

The Parish of St John the Evangelist Great Stanmore



**Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ended
31st December 2024**

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**The Annual Meeting of Parishioners
for the Election of Churchwardens**
Sunday 27th April 2025, 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 (28th April 2024)
4. Election of tellers (if required)
5. Election of two Churchwardens to serve 2025/2026
6. Date of next Meeting (26th April 2026)
7. Closing prayer

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on
Sunday 28th April 2024 at 10.45am
in Church House**

Chair: The Revd Matthew Stone	Minutes: Karen Stirrup
Attendance: 68 parishioners (of which 62 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 2024/2025.</p>
2.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from: Lisa Bertie, Graham Denman, David Galt, Louise Gregory, Carolyne Johnson, Kelly Kehn, Eric Kershaw, Valerie Kershaw, Ian Mackie MBE, Lydia McLean, John Onate, Jackie Peters, Diana Phillips, Jane Prentice, Geordie Raine, Gurnetta Taylor, Victoria Ward and Tee Waterhouse.</p>
Administration	
3.	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting of Parishioners held on 30th April 2023: 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 2024/2025	
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 Andrea Nicholson, seconded by Shaun Knevet. • <u>Graham Nicholson</u> proposed by Sylvia Daniels, seconded by Jackie Peters. <p>Pam Curran and Graham Nicholson were unanimously elected to serve as Churchwardens across 2024/2025.</p> <p>Pam and Graham will be readmitted to office by the Archdeacon of Northolt, at the Visitation taking place at St John's Church Stanmore on 9th July 2024. 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 27th April 2025.</p>
7.	<p>Closing prayer The Rector closed the meeting in prayer.</p>

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 27th April 2025, 11am in Church House

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. To receive the Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting (28th April 2024)
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 2025/2028
 - 6.1.1 Term of Office for PCC Members (CRR M16 (7) and (8)) - to renew
 - 6.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2025/2026
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 (26th April 2026)
13. Closing prayer

Advance Notice of PCC Meeting – Sunday 27th April 2025 at 12 Noon

*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 28th April 2024 at 11am in Church House

Chair: The Revd Matthew Stone	Minutes: Karen Stirrup
Attendance: 68 parishioners (of which 62 on the Electoral Roll)	

Introduction	
1.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted from: Lisa Bertie, Graham Denman, David Galt, Louise Gregory, Carolyne Johnson, Kelly Kehn, Eric Kershaw, Valerie Kershaw, Ian Mackie MBE, Lydia McLean, John Onate, Jackie Peters, Diana Phillips, Jane Prentice, Geordie Raine, Gurnetta Taylor, Victoria Ward and Tee Waterhouse.</p>
Administration	
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 30th April 2023: 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 24th March 2024 and 12th April 2024.</p> <p>The revised roll still stands at 179 which is made up of 69 residents (who live within the parish boundary) and 110 non-residents (who do not live within the parish boundary). 17 new people were added, 19 were removed – 16 because they had moved away or were no longer attending. Parishioners restated their sadness at the deaths of Barbara Robbins, Audrey Saker and Peter Wong 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 2023, which is on pages A9-A15 of the 2023 Accounts Booklet. Karen was thanked for her work. 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 A15-A18 of the 2023 Accounts Booklet. The Rector gave an overview of the income and expenditure during the year and highlighted the surplus of £22,135.</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. This had generated £58,174 across 2023. It was noted that 2023 was less busy than 2022 in terms of one-off bookings.</p>

	<p>It was pleasing to note that St John’s had paid, for the fourth year running, full Common Fund costs, which in 2023 was £87,775.</p> <p>In the absence of any questions, Mark Lynch proposed the 2023 Accounts be adopted. Michael Carmody seconded the proposal. The 2023 Accounts were unanimously adopted by the meeting.</p> <p>Jenny Neve was thanked for her work as Treasurer. In turn, Jenny presented gifts to the Rector and Becky Stone to thank them for their support to her during the year.</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 remains in good order (apart from the Old Church). <p>The PCC is taking forward the actions from the 2022 Quinquennial Inspection. The current priority is the tower stonework repairs. Work is being undertaken to explore a new environmentally friendly heating system in the church. This is not straightforward and the next step is for an ‘Energy Audit’ to take place. The organ refurbishment continues on a modular basis. The PCC is also keeping in mind the introduction of disabled facilities as and when funds allow.</p> <p>Graham Nicholson commented that the Old Church needs significant work. The Rector added that frustratingly no external bodies have been able to help thus far, but a meeting is booked for 4th June 2024 with Historic England. The PCC is in regular contact with the Diocese of London and Archdeacon of Northolt about the deterioration of the Old Church. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group are also aware.</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
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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 4 PCC Members to serve 2024/2027 The Rector reported that four nominations had been received as follows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Samuel George</u> proposed by Jane Prentice, seconded by Shaun Knevett. • <u>Nina Nolan</u> proposed by Pam Curran, seconded by Pauline Bayliss. • <u>Madu Oji</u> proposed by Beverley McKeon, seconded by Lauren McKeon. • <u>Beverley Singleton</u> proposed by Andrea Nicholson, seconded by Sylvia Daniels. <p>The Rector sought agreement that the four nominees could be elected together, rather than individually. This was agreed by all. Accordingly, Samuel, Nina, Madu and Beverley were duly elected to serve on the PCC for a period of three years until 2027.</p> <p>The Rector thanked the retiring PCC Members: Graham Denman, Shaun Knevett, Jackie Peters and Victoria Ward.</p>

- **6.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2024/2025**
Derek Taylor-Mew has been our Independent Examiner for several years. The Rector invited Derek to attend the last PCC Meeting to speak about the recent independent examination and to comment on our accounting/record keeping. Derek was very complimentary about the work undertaken by Treasurer Jenny Neve and the way the PCC continues to maintain and improve the facilities across all the buildings.

Derek was re-appointed for a further 12 months.

Group reports

7. The 2023 Annual Report and Accounts were published on 28th March 2024. Rather than comment on each report, the Rector invited additional comments from the report authors and questions from church members as follows:

- **7.3 Churchyard Gardeners**
Rosemary Mackenzie-Corby asked if someone would be willing to help Carole White dig over two or three flowerbeds. Carole was thanked for her ongoing work and anyone interested in helping was asked to speak with her.
- **7.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (pages 17-18)**
The PCC had 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 concerns about inequality within St John's Church, please speak to Frederick.
- **7.6 Flowers (pages 19)**
Valerie Banger asked if anyone could join the flower arranging team – it is not an onerous commitment and full training/support is given. Please speak to Valerie.
- **7.10 Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group (page 22-23)**
Philip Rees said that Little Fishers, led by his wife Edit, needs extra help to ensure this group continues to run smoothly. Philip explained that Edit is herself a childminder and she cannot look after 'her' children, set up play equipment and organise the kitchen. Belinda Burnand, Edwina Neumann and Karen Stirrup were thanked for their help, but additional assistance is needed. Please speak to Philip or Edit if you can help.
- **7.15 Safeguarding (pages 30-32)**
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 is undertaken during the course of a year.

