared responsibility and is always most effectively undertaken when an entire community works together to keep the children, young people and any vulnerable adults safe.

If you have any questions about our safeguarding procedures or a concern, please contact our Safeguarding Officers, Mark Lynch or Nancy Newton (or the Diocese of London Duty Safeguarding Adviser on 020 7932 1224).

Matthew Stone

7.16 Tea & Chat

We met weekly throughout 2023 on Tuesday afternoons. Everyone came regularly to enjoy the companionship and we were pleased to welcome a couple of new faces during the year too. We shall miss Barbara Robbens, a longstanding member of the group, who sadly died in December.

We started the year with a visit from the children at Aylward Primary School who sang, showed us their written work and chatted to us. We also had two visits from St John's School Sing Up club, in the summer and their usual visit at Christmas, always greatly enjoyed.

We held our own fish & chip lunch in the autumn, and some of our number also joined the Harvest lunch and Christmas Tea arranged by the church.

One of our ladies, Heidi, with the help of her daughters and friends provided us with a delicious, authentic Turkish Tea one afternoon in June.

In November we celebrated Olive Oliver's 100th birthday.

Everyone enjoyed the special events but were equally content to come for tea and cake and a chat and with the help of our valuable band of helpers we were able to continue to provide a warm welcome to all.

Sylvia Daniels & Sheila Oliver

7.17 Welcome Team

Welcome is a very important part of our ministry and something St John's is excellent at! Thank you to our wonderful welcome team for all that they do.

Jane Prentice

7.18 Youth Group

Our Youth Group was launched in January with an informal get-together at The Rectory to find out what the young people wanted and what would be of interest to them.

It was decided that we would meet every half-term and our events have included Laser Tag, ten pin bowling, pizza followed by games at The Rectory and a BBQ on Church Field. I would like to thank all the people that have helped us and made these events possible.

Towards the end of the year we shared a joint event with our friends at Stanmore Baptist Church and plan to further develop this relationship next year.

Beverley McKeon
Commissioned Children's Minister

8. Assistant Curate's Report

It is hard to believe that I am now halfway through my curacy. In some ways the last year has passed very quickly, but I have had so many new experiences and learned so much, it is also hard to believe it has only been a year.

A significant moment of the year was my ordination as a priest on 24th June 2023, made even more special as the service took place at St John's Church. The post-reception arranged by Bev Singleton and the team was exceptional - thank you all so much.

I have enjoyed growing in confidence as a priest since that time, celebrating communion at a broad range of services, including Midnight Mass, Christmas Day and as a visiting priest to three local churches. It has been a privilege to continue to develop my experience of baptismal and funeral ministry, and to conduct my first wedding in July 2023.

Highlights of the year include:

- running an Alpha course and walking alongside 'guests' as they considered some of the big questions of life;
- the fellowship of sharing with others to pray through the monthly prayer meetings which began in May 2023;
- attending and delivering Collective Worship at St John's School;
- welcoming local schools, including St John's, Aylward and Whitchurch into the church to learn about Christianity;
- the blessing of helping to prepare candidates for baptism, admission to communion and confirmation.

As well as many times of joy, the year has also brought challenges. I often find it challenging to do things I have not done before. My Bible verse of the year has been Isaiah 41:13: *'I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, "Do not fear; I will help you."* Leaning on God during the challenging moments has been vital for my growth as a Curate, and also as a Christian.

The Discipleship Mission Action Group continues to meet regularly to discuss discipleship and to plan activities to help us grow in our knowledge of and relationship with God. The Quiet Day on Prayer, run by the Revd Canon Alison Christian at St Mary's Church Harrow-on-the-Hill, grew out of these discussions. The online Close Encounters Lent course and Stable Through the Grave courses were also planned through the Discipleship Mission Action Group.

The Environment Mission Action Group has re-started and is considering ways of raising awareness of environmental issues and exploring more cost-effective and environmentally friendly heating systems for the church.

A significant highlight of the last year has been building on my relationships with the church family here at St John's, through helping with Junior Church games, the Youth Group and Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group. Attending Tea & Chat, presiding and attending the weekly services, carrying out home communions and home and hospital visits have brought further blessings and learning opportunities.

I have weekly meetings with Matthew [Stone] and am continuing to develop my experience across the breadth of parish ministry. I also attend regular training with other curates organised by the Willesden Area and Diocese of London. I am looking forward to undertaking a placement with Stanmore Baptist Church in February 2024 and at John Keble C of E School in Harlesden in March 2024.

