



Annual Review 2023



Annual Church Meeting 21 April 2024

St John's Church, St John's Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 1HS.

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Registered Charity 1128699

A church gathering to celebrate and review 2023, as we report back and give glory to God.

You are invited to come early for praise and worship from 10.20am.

The Annual Church Meeting will start at 10.30am.

CONTENTS

Agenda for the 2024 Annual Church Meeting

Minutes of the 2023 Annual Church Meeting

Written Reports for the period ending 31st December 2023

a. Meeting Reports

- Fabric
- Electoral Roll
- PCC Secretary
- Safeguarding

b. Ministry reports

- Children's Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- Evangelism and Outreach
- Global Mission
- LifeGroups
- Equipping Ministry
- Worship Services and Prayer
- Pastoral Ministry
- Fellowship and Events Ministry
- Administration and Communication
- Finance, HR, and Safeguarding

c. Other reports

- Deanery Synod
- Churches Together Woodbridge and Melton (CTWM)

Please note that the accounts are available separately



ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING
at St John's Church, Woodbridge
10.30am on 21st April 2024

AGENDA

Welcome and worship (worship to start from 10.20 am)

Introduction

- 1: Introduction
- 2: Appointment of Minutes Secretary
- 3: Apologies

Annual Meeting of Parishioners *

- 4: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Parishioners held on meeting on 23rd April 2023
- 5: Election of Church Wardens
 - *Elected for an annual term of office for a maximum of six consecutive terms of office.*
 - *Nominated and seconded by people entitled to attend **
 - *Candidates must not be disqualified as per church representation rules*

Annual Parochial Church Meeting **

- 6: Approval of the Minutes of Annual General meeting held 23rd April 2023
- 7: Approval of Tellers (to count the votes if there is an election)
- 8: Election of three Deanery Synod Members
- 9: Election of six PCC Members
- 10: Vicar's Report
- 11: Written reports as received (see Financial Accounts)
- 12: Testimonies and other feedback

Reflection: What were the highlights that you celebrate and give glory to God?

Worship songs and prayer and thanksgiving

Reports for the period ending 31st December 2023

- 13: Electoral Roll (Sue Simpson, Electoral Roll Officer)
- 14: PCC Secretary (Wardens - Alan Nunn and Lyn Spall)
- 15: Church Wardens (Fabric) Report (Alan Nunn and Lyn Spall)
- 16: Financial statements (Richard Bolt)
- 17: Noting of 2023 Accounts
- 20: Appointment of Independent Examiner (Richard Bolt)
- 18: Deanery Synod (see attached)
- 19: Safeguarding update (Lyn Spall)
- 21: Results of the Elections (if there is an election)
 - Deanery Synod Members
 - PCC Members

Any other business (To be notified to the chairperson 48 hours in advance)

Prayer, worship and close of meeting

The next APCM will provisionally be on 11th May 2025

* This meeting is open to all persons whose names are entered on the electoral roll of the parish and persons resident in the parish whose names are entered on a register of local government electors by reason of such residence.

** This meeting is open to only those whose names are on the Church Electoral Roll are entitled to vote and take part in the proceedings of this.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
23rd April 2023
In Church (as an Integral Part of the Morning Service)

Chairperson: The Rev Charles Trefusis

1	Apologies for Absence As above	Chair
2	Appointment of Clerk As above	Chair
3	Approval of Minutes of APCM held on 24th April 2022 As above	Chair
4	Elections of Deanery Synod & PCC Members Charles informed the meeting that there were 6 vacancies on the PCC. Only four nominations had been received to date and therefore there would be no need for an election. Charles reminded everybody that it would be good if we could, in future, have sufficient nominations to warrant an election. There being four nominations Di Russ – Proposed by Clare Johnson and Seconded by Gay Nichols Carol Saunders – Proposed by Alan Nunn and Seconded by Michael Lyons Avril Askew – Proposed by Lyn Spall and Seconded by Julie Wilman Gay Nichols – Proposed by Mike Brierley and Seconded by Roy Eaton Unanimously agreed. Charles informed the meeting that there were presently three vacancies for Deanery Synod and to date there has only been one nomination. Rosie Evans – Proposed by Lois Bridgeman and Seconded by Noelle Gore Unanimously agreed.	Chair
5	Vicar's Report Charles based his report on Nehemiah 8v10 “..for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” In summary Charles referred to our last year under three main headings: i. Restoration ii. Rebirth, and iii. Refocus Charles reminded us that “following Jesus is a marathon – not a sprint!” The whole of his report had a maritime theme in which Charles likened the start of his ministry at St John's as a ship's captain and together with the crew (the congregation/fellowship) are serving King Jesus. He further reported back the processes which eventually culminated in the document entitled “Our Purpose, Values and Vision. This would be the centrepiece of the church's direction for the foreseeable future.	Chair

Charles reminded us all that we are not passengers but all members of the crew. This is not a pleasure cruise but a lifeboat.