The Rector explained the work undertaken by:

Parish Safeguarding Officers - Mark Lynch and Nancy Newton.
Children's Champion – Sue Wright.
Vulnerable Adults Champion – Sheila Oliver.

If anyone has a concern about a child, young people or vulnerable adult (or needs to make a disclosure), please speak to Mark or Nancy.

	In closing this section of the meeting, the Rector reflected that we do so much as a church however the people who lead the groups/activities are working at full capacity. They are unable to give more of their time and additional help is needed. He encouraged all present to pray regularly for the work of the church and to consider how else they might get involved in the life of the church.
Assistant Curate's review	
8.	Assistant Curate Wendy Wall had written a report (pages 33-34). Wendy spoke about how much she and Shane enjoy being part of the St John's Church community. The Rector thanked both Wendy and Shane for the contributions they make to the life of St John's Church.
Rector's review	
9.	The Rector had written a report (pages 34-36) to explain his work in 2023.
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 A13-A15).
Any other business	
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.1 Brass Cleaning Pat Hodgson and Diana Phillips are retiring from the brass cleaning rota. They were thanked for their work. The Rector asked anyone who would like to help with this occasional task (three times a year) to speak to Pat. • 11.2 Church Lunches Sue Jones thanked those present for their ongoing support and appreciation towards the lunches that have taken place (eg Pre-Lent, Summer BBQ and Harvest). The Rector thanked Shaun Knevett for organising the installation of the new Church House cooker.
Miscellaneous	
12.	Date of next meeting The next Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place on Sunday 27 th April 2025.
13.	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 meeting closed in prayer.

4. Reports

4.1 Electoral Roll Officer's report

A verbal report will be given at the meeting.

4.2 PCC Secretary's Report

See pages A8-A12 of 2024 Accounts Booklet.

4.3 Treasurer's Financial Review and Accounts

See pages A15-A18 of 2024 Accounts Booklet.

4.4 Fabric Report

During 2024, the following work has been undertaken:

Routine Repairs/Maintenance

Church

1. The organ blower and humidifier were serviced every six months. Cost £210 and £215.25.
2. The tower clock was serviced. Cost £393.60.
3. The annual asbestos monitoring took place and the register duly updated. Cost Nil.
4. A new screen was purchased as the old one failed. Cost £5,874 (plus an additional £144 to investigate whether the old screen could be repaired).
5. Portable Appliance Testing took place on all plug-in appliances. Cost £108.
6. The oil-fired boiler was serviced and safety tested. Cost £160. A new gas sensor was fitted in the gas alarm unit. Cost £260.
7. Annual service of the lightning protection system. Cost £168.
8. The fire extinguishers were serviced. Cost £117.43.
9. The insurance policy was renewed on 3rd October 2024 (covers the Church, the Old Church, Church House and Church House Cottage). Premium £10,330.29. Excess £250.
10. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected. Cost £247.50. The inspection highlighted that a section of lead needed to be refitted. Cost £492.

Churchyard

1. The churchyard was regularly maintained throughout the year by the London Borough of Harrow. Cost Nil.

Old Church

1. The insurance policy was renewed (see '9' under The Church above).
2. The weeds were cleared on three occasions during the year. Cost £410
3. The safety access equipment in the tower was serviced and tested. The Diocese of London covered the cost (£571.20).

Church House

1. A new cooker with extractor hood and splashback was purchased at a cost of £3,000 which included the disconnection and removal of existing cooker. Additional wiring was needed (£396) and the new pipes were boxed in (£42.85). Total spend £3,438.85.
2. The doorbell failed and needed replacing. Cost £250.

3. All windows (including Church House Cottage) were cleaned inside and out on two occasions. Cost £408.
4. The annual asbestos monitoring was undertaken and the register updated. Cost Nil.
5. The Wolstenholme Hall heaters were hoovered to remove the dust. Cost Nil. Three new pumps were fitted free-of-charge.
6. The gas-fired boiler and cooker were serviced and safety tested. Cost £100. The smoke and carbon monoxide detectors were also checked.
7. The fire extinguishers (and fire blankets) were serviced. Cost £154.78.
8. The annual test for legionella was undertaken. Cost £52.50.
9. The insurance policy was renewed (see '9' under The Church above).
10. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected. Cost £168. Two downpipes needed to be repaired. This was work done free-of-charge when the section of lead was being re-fitted to the church roof (see '10' above).
11. New wooden laminate flooring was laid in the Micklem Hall. Cost £2,818.72.

Church Field

1. Church Field was maintained throughout the year. Cost £3,646.58.
2. Various tree works were necessary. Cost £2,800.

Church House Cottage

1. The boiler was serviced and gas safety tested on 2nd May 2024. Cost £100.
2. The insurance policy was renewed (see '9' under The Church above).
3. A faulty zone sensor was replaced. Cost £180.
4. A wasp's nest was removed. Cost £90.
5. A broken window pane was replaced. Cost £99.

Hollond Lodge

1. The boiler was safety and gas tested on 15th February 2024. Cost £100.
2. The buildings insurance policy was renewed on 3rd October 2024. Premium £1,097.05. Excess £25.
3. The gutters, downpipes and drain gullies were cleared of leaves and the roof was inspected. Cost £82.50. The inspection highlighted that some tiles had slipped and were replaced. Cost £156.

The Chase

1. The buildings insurance policy was renewed on 4th January 2024. Premium £1,397.74. Excess £25.
2. The boiler was safety and gas tested on 14th February 2024. Cost £100.

The Rectory

1. The burglar alarm was serviced. Cost £192.

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.

Quinquennial Inspection Actions

The last Quinquennial Inspection was undertaken in 2022. On top of the routine repairs/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 Project

A reminder that in late 2023 the following was undertaken to commence this project:

Drone survey of tower - £2,994
Windows survey - £768
Art Architects (Stage 1 fee) - £3,540
Total £7,302 incl. VAT

In 2024 the following was undertaken:

Tower stonework inspection - £8,354.40
*Netting and pinning of three gargoyles - £2,993.76
Art Architects (Stage 2 fee £6180 & Extra Advice £660) - £6,840

A Faculty was required for this work.