I continue to feel very blessed indeed to be part of the St John's Church family and am grateful to each and every one of you for the encouragement and support you have given to me, and to each other over the last year. Special thanks to Matthew for all your time, patience and investment in my learning.

The Revd Wendy Wall

9. Rector's Review

St John's Church has stood in Stanmore for countless generations and, at its best, has been a place of comfort, courage, compassion and care. Over the decades we may have been tested, such as during the Covid-19 pandemic (which is for the greater part behind us, thankfully), but we have not stopped being the people of God in this place.

Astonishingly this report is my tenth! As I reflect on my time with you, I am aware that I am but one in a long line of Rectors (12 since 1850 when the church was built) who have tried to live out their vocation by serving you, the parish and wider area. It is an honour to do this.

Over the past 12 months we have continued to grow in faith, hope and love. It is our Christian duty to love our neighbours as ourselves and to use the gifts God has given to us in his service.

It is always pleasing to welcome a number of new people into our church family with even more children and young people joining Junior Church and the Youth Group. It was a joy to see 10 children admitted to communion and to have no fewer than 17 candidates confirmed by the Bishop of Willesden in December 2023. This is on top of 12 baptisms, four weddings and one wedding blessing which took place during the year.

Our church groups are flourishing: Junior Church, Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group, Tea & Chat and our Youth Group. There are also a whole host of other ways for you to use your gifts and serve the Lord. Examples include Bell Ringing, Bereavement Visiting, Café St Jean, Choir, Flower Arranging, Pastoral Visiting and Welcome Team. Thank you to those who lead these groups/activities.

We have also enjoyed delicious food and great company during our Pre-Lent and Harvest Lunches, the Coronation BBQ and the Christmas Afternoon Tea. Thanks to the teams who plan, shop, prepare, serve and wash up for us.

Advent and Lent Courses have been offered, alongside a Quiet Day, which is all on top of three Home Groups to give you the opportunity to grow in faith and deepen your own spirituality. In Advent a study course was started that continues into Lent 2024.

Mission and ministry remain key priorities. Ministry takes place within the Body of Christ, mission happens outside the walls of the church. The PCC (and others) have been busy progressing our current strategy for mission. This is discussed and delivered through the work of four Mission Action Groups: children & young people, discipleship, environment and outreach, with all meeting regularly. Reports of their work are mentioned elsewhere.

Away from perhaps the more typical priestly duties, I continue to keep myself busy with various commitments:

- Chair of Governors to St John's School
- Delivering collective worship and services at St John's School
- Delivering assemblies at Aylward Primary School
- Hosting a number of church visits from Aylward Primary School, Stanburn Primary School, Whitchurch Primary School and Bentley Wood High School. New relationships with Avanti House Secondary School and North London Collegiate School have also begun
- Chair of Trustees to the Bernays Memorial Institute
- Chair of the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Team Ward Panel
- Member of the Bishop of Willesden's Creative Growth Group
- Mentor to a new Vicar in the Harrow Deanery
- Ministerial Development Review Consultant
- Padre to Stanmore Air Cadets

- Coordinate the relationship between the Stanmore Churches

It has been wonderful to have Wendy and Shane Wall as part of our community. A particular highlight was seeing Wendy ordained priest in June 2023 with this special service being held in St John's Church. She continues to grow in confidence and we are grateful for the many contributions she is making to our corporate life together.

It would be remiss not to mention the sadness we all feel when members of our church family die. In 2023, of the 11 funerals we conducted, we were very sad to mourn the deaths of Mick Oliver, Barbara Robbens, Peggy Simpson and Peter Wong who have all been part of the church for many years. We give thanks for their lives and service to the church and pray that they will rest in the loving arms of God. Please remember to pray for their families. We also interred nine sets of ashes in the churchyard.

I am immensely grateful to all those who give so generously of their time to make St John's Church run as smoothly as it does. The PCC share their wisdom and commitment in the strategic leadership of the church, our Parish Administrator does an excellent job of running Church House and keeping things in good order, the Churchwardens, Deputy Wardens, Treasurer, Director of Music, Choir, Licensed Lay Ministers and Pastoral Assistant all exercise their gifts in so many different ways. I am also deeply thankful for those members of our church family who, behind the scenes, usually unseen and unsung, carry out the thousand and one tasks of the Kingdom. Too many to mention but they are, nonetheless, hugely appreciated. I also wish to thank my family – it is quite an unusual life living in a Rectory, but they seem to cope well and I could not do my work without all their help and support.

I look forward to our journey continuing – please pray for me as I do for you.

The Revd Matthew Stone



**2023 Confirmation and Admission to Communion (minus the two adults!).
Photograph used with permission.**