Charles thanks everyone for their contribution to church life but made special mention to some key people in the fellowship.

6 Statutory Reports for the Period ending 31st December 2022

Chair

a. Annual Report and Financial Statements

This report was presented to the meeting in its entirety. There were no questions raised.

Proposed by **Julie Wilman** and Seconded by **Peter Brockett**
Unanimously agreed

After a time of further testimonies from key areas of church life and a time of worship, the meeting spent some time in prayer.

b. Electoral Roll – **Sue Simpson** reported the following:

- there were 197 people on the roll.
- 27 live in the Parish and 170 live outside the Parish.

Since the last AGM in 2022

- 7 people have left (this means left St Johns usually to another church) and 3 people had moved away.
- 4 people had died.
- 13 people had joined the roll.

c. PCC Secretary Report - (from Alan Nunn & Lyn Spall)

We've not had a formal PCC secretary this year, and will be appointing one at the next PCC meeting. Luc Ray-Mathur has offered to carry out this role and this matter will be ratified at the next PCC. The PCC met 4 times in the year and covered finance, buildings, and latterly looking ahead at the Vision and Action Plans.

We recorded thanks to Diana Ray-Mathur who volunteered to be our Minute-Taker for our PCC meetings and at this APCM. We also recorded thanks to God for bringing Charles & Kate Trefusis to St John's during 2022

d. Church Wardens Report (Fabric) – (from Alan Nunn) (See from page 9):

- i. Please refer to detail in the report provided. We have 4 additional buildings as well as the church building – the Old Vic, Church Hall and 2 residential properties. One is currently housing our Childrens & Families Worker, (and a full inspection is scheduled for the coming week.) The other property (following significant refurbishment works during the year) is currently rented to tenants from the church family.
- ii. Church Hall has had work carried out, including a boiler replacement. The courtyard wall has fallen into disrepair, and good progress is being made for its reinstatement.
- iii. The Old Vicarage - is a listed building and is in need of significant investment to cover deferred maintenance. A priority schedule of works has been prepared and works will be progressed accordingly in 2023 and beyond.
- iv. Future Use: We will be considering the future of buildings as part of the action planning following the vision exercise, to ensure that we have properties which support our vision.

e. Financial Statements (from Alan Hawes & Richard Bolt)

- i. **Alan Hawes (PCC Treasurer)** – led us through the accounts. The 2022 accounts had been audited and approved by Ensors. A copy of the accounts can be found on the APCM chapter of the church website. Alan (who is stepping down from this role after 40+ years after this APCM) did a short presentation of the significant changes that have taken place in our income and expenses throughout that time.
- ii. AH thanked **Robert Brockbank** for his ongoing support as Gift Aid secretary and **Tony Allwood** for his ongoing support throughout the year. AH also thanked **Richard Bold** for offering to take on the role in 2023 and will be working with him to ensure a smooth handover.
- iii. AH confirmed that the last PCC unanimously approved of the accounts for 2022

Proposed by **Lyn Spall** and Seconded by **Richard Bolt**
Unanimously agreed

- iv. **Richard Bolt** subsequently gave an update on the church finances for 2023 (to date) showing a couple of PowerPoint slides. We were encouraged by the increase in our income and he thanked the congregation for their faithfulness and encouragement. Expenses were very much in line with expectations.
- f. Deanery Synod Report – Clare Johnson (our Deanery Synod Rep) supplied us with a report which is summarised as follows. 4 meetings were held last year (at various venues in the deanery). Their meetings touched on a number of matters. The highlights of the year were the following:-
- i. Exploring the Fifth Mark of Mission “*to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.*”
 - ii. Synod was reminded to “Teach; Tell; Tend; Transform & Treasure.
 - iii. Parishes were encouraged to get involved with A Rocha UK’s “Eco Church Scheme”
 - iv. To acknowledge and thank the Ven Annette Cooper who retired paying especial tribute for all her hard work as Rural Dean over the last 2 years assisting with a number of clergy appointments, updating parish inspections post-covid and setting the Deanery on a firm course for the future.
 - v. Growing Younger initiatives with a presentation by the diocesan Children’s & Families Minister.
 - vi. Update on deanery and Parish Share
 - vii. Update on Eco-Church & Website with parishes encouraged to aim for Bronze Eco award by 2023.