Total £18,188.16 incl. VAT

The PCC were able to claim VAT of £4,248.36 on the works undertaken in 2023 and 2024 through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPOW).

At the time of preparing this report (January 2025), the next step is for Art Architects to prepare a detailed scope of drawings to confirm all repair and consolidation works required to the tower only, as identified in the quinquennial inspection report (and subsequent tower stonework inspection report). A budget of £300,000 incl. VAT and all professional fees has been agreed for these works which we hope will take place in September 2025.

Organ Refurbishment

The organ is being refurbished on a modular basis.

The PCC spent £20,702.40 to complete the next stage in the refurbishment. This work included the great mounted drawstop action, 3 sets of primary drawstop movements, pedal bourdon and open wood pipework, soundboards, and derivation relays, including the replacement of all perishable leatherwork, life expired parts, bedding, valve assemblies, regulating buttons and transmission tubing.

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. £4,572 in 2024.

The PCC has continued to explore its replacement to a more 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.

In 2023 and 2024 Graham Denman and the Assistant Curate visited various churches who have had their heating systems replaced recently to see how effective they are and what lessons can be learned. In 2024 an Energy Audit of the Church (and Church House) was undertaken by an external consultant. The cost of this audit was covered by the Diocese of London. The [current] recommendation is to install air-to-air heat pumps although this will need further and detailed exploration in 2025.

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

Another area being monitored is the Church House roof which is old and will ultimately need replacing. Broken/missing tiles are replaced where possible (access to the higher tiles is impossible without specialist equipment). There are no reported leaks inside the building.

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 2025. The Health & Safety policy was updated and a copy is on display in the porch.

A new Quinquennial Inspector will be appointed in 2025 following the retirement of Charles Sheppard who has looked after St John's Church for many years. Our thanks to him.

Finally, we remain very grateful to those who help look after our building, especially Shaun Knevett, 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 2025/2028

6.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2025/2026

7. Group and Activities' Reports

7.1 Bereavement Visiting Team

In 2024 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 had contact, either in person or by phone, with only four clients this year. This was due in part to the availability of visitors as well as diminished numbers of clients requesting help from the Bereavement Care (BC) Office. We also welcomed the return of one visitor to the group following a lengthy absence and in 2025 we expect to gain a new visitor to our ranks.

The visitors 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 several families for the annual Memorial service, followed by refreshments in Church House thanks to Bev Singleton and her 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 BC. Parishioners are reminded that this service is open for all to attend.

St John's is a corporate member of Bereavement Care, so we work within their Codes of Practice as well as that of our own parish. To that end we have all undertaken the Diocesan Safeguarding training, which protects both visitors as well as our clients. Ongoing training is available and most of us were able to attend our annual conference in October, that ranged over several themes both in workshops as well as the opening address and much informal discussion over lunch. Our corporate membership of Bereavement Care entitles us to reduced fees for training and attendance at our annual conference. The bereavement team acknowledges the ongoing generosity of the PCC to cover the expenses for all our visitors.

Bereavement Care Charity is dependent on individual donations and grants from organisations. The effects of the pandemic and the wider economic downturn continued 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, or speak to me. The ongoing work of the Board of Trustees continues to take the charity forward, to make it better known and its work more effective. It has recently published a three-year strategy that will hopefully enable our expansion into new areas of work. Interesting times do indeed lie ahead of us.

In the meantime, our visiting group looks forward to another year of supporting those who need a listening ear during difficult times. Do please contact me or the clergy, in confidence, if you would like to receive such support, or are interested in exploring opportunities to share in the wider work of Bereavement Care.

**Jean Orpwood
Group Leader**

7.2 Café St Jean

Café St Jean is our weekly café, which follows the main Sunday morning service.

It is a great community space for people to connect and unwind a little, in the safety and comfort of Church House.

This informal gathering is enjoyed by all ages throughout the year. Hot drinks and a warm space are a real winter comfort and in warmer months, the children make good use of Church Field.

In all seasons, the children also have access to a couple of other rooms in the building – where they enjoy their own space to be with their friends. This gives parents a chance to relax themselves, knowing their children are nearby and safe.

Tea, coffee, fruit squash and biscuits are served weekly by a rota of over 20 dedicated volunteers in a warm friendly atmosphere. Additional treats, - cake and wine, are also occasionally served by members of the church family who are celebrating a special occasion.

The willing team of volunteers are crucial in keeping the café running smoothly and by creating the all-important welcome. It is a real team effort. I would like to thank everyone on the team for their ongoing support and hard work. It is very much appreciated.

Bev Singleton
Café Co-ordinator

7.3 Churchyard Gardeners

After Rosemary's appeal at last year's Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Bianca joined our team and came every week to help, making a huge difference and quickly learning what was needed.

As usual, the Roses were fed in March and July and kept deadheaded throughout the year as needed. Unfortunately, there is a local thief who likes to take the best blooms for the first month or so. About a dozen stakes for the standard roses were replaced by Bill with metal stakes which we hope will last longer.

The two long borders were weeded and in June planted by Carlyne and Rosemary with 48 Geraniums (from Morrisons) and by Bianca and Carole with 60 Cosmos grown from seed. Everything newly planted was kept well-watered by Maga.

The triangular bed on the southeast corner of the church was covered with bracken, thistles and amaryllis bulbs (which only occasionally flowered). Bianca cleared most of these and continued to weed out later any that started to grow back. There was then room for Rosemary to plant 35 Rudbeckia plants grown from seed and they gave a good display.

Only now did we have time to weed the rose beds and graves but, unfortunately, on one of the visits from the London Borough of Harrow to cut the grass, someone decided to strim the weeds around the Roses in spite of being asked not to do so. As a result many of the standard roses were damaged again (after similar damage in the past) and the three new

standard roses are badly damaged and struggling to survive. The two beds alongside the porch were also strimmed, cutting back one of the Fuschia bushes to the ground. Finding all that damage, as well as evidence of a rose thief, was not a good day!

In a previous year, one of the beds along the south of the church had been strimmed over. It was dug out and redefined by Vita and Joy and a few months later planted with purple hardy Geraniums. In October, Ranjit [a neighbour to Bev McKeon] brought and planted in that bed 6 roses, spare after he had successfully taken cuttings.

We continued to weed the graves before the Battle of Britain Sunday in September and Bianca did an excellent job in removing the many weeds on the war memorial. She also kept clean the steps to the boiler room.

Rosemary and Bianca planted many new bulbs which should look good next spring if the squirrels haven't dug them out!

In November, Carolyne and Carole went to the stables in Borehamwood where Carolyne filled 10 compost bags with stable manure which was taken to the churchyard where it was later spread as a mulch on most of the beds.

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. In June we held the service outside on Church Field, with thanks to Shane Wall for organising all the necessary PA equipment to make this a success. 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 Jonny Rapson Rector, St Mary's Amersham with All Saints Coleshill	Walking in the Footsteps of Christ - a conversation about faith with the artificial intelligence bot, ChatGPT
February	Chris Tapp Minister, Stanmore Chapel	What is Heaven Like?

May	The Revd Emma Webber	Being Church
June	The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent Former Bishop of Willesden (Retired)	Grace and Glory (An outside service!)
July	The Revd Wilson Gill, with Kenneth Shakeel	Religious Persecution in Pakistan
September	The Revd Peter Mackenzie	Finding God in the Ordinary
October	The Revd Daniel Norris	The Hospitality of God
November	The Revd Lyndon North	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. This year Good Friday was 28th March, so we also cancelled the March Engage in order to avoid asking too much of our band members who give their time so generously. We also take a break in August).

Average attendance is around 30, 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 (EDI)

I ensured EDI was considered in my engagements with fellow worshippers at St Johns and in my discipleship activities.

My details as EDI officer are also added to the weekly pew sheet should anyone have reason to enquire about an EDI related matter or report an EDI related incident.

Importantly in conversations I enquired if individuals felt included in church services/activities. The response was always positive.

My conclusion is St John's is in a good place regarding EDI.

Frederick Oshunniyi
EDI Officer

7.6 Flowers

Throughout 2024 the floral decorations in church were, as usual, undertaken by the faithful small team of flower arrangers. This meant fresh flowers for an altar arrangement weekly when appropriate and special decorations for the festivals: Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and Christmas.

This year the outside Christmas tree was donated by James Funeral Services. Once again, we were grateful for generous donations to the flower fund from people sponsoring altar arrangements on their chosen Sundays.

In November we held our annual meeting to reflect on the year and prepare for 2025. Successful help and advice had been given during the year to give confidence in flower arranging to a newcomer. We could celebrate that a couple of people had shown an interest in joining us and they helped at the festivals, which is a good way to start getting involved.

We do, however, still need more people to share the work of providing floral beauty in the church.

Sheila Oliver

7.7 Great Stanmore Bell Ringers

We continue to practice most Thursday evenings with new ringers always welcomed warmly. In recent months we have welcomed Val and Kush to the team and they are progressing well.

We have been able to ring on a number of Sundays including Easter Day and ahead of the Nine Lessons and Carol Service on 22nd December.

The routine maintenance and clock winding is undertaken by Shaun or David.

There is also a social side the ringing team enjoy. We have attended a performance in the West End of Les Misérables starring Victoria Ward, who rings when she is available. We also attended Sleeping Beauty at Radlett Theatre in December which was directed by Victoria.

We prepared an article about our work which was featured in one of the May editions of 'My Stanmore News'.

The AGM took place on 8th August following which we went out for a meal.

The total funds belonging to the Bell Ringers (held by the PCC) were £7,881.42 as at 31st December 2024.

Shaun Knevett
Tower Master and Deputy Steeple Keeper

7.8 Home Groups

Bushey Home Group

The Bushey Home Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons from 2.30pm–4pm (every Tuesday during Lent) at a member's house in Bushey. We then have delicious refreshments provided by our host. We are a small group, currently seven members, but are friendly and welcoming.

Over the years, we have studied many books of the Bible and a range of themes and topics. Last year we began studying The Gospel of St Matthew, having previously studied the other three Gospels. During Lent 2024, we looked at the events of Holy Week, supplementing our discussions with excerpts from 'An Easter Book of Days' by Gregory Cameron. Our final meeting in December is always a short Advent service followed by a bring-and-share meal.

We would be delighted to welcome more members.

Frances Westcott

The Hatch End Home Group

The Hatch End Home Group has been meeting every month since 27th July 2023. The group meets on the last Thursday of each month from 10.30am until midday.

Each meeting starts with an opening prayer, then there is discussion about different topics including matters of concern for the world. The group has been engaged in many meetings exploring Bible passages about Grace, Peace, How to Pray and Saints and Sinners. We were delighted to have our Rector in June to lead our meeting in Praying for the Church and sharing communion with us.

We have a great bond between us, we can laugh together, we support each other and are able to express whatever is placed on our hearts. Our meetings close with the Grace. After meetings everyone is welcome to stay for a fresh coffee and a chat. We celebrated an eightieth and a seventieth birthday together with delicious cakes (one generously provided by Maureen Davter).

Our fellowship also gives us an opportunity to share information about serving as members of the Body of Christ. All of us are engaged in different forms of service. A member of the group was delighted to meet an unannounced visitor, King Charles III, while helping out at a homeless charity in London just before Christmas.

We were devastated when a much-loved member of our group sadly passed away in December last year. Andrew Newton contributed positively to our group in many ways and led several of our group meetings. We will not forget him and pray that he rests in peace.

Lorna & Bill Wyon

The Rectory Home Group

We began this year by continuing our exploration of the Gospel of John. 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.

For Lent we decided to follow a course called *Not a Tame Lion* based on the Narnia books and films and other writings by C. S. Lewis. We enjoyed this so much, we have since been listening to recordings of C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, and discussing the issues raised in those with the help of some question prompts if needed (though these rarely have been!). This took us through to the end of the year and will just finish in time for a new Lent Course for 2025 which will be *Still Standing (A Lent course based on the film Rocketman)*.

If you would be interested in joining us, please speak to Becky Stone – newcomers always welcome!

Becky Stone

7.9 Junior Church

It is pleasing to report that Junior Church numbers have continued to grow over the past year. We have welcomed several new families and said 'farewell' to others who have relocated. Most weeks we have between 25-30 children in church which is amazing.

We continue to use the same *Searchlights* material as a basis for our teaching and this is supplemented with craft and games, and sometimes drama. The Junior Choir (which was joining the adult choir on the third Sunday) is less popular, but the monthly games hour in Church House in the afternoon is well received by the children who attend.

Our format for the month is as follows:

First Sunday – All-Age Service

Second Sunday – Junior Church

Third Sunday – Junior Choir (9:30am), Games (2:30pm)

Fourth Sunday – Junior Church

This year we again joined with Stanmore Baptist Church for a pancake party on Shrove Tuesday. This event was well attended by lots of our families who enjoyed pancakes, games and craft. We also repeated the light party on Halloween with food, games, craft and music. This is a really exciting partnership which continues to grow.