7 Safeguarding - Update

Lyn Spall

Lyn Spall is our Parish Safeguarding Officer and her report is summarised as follows: “As a church we are doing quite well regarding Safeguarding Training. Many people have gained their certificate for Basic Training and others have gone onto the next stage and attained Foundations. The leaders of our church have undertaken Leadership Training.

The online Parish Dashboard reminds us about keeping policies up to date and ensuring all the activities we undertake are covered by our Safeguarding, including Safer Recruitment. Any volunteer wishing to help in an area should meet the accepted criteria to ensure that we all keep each other safe. Any one of us can be vulnerable at certain times of our life. We are reminded of the need to watch out for each other and if anything concerns or worries us then we are to contact Lyn Spall. Thank you to all who endeavour to make our church a safer place for all.”

LS also reminded us that there was an urgent need to appoint a deputy Safeguarding Officer and asked for anyone interested to speak to her.

8 Appointments – Auditor/Independent Examiner **Chair**

Alan Hawes proposed Ensors to continue with this role into 2024.

Proposed by **Cathie Taylor** and Seconded by **Peter Plummer**.
Unanimously agreed.

9 Appointment of Electoral Roll Officer Alan
Nunn

AN reported that he has approached **Sue Simpson** to continue in this role. SS agreed.

10 Meeting Closed at 12.10pm

The APCM was brought to a close with a hymn, prayer and blessing.

A: MEETING REPORTS

FABRIC REPORT

Alan Nunn

St John's PCC is responsible for 5 buildings. The condition of each is summarised below. A Quinquennial Inspection (QI) was carried out during the summer, and a further report for the Old Vicarage and Church Hall was carried out at the same time.

The Fabric team are seriously overloaded, and progress is hampered by the amount of volunteer time available to progress items identified below. This represents a risk in that the ability to maintain the buildings into the future is compromised by the time available to progress them, including the 25 high priority items identified for work over the coming 12 months. More help would be welcome to assist with seeking quotes and project manage the necessary repairs.

St John's Church

The church is in overall good condition, although a number of points were raised on the QI. These include improvements to the roof, Tower, exterior and clock / bell mechanism. 9 items were identified as priorities over the coming 12 months. The buildings team have ideas for improving the churchyard, making it a more welcoming and inclusive space. To deliver these changes, work is needed to prepare detailed plans and progress permissions with both the Diocese and East Suffolk Council who maintain the churchyard.

The Old Vicarage

The Old Vicarage is in overall good condition, although a number of points were raised on the QI. These include work needed on the roof, repairs and repainting to all exterior woodwork, improvements to the cellar to prevent water ingress and improve ventilation, work to maintain plants and trees and reinstate the garden to a useable state. 9 items were identified as priorities over the coming 12 months. In addition to this, the retaining wall to St Johns Street remains a concern. We continue to make slow progress towards planning permission to introduce structural repairs which will prevent eventual collapse.

St John's Church Hall

The Church Hall is in overall good condition, although a number of points were raised on the QI. These include work to the roof, external paths, interior decoration of WCs and kitchen. 7 items were identified as priorities over the coming 12 months. During the year the courtyard wall repair was completed, which has enabled us to re-instate the exit route through the courtyard.

1 Anderson Way

This property was used by the Childrens' pastor until September 2023. When she left, we carried out significant works to bring it up to a high standard for future use. The house was fully rewired, and the heating system updated to correct a long standing issue of poor coverage in some rooms. The interior was redecorated, and new carpets laid. In December, the property was let commercially on a short-term basis, so that it can be made available for future staff if needed.

44 Bury Hill

This property is let to a family from Church. No major work has been undertaken this year, and the property remains in excellent condition.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Sue Simpson

Our Electoral Roll shows that we have 187 members. Of this 8 members have joined, 2 people have moved, one has been ordained, 13 have left and 2 have died. If you are not currently on the Electoral Roll, it's really worth considering joining if you consider St John's your Church Family. You are eligible if you have been attending habitually for at least six months or if you live in the parish.