In September we had an outing to Lost Jungle in Edgware for a round of crazy golf. This was followed by refreshments at the nearby McDonalds. Thank you to the parents who helped to supervise this activity. In December we again had an outing to the theatre in Radlett to watch 'Sleeping Beauty' which was enjoyed by the large number of children who attend, along with some parents who helped.

On Christmas Day we presented our Nativity, 'God is with us everywhere', which was excellent. Thank you to all the children that took part; and a special thank you to Becky for organising it all and Andrea for sorting the costumes.

In closing, it has been another busy and successful year and we look forward to all that lies ahead. Finally, our thanks to all those who give their time to help lead Junior Church.

Beverley McKeon
Commissioned Children's Minister

7.10 Little Fishers

This year Little Fisher's Parent & Toddler Group has faced many challenges. First, in September the attendance dropped (as it always does) due to many of our regular attendees starting primary school. However, thanks to the continuous work and lots of advertising, by Christmas we had 18 children to celebrate with us. It was a great afternoon and was enjoyed by all!

The opening of a new children's activity centre in Stanmore poses a new challenge for us. Our advantages are the low entry fee, refreshments and snacks, the large hall and the wonderful outdoor area. In order to make our group more effective, we have invested in new resources including two climbing frames and a multipurpose balance activity frame.

In the meantime, we desperately need our own shed to store our equipment and more volunteers to help out occasionally.

I would like to thank my fantastic helpers: Belinda, Helen, Joyce, Karen, Matthew and Wendy. I also want to thank Nick who was our Santa and for Lisa Bertie for her help to find resources.

Edit Rees

7.11 Music

We continue to have a sung service every Sunday, with music accompanied mainly on the organ and sometimes with pre-recorded music played through the sound system. Once a month we have our All-Age Service, and the other Sundays with the choir.

I am pleased to report that we have welcomed some new members of the choir in recent months, and if you are able to sing soprano, alto, tenor or bass and would like to consider joining us, please speak to either myself or Pam after the service sometime. I promise an informal chat will not mean any commitment!

We had a very successful Christmas carol service, with the help of some extra singers from our congregation and beyond, and thanks to the Revd Rachel Phillips for her marvellous organ playing. Again, if you can sing soprano, alto, tenor or bass and would like to join us just for Christmas, you would be very welcome. Rehearsals normally take place on Sundays after church from the end of October.

This year (2025) we will be hosting the annual Harrow Deanery Choirs Festival, on Saturday 11th October. Approximately 100 singers from various churches in the area will form a choir, and all are welcome to attend (further details nearer the time).

The work to overhaul the organ is ongoing. We are currently waiting for some special springs to be made. Currently most of the organ works, but there is still some of it that doesn't.

I must record my thanks to Pam, who chooses most of the hymns, along with Nancy, Matthew and Wendy. Thank you to all of the choir, to those who come nearly every week and to those who come as and when they can, also to Becky, who provides the words for the projector and the music for the sound system.

Philip Rees
Organist and Director of Music

7.12 New Wine

New Wine's summer conference 'United '24' was held back in the familiar surroundings of the Bath & West Showground. However, this year the New Wine team revamped the space, giving the event a festival feel; with outdoor rides and games for families to enjoy, venues for young adults to meet and dance and a giant outdoor screen to watch Olympic events and "The Chosen" en masse.

Our time together was filled with BBQs, badminton, fellowship and fun. The children and youth in our group enjoyed their daily worship and talks and took part in many of the afternoon sporting activities. All the while the sun shone -which, given our past experience of wet and windy weeks, was much appreciated by all those living under canvas!

The weather was so beautiful, many of us were able to sit outside to enjoy morning worship and teaching, choosing to listen the Bishop of Horsham, the Rt. Revd Ruth Bushyager, and her talks on the theme "Come away with me" – speaking of the different times in the gospels when Jesus invited the disciples to come away with him. She was utterly brilliant!

Another enriching week shared with friends which we would be delighted to share with you! United '25 will be held at Bath & West Showground again, from 30th July – 4th August. Please do get in touch with Matthew, Becky or myself, if you would like to join us.

Fiona Hussey

7.13 Old Church

A working group was formed in 2015 made up of 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 the Old Church given its ruinous state and ongoing deteriorating condition. At different times, the group held meetings with the Diocese of London, English Heritage, London Borough of Harrow and the Quinquennial Inspector, Daniel Benson.

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 formally consider any proposal to reinstate the Old Church as a usable building. The Options Appraisal would need to be prepared by an architect at a cost of £20k-£25k. 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 April 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 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 the 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.

In March 2024, English Heritage finally responded (almost two years since the original meeting) and introduced the Rector to a Heritage at Risk Project Officer from Historic England. This led to a meeting with a conservation architect who visited in June 2024 and said he would review what assistance might be possible. Nothing further has been heard in spite of regular chasing emails being sent.

The Rector meanwhile contacted the Director of Parish Property and Fundraising at the Diocese of London who agreed to request that Historic England review the Old Church's 'Heritage at Risk Status' which may trigger some external help. It could, however, take up to 18 months for Historic England to respond.

Towards the end of the year, Kevin Rogers (Diocese of London) confirmed that he had been reviewing the legislative framework for the London Diocesan Fund's (LDF) responsibilities which flagged up that they were responsible for costs linked to the Old Church. Apparently, St John's Church is unique in that we are the only parish with a ruined church in the Diocese of London. Mr Rogers has confirmed that the Diocese will cover the cost of the annual PPE and insurance. Mr Rogers will also speak to the Quinquennial Inspector regarding the priority works to clarify the up-to-date position.

The PCC re-confirmed its agreement to keep the Old Church closed to all visitors and to ensure insurance cover is in place, with a risk assessment and the test of the vertical fixed

wire safety system in the tower taking place annually. The weeds have been cleared in February (£110), May (£130) and October (£170).

The Old Church restricted fund has a balance of £5,031.78 as at 31st December 2024.

Karen Stirrup

7.14 St John's Church of England School, Stanmore

This report is based on the last full school year which covered 2023/2024 with some reference to the current school year which commenced on 1st September 2024. A report is necessary because we are blessed to have a Church of England primary school in the parish with many children attending St John's Church and School. Additionally, as the PCC is responsible for appointing two governors, this report will explain what governors do, give a broad overview of the school's Christian ethos as well as some information about what has happened during the reporting period.

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. The staff are a credit to their profession and are ably supported by highly skilled learning support assistants.

1. The role of Governing Boards

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.

As members of the Governing Board, we are proud of the school and its warm, welcoming, inclusive and strong family atmosphere.

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 that happens at St John's School. It is this highly valued and widely shared ethos which makes our school special.

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.

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 re-appointed Tracey James in September 2024 to serve another term. The other PCC appointed governor is Jon Stephen whose term of office commenced in September 2021. Four 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. Unlike many other schools, 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.

7. Governing Board Changes

- The Revd Dr John Barker's, London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) appointed governor, term of office came to an end in March. The Governing Board appointed John as an Associate Member for the remainder of the school year. In September John moved from All Saints' Harrow Weald, where he had served as Vicar since 2019, to a new part-time Associate Priest post at All Hallows-by-the-Tower.
- Claire Ingate was appointed by the LDBS and began her term of office on 1st April 2024. She succeeded John Barker.
- Abi Miranda was re-elected in July to serve another term by the LDBS.

In December 2024, the Rector 'retired' as Chair of Governors after almost 10 years in office. The Vice-Chair, Kelly Kehn, was elected as the new Chair of Governors. The Rector was appointed Vice-Chair.

8. Committees

During the school year 2023/2024 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 of these committees where their skills, interests and experience enables them to play a full part and make the biggest impact. The Governing Board and the committees all have clear terms of reference which are reviewed annually.

Governors are also linked with a specific subject or area within the school, often connected to the improvement priorities (see below). In 2023/2024, the subject/areas were: Early Years Foundation Stage, Equality, Environment, Health & Safety, IT, Maths, Mental Health & Well-being (for the children and staff), Music, Pupil Premium, Reading, RE with Collective Worship, 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 2023/2024 the Governing Board met routinely on five occasions (September, December, March, May and July). The committees usually meet once each term.

The Headteacher's Performance Management Committee 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 2023/2024.

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 2023/2024 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 updated their safeguarding training which is an annual requirement.

13. Ofsted

The school received a routine visit from Ofsted in July 2024 (previous inspection January 2019). The school retained its 'GOOD' judgement. Here are some highlights from the report:

"St John's is a warm and welcoming school. Relationships are respectful and pupils are safe. The school's values of 'faith, strength, compassion, wisdom and hope' permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils are polite, considerate and show curiosity in their learning. The school ensures that pupils receive helpful pastoral support when they need it."

"The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It is broad in scope and meets national expectations. It has been carefully designed to build pupils' knowledge right from the start in early years through to Year 6. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit learning. Staff have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve."

Pupils learn a broad and stimulating range of subjects. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well."

"The curriculum for pupils' wider development is extensive. Pupils participate in a range of clubs and activities."

"The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. Governors understand their statutory responsibilities and maintain effective strategic oversight of the school's work. They share the school's high aspirations for all pupils at the school to be successful in the next stage of their education."

"Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience at the school."

"The school is relentless in its aim of ensuring that attendance meets its high expectations. Staff have rightly identified that this is a priority and take a range of actions to promote the importance of good attendance."

To strengthen the work the school does, the inspection said, *"...in a few subjects, changes to the curriculum are more recent and not fully embedded. In these instances, staff are still getting used to delivering new curriculum content and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that they embed the curriculum across all subjects and continue to develop staff expertise so that they can implement it with confidence."*

14. School Improvement Priorities

The Headteacher reported regularly on (and the Governing Board duly monitored) the four areas that formed the 2023/2024 School Improvement Plan:

Priority 1 - Quality of Education (implement new EYFS reforms and develop outdoor provision, raise standards of Writing, develop quality adaptive teaching to support 'Great Expectations' for all pupils, raise standards in Maths for all pupils especially for higher ability pupils, further develop Reading skills for middle ability pupils and those identified groups).

Priority 2 - Behaviour and Attitudes (develop quality playground opportunities and build on positive relationships between the school and wider community).

Priority 3 - Personal Development (increase opportunities for outdoor learning and use of forest school to support pupil progress and mental health wellbeing, 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 and achieve Arts Mark Status).

Priority 4 - Leadership and Management (develop all subject leaders as effective Middle Leaders, ensure a healthy work/life balance for all, encourage a culture of coaching and mentoring within the school to support growth both for adults and pupils and Pupil and Parent Voice).

The Governing Board annually approves a 3-year school budget. 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 2023/2024 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 and PE & Sports Premium.

Governors remain increasingly 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 had some success but the pressure on the school budget remains acute.

In the 2024/2025 school year the following school improvement priorities were agreed:

Priority 1 – Quality of Education (raise standards of Writing, develop quality adaptive teaching to support 'Great Expectations' for all pupils, raise standards in Maths for all pupils especially for higher ability pupils, embed the new Geography curriculum and develop provision for EAL pupils).

Priority 2 – Behaviour and Attitudes (improve attendance and punctuality and build on positive relationships between the school and wider community).

Priority 3 – Personal Development (increase opportunities for outdoor learning and use of forest school to support pupil progress and mental health well-being, develop mental health and well-being for all staff and pupils through the developed use of Zones of Regulation, develop British Values and courageous advocacy across all curriculum areas and achieve Arts Mark Status).

Priority 4 – Leadership and Management (develop all subject leaders as effective middle leaders).

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).

It has been another busy year but the school has gone from strength to strength as clearly validated by Ofsted.

**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 most 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. In 2024, 6 DBS checks to the enhanced level were obtained (5 new and 1 recheck). DBS checks are renewed every three years. DBS checks are held for the Clergy, the Junior Choir, Junior Church, Littler Fishers and Youth Group leaders, Licensed Lay Ministers, the Parish Administrator, PCC Members and the Safeguarding Team. DBS checks are also held for the keyholders who open and close Church House for one-off bookings as these events are often children's parties.
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 Awareness, Foundations and in some cases Leadership) when they receive their new DBS check. The Diocese of London now requires all PCC Members to complete the 'Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse' course (as well as the Basic Awareness and Foundations courses). All serving PCC Members have completed these three courses.
3. Regularly updated the Church of England's Parish 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' (copies were displayed in the Church, Church House, uploaded onto our website and sent to the Diocese of London).
8. Reviewed and re-adopted the Diocese of London's 'Model Parish Safeguarding Checklist'.
9. Reviewed and re-adopted the Church of England's 'Code of Safer Working Practice'.
10. Reviewed and noted the Church of England's 'Practical Guidance: Safer Recruitment'.
11. Reviewed and noted the Church of England's online guidance 'Responding Well to Victims and Survivors of Abuse'.
12. Reviewed and adopted the Church of England's new policy statement on 'The Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' (copies were uploaded onto our website and sent to the Diocese of London).
13. Re-appointed Mark Lynch and appointed Nancy Newton as Parish Safeguarding Officers. Mark and Nancy attended in person training organised by the new Willesden Area Safeguarding Adviser, Angela Colman.
14. Re-appointed Sue Wright as Children's Champion.
15. Re-appointed Sheila Oliver as Adults at Risk 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 safeguarding posters and contact information were up-to-date and displayed across the Church and Church House (incl. in the toilets). A new poster with a QR code was created and is now on display. Leaflets on Domestic Abuse are also available.
19. Reviewed and adopted the Church of England new 'National Safeguarding Standards' which are essential for churches to understand the quality and, most importantly, the impact of its safeguarding activities. The details are on display across the Church and Church House and have been sent by email to church members.
20. Reviewed and re-adopted the Role Descriptions for our 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). Each person undertaking one of these roles is asked to review the Role Description every year and to sign a copy in confirmation that they understand the requirements of the role.
21. Obtained a new signed 'Declaration on Safeguarding' (= Code of Conduct) from all those who work with children and young people.
22. Reviewed the Group Risk Assessments for Junior Church (incl. crossing Old Church Lane) and Little Fishers Parent & Toddler Group
23. Updated the General and Fire Risk Assessments for the Church and Church House.
24. 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.
25. Updated the Health & Safety Policy.
26. 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. Food allergies, risk assessments, insurance and security are also covered in the Terms & Conditions.
27. The safeguarding section on the church website was reviewed and updated.
28. Nancy Newton and Sue Wright visited Junior Church to explain their roles. This will be repeated on a semi-regular basis.