PCC SECRETARY

Luc Ray-Mathur (PCC Secretary)

In 2023 the PCC met on 6 occasions. We dealt with a number of issues as follows:

- a) **Staffing Matters** – our Children & Families Worker resigned in August. We subsequently advertised and appointed Kate Trefusis to the post on a part time basis (one year contract only). In preparation for 2024, New Job Descriptions and job advertisements have been drafted in the hope that we would be able to advertise for a full time Children & Families Worker and Youth Pastor before the end of the year.
- b) **Premises** –
 - i. **44 Bury Hill** – we dealt with the complete refurbishment of this property in 2022. The property was let to a family within the church in January.
 - ii. **Andersons Way** – subsequent to the Children & Families Worker resigning during 2023, the PCC carried out an inspection/survey with a view to identifying any works that needs to be carried. Renovation work was completed and the property let in early December on a short-term basis
 - iii. **Church Hall** – Wi-Fi to this building was connected. Completed in 2023.
 - iv. **Church Hall Driveway & Courtyard Wall** – needed skilful negotiations with the neighbour who needed to contribute towards the repair works. This was completed in 2023.
 - v. **Old Vicarage Windows** – needed urgent repair works. Completed in 2023.
 - vi. **Old Vicarage Wall** – this has shown significant deterioration and work has started to identify how best this can be remedied. This work is ongoing.
- c) **Safeguarding** – much work was carried out in order to meet our accreditation requirements. In the autumn we were able to appoint two assistants to support our Safeguarding Officer. **Avril Sterling** is the Deputy Safeguarding Officer and **Janet Kinsman** is the Safeguarding Administrator.
- d) **Vision & Strategy** – this was the subject of a huge investment in time and effort by many in the church. The process started with a PCC Away Day in January 2023 where other key stakeholders were invited. Subsequently, two “open-door” meetings were arranged where every church member could attend and give their voice and opinions. Our Purpose, Values & Vision was created and launched in April 2023. New Ministry Teams were created to help drive the vision forward. (The old Hub Teams were dissolved as these groups have been superseded by the introduction of Ministry Teams.) This strategy is being brought together by our Mission Action Plans together with budget implications for 2024 and beyond.
- e) **Finance** – we appointed **Richard Bolt** as our new PCC Treasurer in 2023. He has invested a lot of time and effort into refreshing all the areas of financial management, to safeguard the fiduciary duties and responsibilities of PCC. We are regularly updated on our income and expenses and in spite of the numerous calls for extra funds for exceptional and urgent expenditure the Treasurer reports that set against a forecast deficit of approx. £50k at the start of the year, we will likely end 2023 breaking even.

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Lyn Spall

The safeguarding team – Lyn Spall, Avril Askew and Janet Kinsman – met regularly throughout 2023 to review documents and ensure all Safeguarding records are up to date.

All individuals within St John’s who work or volunteer with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults undertake a DBS check and the relevant Safeguarding training depending on their role. There are three levels of training; Basic, Foundations and Leadership. A new online course has been introduced for all leaders and PCC members, Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse and this will be rolled out during 2024.

All hirers of our church premises must agree to follow our Safeguarding Policy and all members of St John’s share in the need for vigilance and openness to keep each other safe. A reminder that if you are concerned about anything at all, speak to one of us or to Charles.

B: MINISTRY REPORTS

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' MINISTRY

Kate Trefusis

We want to thank Clare Johnston for the wonderful work she did leading the children's ministry until August 2023, from the lively Jungle Jamboree holiday club in February and Experience Easter for primary school children to the weekly Haven in the summer holidays for primary aged children and their families.



Since September, the teams and I have developed the work at Little Gems to include Bible stories and enthusiastic singing of Christian songs with puppets – these have been mornings full of joy and many fantastic friendships have been made amongst the children and parents.

At Christmas, we welcomed children in Years 1 and 2 from our local primary schools to Experience Christmas in the church to learn through interaction about the love Jesus has for each of them. We have also enjoyed taking the Gospel to each of the local schools for whole school assemblies.



In addition to the Light Party at the end of October, we introduced half termly Extravaganza after-school parties with craft, games, a relevant talk and hot-dogs for primary aged children and these have been well attended. Our Sunday ministry, Kingdom Kids, has developed to help the children to understand a strong application of the message from each Bible story for their lives today. The crèche has developed to include a Bible story and application, singing and a play time.

As has been the focus throughout this year, the focus in 2024 continues to be mission to bring the good news of Jesus to those who do not yet know him, as well as discipling those children already attending our church. We continue to pray that God will bring many more families to St John's.

I want to thank each person on the amazing teams who have so willingly made all of the above work possible.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Rosie Evans

Friday youth (FNY) comprises games, crafts, cooking, refreshments, bible teaching and prayer. Youth Alpha concluded in Spring 23, including a Holy Spirit evening.

2023 events included crazy golf, outdoor games, Clip 'n' Climb and attending "The Gathering" - a youth event in Ipswich. Early in 24 we enjoyed Nerf Gun games in the Old Vic. These social evenings encourage youth to invite friends, some of whom have become regulars at FNY.

In Spring and Summer 23 we had 12-15 youth attending weekly, dropping to 10-ish from September 23. They are all delightful young people who get on well together and it's a privilege to spend time with them.

The evenings are lively, enjoyable, and purposeful. We are building relationships and have thoughtful conversations. The young people know they are valued and cared for.



Sunday Night Youth (for older youth) combined food with a bible study and prayer. It ran fortnightly until Summer 23. We have not had enough leaders to run SNY since then. Three youth achieved majority this year and received a Christian book and a prayer journal.

Nine youth attended a youth weekend at Sizewell and two youth attended New Day Christian youth festival in the Summer.

Our six youth leaders find this ministry fun, refreshing and very worthwhile. We would love at least four additional people to join the Youth team from September 24 so we can:

- launch Youth Ministry on Sunday mornings
- attract new year 7's to FNY
- run a separate group (Friday/Sunday) for older youth (most current attendees will be sixth-formers in Autumn 24)

Please pray for the youth ministry and if you feel called to be part of it please get in touch be considered.



EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH MINISTRY

Peter Plummer

This is the first time that Evangelism and Outreach function has been consolidated under one group with the formation of the team in September 2023. Prior to that, evangelistic activity has been undertaken on an ad hoc basis, with several church members involved.

As part of our mission action plan for Evangelism and Outreach, we have looked to raise the profile of evangelism within the church, at whole church level, Life group level and at a personal level. To begin this approach, the table tennis club has been launched with an intentionally evangelistic approach; we were also able to be part of the Woodbridge Christmas Street Fair, where we engaged with the public with a Christmas quiz. The pub carols were another way of us getting into the community. In addition, Alpha continues to be key as we invite and nurture people as they explore the Christian Faith. The Evangelism and Outreach team has also studied the "Leading in Evangelism" course, which has provided much input, challenges and discussion amongst the team.



As a church, we need to continue to pray and look for the opportunities for Evangelism and Outreach, in order for us to see our church grow and flourish. How might we encourage and invite children and young families to join us at St John's? The natural Evangelism course throughout lent and training day set for May will assist with this as this is one of our key focusses in 2024. Many thanks to the support team who have encouraged and prayed for the activities thus far and we look forward to where we as a church develop in this coming year.

GLOBAL MISSION MINISTRY

Michael Lyons

The World Mission Action Group (WMAG) aims to raise members of St John's awareness of, and involvement with, Global Mission. Members will be encouraged to support one or more Christian missions. This support may be through giving, prayer or volunteering.

In 2023 we sought to increase awareness of the work of St John's mission partners (the Pawsons and Robinsons) and the mission organisations supported by the church.



Prayer letters were received from the Pawsons, in Japan, and the Robinsons, in Bangkok, Thailand. These were published on the church website, available to those with members' access.

Suffolk Council Debt Centre (SCDC) based at St John's Saxmundham and partnered with Christians Against Poverty, is one of the missions supported by St John's. On 25th June, Laura Knight from SCDC spoke at the morning service.

In addition, our mission partners and organisations supported by St John's have regularly been included in intercessions at the Sunday morning services. In 2024, we continue our focus on raising awareness of global mission. Both our mission partners will be speaking at morning services this year.

We plan to introduce an on-line newsletter highlighting the work and specific needs of missions supported by St John's and carry out a survey of how members of St John's currently support global mission. Thank you to the members of WMAG for their support and commitment to this work.

LIFEGROUPS

Luc Ray-Mathur & Pamela Bulgin

LifeGroups are the heartbeat of the church. In 2023 we appointed Pamela Bulgin to assist with the co-ordination work of LifeGroups and this has been exciting and our joint efforts are already bearing much fruit.