Safer Recruitment

We do not permit anyone to work with our children and young people unless they have been safely recruited. This involves the applicant reviewing the relevant Role Description to make sure they fully understand the requirements of the role (incl. safeguarding expectations). A new DBS check to enhanced level is obtained as well as two written references

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.

Safeguarding Sunday

The Church of England designated the third Sunday in November as 'Safeguarding Sunday'. This important initiative is a chance for congregations to use a regular Sunday service to listen and talk together about how spaces can be created that are safer for everyone. The theme and focus in 2024 was 'Let's talk about it' to encourage churches to talk about how communities can work together to prevent abuse and create a world where every child and adult can feel and be safe.

Our 9.30am Parish Communion on 17th November 2024 was dedicated to 'Safeguarding Sunday' with the liturgy, hymns, prayers and sermon all focussed on safeguarding. As part of the sermon, the Parish Safeguarding Officers, Children's Champion and our Adults at Risk Champion were brought to the front and introduced with their roles being explained.

Members of the church family were invited to undertake the 'Basic Awareness' online course which some elected to do.

Resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury

In November the Most Revd Justin Welby resigned following the recent publication of the Makin [Report](#). This report exposed the long-maintained conspiracy of silence about the heinous abuses of John Smyth. This was yet another example of where the Church of England failed to properly respond to a safeguarding disclosure. Disclosures are often received many years after the actual abuse took place and it is right that the leaders of the Church of England take responsibility for this neglect.

Finally

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).

Indeed, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we must all play our part to ensure that St John's Church remains a safe place where everyone can flourish.

If you have any questions about our safeguarding procedures or a concern, please contact our Parish Safeguarding Officers or the Diocese of London's Duty Safeguarding Adviser.

Mark – 07982 906833

Nancy – 07443 487126

Duty Safeguarding Adviser - 020 7932 1224

Matthew Stone

7.16 Tea & Chat

We met weekly on Tuesday afternoons throughout 2024.

The children from Aylward School visited in February. They sang for us and then showed some of their written work, explaining and chatting enthusiastically while enjoying squash and biscuits.

Heidi, once again, provided a delicious, authentic Turkish meal for us one afternoon in June. Somehow, the two Community Police officers on their rounds, found themselves spending quite a while in Church House that afternoon.

At our regular Christmas visit from St John's School Sing Up Club, Mrs Ogunniyi brought 47 children to sing for us, with all the necessary helpers. Lots of squash & biscuits required. For the first time, the Montessori nursery brought some of their tiny children to watch. It was a joy to have so many young people with us that afternoon.

During the year some of our people joined in and enjoyed Church social functions and occasional services too.

Our numbers varied weekly. We welcomed a couple of new people during the year. Transport, health and weather had implications at times. We were pleased when Olive was brought to see us one afternoon about the time of her 101st birthday. Matthew & Wendy enlivened our afternoons whenever they were able to pop in.

Throughout the year, with the help of our wonderful tea makers, Tea & Chat continued to be a place for conversation and companionship where all were welcomed.

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

The Youth Group continues to meet twice each term with the aim of providing a safe space where the young people (aged 11-18) can meet and have fun. Our events have included Laser Tag, ten pin bowling, games and a BBQ on Church Field. We now share our youth work with Stanmore Baptist Church.

In September it was pleasing to welcome the new Year 7s and most sessions have a total of 15-20 young people attending.

Thanks to those who support this important work.

Matthew Stone and Wendy Wall

8. Assistant Curate's Report

The last year has been a special time in my curacy. I have grown in confidence as a priest, consolidating my experience of leading and preaching in the weekly services. I have gained more experience in baptismal and funeral ministry and taken 3 more weddings. I have shed tears of joy, tears of sadness and tears of laughter, through these deeply personal life experiences.

It has been a privilege to walk alongside members of the church family and community through different life events, and I will forever be grateful to you all for the times you have shared with me and the encouragement you have given me.

Highlights of the year include:

- conversations and deepening relationships with church family members
- leading, preaching and presiding at the Easter and Christmas services
- the privilege of spending time with children and young people
- tea, chat and cake at Tea and Chat
- the fun and fellowship of Little Fishers
- prayer group meetings
- reading the Bible in a year and monthly meetings in the pub
- collective worship at St John's School and assemblies at Aylward School
- home visits and home communion with church family members
- running a Hope Explored and Christianity Explored course with Stanmore Baptist Church; talking with people about some of the big questions of life
- welcoming children from Stanburn, Whitchurch, Aylward schools on visits to the church
- a 20-day placement as a Chaplain at UCLH
- short placements at John Keble School and Stanmore Baptist Church.

It has been exciting to be part of the Discipleship Mission Action Group as we met regularly to discuss discipleship and to plan and facilitate activities to help us grow in our knowledge of and relationship with God.

The Environment Mission Action Group has organised litter-picking days and continues to raise awareness of environmental issues. Graham Denman and I have been exploring more cost-effective and environmentally friendly heating systems for the church; a report with our findings was submitted to the PCC in February 2025.

I meet regularly with Matthew [Stone] and have enjoyed continuing to develop my experience across the breadth of parish ministry, including visiting Air Cadets, and covering services at churches in vacancy. I continue attending regular training with other curates organised by the Willesden Area and Diocese of London.

It has been a busy year and, looking back, it is amazing to see the often quiet ways in which God guides and intervenes. His timing is perfect.