Our thanks go to our team of LifeGroup leaders and assistants who week by week care for the individual members of each group. Your dedication to this service is very much appreciated. We end the year with some 136 people in 13 LifeGroups that meet on various weekdays, some in the daytime and some in the evening. 26 people joined a LifeGroup in 2023 and it is pleasing to record that four of these were as a result of the 2023 ALPHA course.

Why join a LifeGroup? It is the ideal place to grow in your relationship with God, expand your knowledge of the Bible, be supported in your life journey and be encouraged to share the Good News of Jesus with those you meet every day. In 2023 we have studied biblical principles behind the Purpose, Values and Vision strategy, and the Book of Joshua. Each group has a different feel and engages in different activities including worship, creative arts, walks, meals out and even trips to the cinema. LifeGroup members come together to serve the church in many ways including cooking and serving one of the meals for Alpha courses.



In 2024 we aim to grow TWO new groups (one daytime and one in the evening). We also aim to equip our LG Leaders in line with our Mission Action Plan. To encourage our groups to each hold an outreach/eco event.

For further details about LifeGroups please contact Luc or Pamela who co-ordinate and support the LifeGroups for St John's.

EQUIPPING MINISTRY

Lyn Spall

The Equipping Team is set up to ensure we are all given the tools we need to live out the Vision and Values of St John's, to 'Discover God and Share the Love of Jesus'.

As a church we want to grow deeper as spirit filled disciples, discovering our God-given gifts to lead, serve and give. We are encouraging every member to be part of a thriving Life Group and to have the opportunity to lead in a small group setting, so we can grow in confidence and in turn become leaders or mentors ourselves where possible.

We are looking at how we can become a more Accessible Church so that everyone, whatever their need, feels welcome and included.

We are learning how to share our faith with others through teaching and putting it into practice.

We are discovering how to be a church that cares for creation and sets an example to others by raising awareness, looking after our buildings and grounds, becoming involved in community and global projects and trying to have a personal lifestyle that honours God's creation.



At the end of 2023 we achieved the Bronze Eco Church Award and we aim in 2024 to work towards gaining Silver status. Thanks to everyone involved with the Repair Café, Little Free Pantry, Foodbank, Churchyard care and to Lois and Noelle for all they do to support.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Charles Trefusis

Over the past year we have sought to ensure our Sunday morning, and Sunday Evening Presence, services remain fresh and incorporate a variety of worship styles. We have done this in different ways through musical worship, teaching, prayer, testimony, reflection and other creative ways as we each seek to be open to God and his Holy Spirit, and grow in our knowledge and experience of Him. We want to ensure that all our preaching is biblical, and amongst other things we have studied Nehemiah, Joshua as well the biblical basis of our Purpose and Values.

We have built on our Worship for All services with a variety of styles and formats including café, interactive prayer, the King's Coronation, forest church and services during the summer months with learning in different styles.



The Wednesday morning service of Holy Communion continues to attract a regular congregation of around 20 and is much valued. Looking to the future we will want to continue to explore how to develop this service.

Our weekly prayer meetings are supported by a committed group praying for St John's and Woodbridge. We want to build on these and other prayer events, so that every church member actively participates in our corporate prayer life through the year.

Looking ahead, we need to explore ways of increasing our capacity on Sundays, with the resources that we have, and make them more accessible to those who do not currently attend. We also want to further develop our prayer, prayer ministry, Presence, musical worship and see even more members involved in different aspects of our worship services.

On behalf of the whole congregation, may I thank all those who take part in and contribute to our worship services at St John's whether they are up front or behind the scenes.

PASTORAL MINISTRY

Sue Simpson and Alan Weller

The team has met monthly throughout the year for prayer and encouragement, and to plan how to ensure that all members of the church receive care and support when it is needed. In addition, we meet on a termly basis with representatives from other groups within the church for pastoral support and to ensure that we remain inclusive, establishing closer links with key groups in the church e.g. Life Groups, youth and children's work and the Bereavement Support Group. During the year we undertook a review of the pastoral work at St John's, including how to deal more efficiently with urgent prayer requests. To that end, the church prayer book has been replaced by a WhatsApp prayer chain which is well used. Urgent requests can be made by phone or email, using dedicated numbers/email address and ensures immediacy and confidentiality. Our thanks to Dave and Liz for setting this up and maintaining it on a day-to-day basis. Home Communion is available for those unable to attend church.

Two members of the team have enrolled on formal Pastoral Training Courses, which are ongoing and due to be completed in the spring of 2024, and we hope to encourage others to do likewise. Some investigation has begun regarding Parish nursing and this will continue in 2024.

Our main aim for 2024 is to work with the equipping team to encourage those with a pastoral heart to come forward. By the end of the year, we want to say that we have a stronger and more diverse Pastoral Team, and our thanks as always goes to our current faithful, caring team and to the Lifegroups for the wonderful way they care for their members. Finally, our special thanks to Charles and Kate for the pastoral work that they do and for their support of the team.

FELLOWSHIP AND EVENTS

Noelle Gore

The Fellowship and Events team, although in its infancy, has successfully organised two church family events since its inception and have several more in the early planning stage for 2024 going into 2025. We are still building the team having begun small but have a wider group of helpers for which we are very thankful. If you have a heart for having fun and getting everyone together, or cooking, or have an idea? Please contact one of the team, we would love a few more to join our little core team!

In 2023 the church enjoyed a 'family' supper "Hotpot and Pud" - and a lovely opportunity to just chat. Going forward in 2024 we had a great time dancing at the Ceilidh, and hope to do this again next year!



There are provisional plans for a spring family picnic with games date TBC, hopefully another Church Family Supper with Entertainment in the Autumn and, looking further into 2025, another winter ceilidh and (very exciting) a Theatre and Fine Dining evening. Partnering with the Outreach team for some of these events as we believe that as we build community and fellowship, others will respond to the invitations we extend to them and want to be a part of it.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Alan Nunn

During 2023 we have developed a better understanding of how our buildings have been used for mission and outreach, which has highlighted significant under-use of Church, the Old Vic and the Hall. This has improved through the year, and we are planning to increase the use further through both church activities and external hire over the coming year.

The PCC has appointed a rep to focus on making our buildings fully accessible. The assessment includes areas such as sound and light in addition to physical accessibility, to make our buildings welcoming to all whatever their physical or emotional needs.

We want our churchyard to be a destination in its own right, and working parties have made significant improvements to the environment, including the planting of daffodils along the paths. We have bigger plans, which are currently being prioritised alongside the other work in the team.



We set the goal of demonstrating our care for creation and aiming towards net Zero. We have inspected each building and identified areas of improvement, working with the Eco-Church team.

All the main church buildings were inspected fully this year, leading to a significant programme of work for 2024 and 2025 which has been budgeted for and will progress alongside other priorities for our staff and volunteer team. We have held a number of congregation working parties through the year and want to build on this in the coming year.

We have started to look to the future, with ideas being developed for a significant refurbishment of the Old Vicarage to create larger meeting spaces. We are considering what to do with the Hall, which also requires significant investment to make it an effective building. Our two residential properties are currently let out.

Administration and Communication

Noelle Gore

The Office has been working hard during the last 12 months to support the growing ministry areas of the church and all the normal busy functions of a benefice office, to ensure all the cogs turn well.

With the help of a small team of volunteers we have been developing our new look website, which will be “going live” today, along with our new church data management system, Church suite, thank you to this amazing team for your tireless efforts to get us to where we are! This is where all the information for events, rotas, teams, and bookings for room use will be managed from today. This system is still very new to us all so please bear with us as we develop both the website and the new data management system to suit our needs as a church.



We have been working to develop better visibility of what we do and what events are happening, for our local community through banners and publicity, within the time constraints of office hours, and have a very new lovely little team in training to cover some basic office hours and tasks when we are taking a break, thank you, you know who you are!! We are looking to expand our volunteer team further so if you would like to get involved this year in anything from looking after the banners, helping keep the church open for visitors during the week, or doing a little clean in our buildings on the rare occasion our amazing cleaner is taking time off, please get in touch with the office, we would love to have you on board!

FINANCE, HR, SAFEGUARDING MINISTRY

Richard Bolt

2023 brought about a number of changes to this ministry team not least the retirement of Alan Hawes, former Treasurer, after 42 amazing years of service.

The action plan focus of the Finance area was initially to establish a strong team which was created and the terms of reference agreed in May, 2023 to provide PCC with a financial strategy and policies with regard to budgets and budgeting; investments and reserves and also to examine and revise the fee structure for weddings and funerals but also to set up and report to the members of St John's a monthly financial briefing explaining key income/expenditure challenges during each month of the year.