Many of you will know that my curacy at St John's Church is due to end in the summer of 2025, and Shane and I will be moving on. We both agree that I could not have been given a better foundation for my ministry as an ordained priest than the time I've had here. I have been humbled by the patience, and generosity of time and spirit shown through your

support of my ministry here at St John's. It has been a pleasure to serve the church and the people of Stanmore alongside you, and I am deeply grateful to each and every one of you.

As we look forward to another year, with all the uncertainty and adventure it holds, let us remain rooted in our Rock and our Redeemer. In Habakkuk 1.5 He says: "Look at the nations and watch – and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told."

Wendy Wall

9. Rector's Review

The past year has not been easy for the Church of England. There is often negative press about fewer people attending services, an absence of children and young people, lack of volunteers, pressure on finances and churches in poor condition with little or no money to undertake the routine repairs and maintenance, let alone improvements.

In 2024 the Church of England was rightly criticised for failing to handle its safeguarding once again and, in particular, not responding well to disclosures. This led to the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in November. A prominent member of the clergy spoke on Radio 4 at the time and said there are two Churches of England. The first centres around the parish church where clergy and people faithfully engage in mission and ministry to serve God and be a witness to the local community. The second, which seems hugely distant from the first, is the 'institution' (Church of England Plc), especially its leadership, which appears to be in such a mess.

Thankfully St John's Church Stanmore is far removed from the 'institution'. Our work to grow the number of people who attend, especially with children and young people, continues to bear fruit. Many of you give so generously of your time, we have a little money in the bank and are on top of our repairs and maintenance. Various improvements have been made in recent years (lighting, sound, screen/projector and organ to name a few) and we are currently gearing up for a large stonework project in 2025.

People often say that St John's is a family church where we welcome and love each other. This is the sort of church I believe Jesus wants us to be, where we serve our community and are the 'good news' to others. I am always humbled when I read the annual report of just how much we do and how much of what we do is undertaken by you as volunteers. Thank you so much for the part you play in our life and witness.

The privilege of conducting services, baptisms, weddings and funerals remains an awesome responsibility and will never diminish. It is always particularly sad, however, when the funeral is for a member of our church family. Indeed in 2024 we were very sad to lose five long-standing ladies: Daphne Johnson, Dorothy Neve, Diana Phillips, Audrey Saker as well as Margaret Payne, who had moved with her husband Harry from Stanmore in 2022 to be closer to their daughter. We miss them.

At the beginning of January, I was appointed Area Dean of Harrow. This additional role means I am 'first among equals' amongst the local clergy and I now attend a raft of meetings (Bishop of Willesden's Senior Staff, Willesden Area Council, Willesden Area Finance Group), supporting the clergy in the 21 churches in the deanery, organise clergy chapter

meetings and help to plan and deliver the Deanery Synod meetings. Over the past 12 months, 7 parishes have been in vacancy and I have covered some of their services and helped them with parish profiles and attending various meetings/interviews to appoint the new parish priests.

Most parish clergy have other duties to undertake and I continue to keep myself additionally busy with the following:

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

I am also a husband and a father...

In July I celebrated the 10th anniversary of my induction as your Rector and it was wonderful to share this occasion with you. It was great to mark Jean Orpwood's silver jubilee as a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) in September. Another LLM, Lydia McLean, was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London also in September at St Mellitus. She will serve as part-time self-supporting Assistant Curate at St Marylebone Parish Church, close to where she has been working at UCLH as a Lay Chaplain.

It is great to see our Assistant Curate, Wendy Wall, continuing to grow in confidence and ability, and we thank her for the many contributions both she and Shane make to the life of St John's Church. I am also grateful to Karen who works so diligently in the Parish Office.

Whilst my report started somewhat negatively, the rest of it was positive! Being part of St John's Church is awesome simply because of who you are and who God is calling us to be. Please continue to pray for our mission and ministry as we give thanks for another busy year and look forward to playing our part in continuing the story of Christ's church in Stanmore and beyond.

Matthew Stone



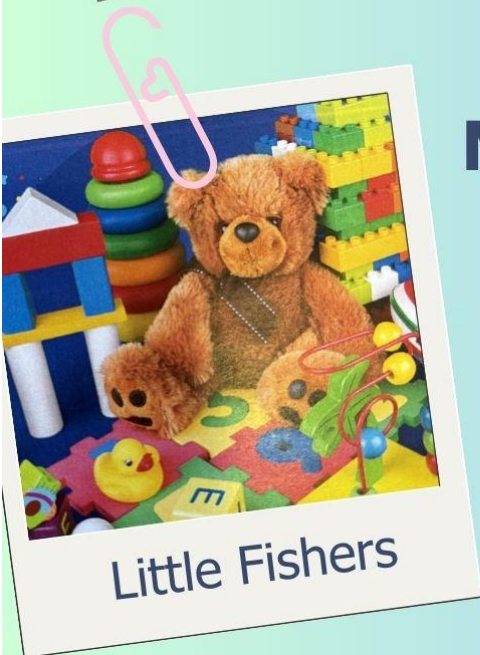
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Tea & Chat

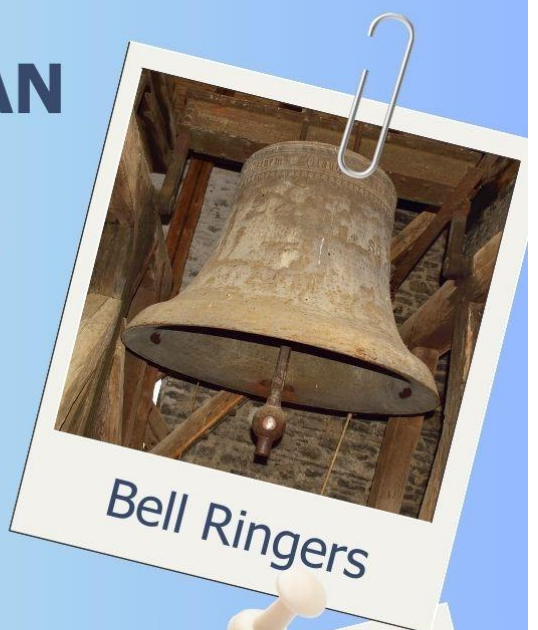
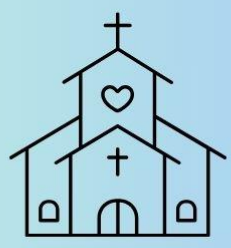


Home Groups



Little Fishers

MORE THAN JUST A CHURCH



Bell Ringers



Café



Junior Church & Youth Group



Flower Arrangers