Whilst not directly associated with an action plan for 2023 and due to changes in staff, there has been a need to revise terms and conditions of new contracts to comply with current legislation. That has been broadly achieved, however, the examination of contracts has identified an urgent need to revise the existing staff handbook.

Safeguarding is managed by a small team who are maintaining a strong focus on compliance to Diocesan standards and ensuring and encouraging the taking of the online training for all involved in the leadership of activities across St John's.

The challenges for 2024 are focussed towards

- the financing of some major work to our buildings identified in the Quinquennial Review undertaken in 2023
- The revision of staff handbook
- Close scrutiny and management of the planned budget deficit to minimise the actual end of year deficit in 2024

Thank you to all those within the teams who have supported this ministry area and also me personally.

C: OTHER REPORTS

WOODBIDGE DEANERY RURAL DEAN'S REPORT

Revd Giles Tulk (Rural Dean)

During the first part of 2023 the role of Rural Dean was shared between me and Revd Katrina Dykes. Following my appointment as Rural Dean in June my main focus has been to ensure that Deanery Synod meetings were seen by those attending as:

- relevant
- helpful
- opportunities to share good practice (and challenges being faced)
- longer than one-and-a half hours.

With this in mind our Deanery Synod meetings in 2023 each had a specific focus, in addition to the short business meeting:

2nd February at St Felix Rendlesham: Presentation by Hilary Wordsworth Sewell - Diocesan Children's & Families Officer on 'growing younger,' followed by questions and answers.

15th June at Clopton Village Hall: 'Information Sharing Groups' on the subjects of (a) green churchyards, (b) setting up a 'friends of' group and (c) running a baby/toddler group in a small village setting.

19th October at St John's Church, Woodbridge: Presentation by Julie Podd (Parishes Resources Manager) and Emma Denton (Parish Giving Advisor) on (a) launching a successful Parish Giving Scheme, (b) digital giving, (c) legacy giving and (d) grants and funding. The presentations were followed by the chance for those present to ask questions and take away information.

In addition, a special meeting of church treasurers and incumbents was held on 7th November in Melton Church Hall, chaired by Archdeacon Rich, to discuss the Woodbridge Deanery Parish Share and its allocation. Clive Willetts deserves a special mention for ensuring that our Deanery finances are in a relatively healthy position, and that we do not lose our focus on this important but often sensitive area which is key to the future life and mission of our churches.

Thank You. I would like to thank Mary Hare - Lay Chair, Clive Willetts - Deanery Treasurer, and Mike Morris – Deanery Secretary for their dedication to ensuring the smooth running of our Deanery. Thank you also to Linda Cooper who stepped down as Deanery Secretary in 2023 and to Rita James for maintaining the Deanery website and being our Deanery 'green champion.'

I would also like to thank all the Deanery Synod Reps and my clergy colleagues who make the time in their busy schedules to attend Deanery Synod meetings. Revd Katrina Dykes announced her resignation as Rector of the Carlford Benefice in the Autumn of 2023, and we thank her for all she has achieved in that benefice, plus in her time as Co-Rural Dean of Woodbridge Deanery, and wish her the very best in her new benefice.

As I will be leaving my current role as Team Rector of Wilford Benefice after Easter to return to the Diocese of Hereford, may I thank you all for your support in my time as Rural Dean and to assure you of my best wishes and prayers for the future of Woodbridge Deanery.

CHURCHES TOGETHER in the WOODBRIDGE AREA (CTWA)

Lyn Spall

Representatives of the churches in the Woodbridge area, together with their ministers meet 4 times a year to pray, plan and discuss how we can work together to serve and share God's love in the community. In January 2023 we held a service of prayer at Quay Church during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On Good Friday there was a well-attended Walk of Witness and open air service in Elmhurst Park, while on Easter Day about 50 people gathered on the River Wall for a joyful Sunrise Service.

The churches supported the Big Family Day Out in July on Kingston Field and had a stall at the Harvest Fair in the town.

The ministers are meeting regularly for lunch and fellowship and we hope this will lead to even stronger links between all the churches. For the first time the joint Christmas card went out online rather than through letter boxes. This was mainly due to lack of funds and will be up for discussion this year.

A leaflet guide for information and advice about Rough Sleepers has been updated, which we can refer to if we encounter a rough sleeper in the town.

Roger Bridgeman has stepped down from being a CTWA rep. for St John's so we would like someone else to join Lyn Spall to represent our church. Many thanks to Roger for many years of serving in this friendly group.