



**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST WOKING**

Charity registration number: 1128277

Report for period between 12/03/2023 and 20/02/2024

Aims and purposes

St John's Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of co-operating with the vicar in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the church buildings, the Youth Centre, the assistant clergy's house and the flat formerly used by our youth minister.

Objectives and activities

The primary objective of the PCC is summarised in the motto *"To know Christ and to make Him known"*. This remains the same year on year because the gospel never changes; 'Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever' (*Hebrews 13v8*).

The PCC is committed to encouraging and involving as many people as possible to become part of our parish community. Our services and worship put our faith into practice through regular Bible reading, teaching, music, singing and prayer.

In planning future activities, the members of the PCC will have regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission where this is relevant, and will include:

- Acts of worship which are open to all.
- The provision of space for prayers, reflection and contemplation.
- Pastoral work including visiting the sick, housebound and bereaved.
- Provision of children's and youth work for the local community, plus weddings, funerals, etc.
- Provision of venues for community activities.
- Teaching the Christian faith through sermons, courses and small groups.

Administrative Information

The Parish is composed of two churches: St John the Baptist in St John's village, the parish church, and Emmanuel in Mayford. Rev Glyn Lucas is the incumbent and Rev Peter Chamberlin is the Associate Minister. They were assisted by Rev Robert Bennett (honorary OLM Curate, retired and with Permission to Officiate), Robin Langdon (Ministry Lead: Children's Work and Music), Lys Price (Ministry Lead: All Age Worship) and Kim Phillips (Ministry Trainee).

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a body corporate established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure.

The following have served on the PCC since the last APCM, held on 12th March 2023:

Clergy: Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin.

Churchwardens: Gerardine Densham Brown and Richard Price.

Deanery Synod members: Warwick Croucher, Nigel Cundy and Stephen Horn. (Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin, as members of the deanery clergy, are also members).

Elected PCC members: Samantha Barwick, Warwick Croucher, Graham Cundy, Chris Dale, Jill Howard, Gillian Margary, Margaret Molloy, Victoria Page, Harriet Pearce, Tim Read, Neil Salt, Amir Sexton, Sylvia Stock.

Co-opted members: Tony Graham (Treasurer) and Mary Kirkman (Safeguarding Officer).

The appointment of PCC members is governed by and set out in the Church Representation Rules. PCC members are elected for a three-year term, after which they stand down for at least a year. Day to day management is delegated to the incumbent and the churchwardens.

This year Samantha Barwick, Graham Cundy, Chris Dale, Gill Margary, Timothy Read and Sylvia Stock are standing down from PCC having served three years, and Victoria Page and Timothy Horn stepped down during the year. We would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work.

The Standing Committee meets between PCC meetings when necessary and comprised the Incumbent, the Associate Minister, the churchwardens, the treasurer, and two other PCC representatives: Chris Dale and Jill Howard.

The Emmanuel Committee is responsible for the day to day running and maintenance of its church.

Achievements and Performance

The numbers on the electoral roll to be reported at the APCM are St. John's 234 (last year 233) and Emmanuel 19 (last year 21). This makes a parish total of 253 (last year 254).

The average Sunday attendance during October was adults 194 (205 in 2023) and children 45 (36 in 2022); there were approximately 2,670 attendances (including schools services) over the Christmas period (1,800 in 2022).

During 2023, there were 8 baptisms and 1 Service of Thanksgiving (1 and 1 in 2022); 9 confirmations (0 in 2022) and 2 weddings (4 in 2022). During 2023, 14 funerals (9 in 2022), 5 cremations (3 in 2022) and 4 interments of cremated remains (10 in 2022) were conducted.

Emmanuel Report

Emmanuel held mainly lay-led services during the year, with recorded clergy sermons from St John's. Clergy visited at least monthly for Holy Communion services and other preachers visited occasionally. Monthly coffee mornings took place, some with visiting speakers, usually attracting some 30 local residents. Monthly Knit 'n' Natter meetings were held, making handicrafts for a variety of charities. There were several bookings by other churches and outside organisations who find the quiet and comfortable premises welcoming. Emmanuel hosted the Woking Welsh Society's annual St David's Day service, led by the Archdeacon of Surrey, Paul Davies. Routine maintenance of the church buildings and grounds continued as far as possible.

Financial Review

The accounts presented with this Annual Report have been prepared under the Charities Act 2011 in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006, together with Charities SORP (FRS 102): accounting regulations stipulate that the financial statements are prepared on an accruals basis. They have been subject to an independent examination by Fuller Spurling, Chartered Accountants.

Our expenditure in the year exceeded our income by £49,932, which is a significant change from last year's surplus of £10,812.

Our total income rose by 6.4%, with voluntary income increasing by 7.3%; however, costs increased by 24% (£83,600), mostly in the cost of church activities (32% or nearly £77,000).

The main reasons for this were as follows:

- The electricity contracts have had a full year at the high rates at which the contracts had to be renewed in late 2021; the utilities cost is now substantially greater than it was last year.
- As indicated last year, we had to undertake repairs to the church stonework which cost £22,000.
- The PCC agreed to sell Willowmead, the investment property, but decided that a better price would be obtained if some renovation work was carried out (and then recouped from the sales proceeds); this was done at a cost of £15,000. However, the sale (although agreed) had not been completed by the year end; this £15,000 will be returned to the general reserves when it does.
- The PCC also decided to renovate the Small Halls in the church when the pre-school closed down, to make it more attractive to new tenants. This cost £25,500 and will payback in roughly two years (from the higher annual rent being received).
- Finally, it is accounting practice to depreciate all assets (apart from land) including buildings; as we purchased the house in Hermitage Woods Crescent in 2020 for £550,000, we must expense this at £11,000 per year over the maximum 50 years it is expected to last.

Maintenance of buildings and other assets

The majority of the urgent and “within 5 years” major rectifications identified in the 2020 Quinquennial Inspection (QI) report have now been completed. This includes major repairs to the stonework on the Western gable ends and the South side of the Church.

During 2023 two other significant projects were completed: the Small Halls have been redecorated and refurbished with improved kitchen facilities. A new, fully equipped disabled toilet has been installed. Decking has been fitted over the very uneven ground immediately outside the Small Halls. This has created a much better space for all users. The Youth Centre Coffee bar has also been redecorated and refurbished. Some new seating has been obtained and better and more efficient lighting has been installed. More storage space has also been created without significantly reducing the space available and all at a very modest cost.

The central heating system in all buildings has required some attention this year. There were several unexpected faults that needed urgent repair. There were also some improvements made to the system to help economise on running costs, while improving available warmth. Extra radiators were installed to improve the heat output to the small halls. There have also been updates made to the lighting in the church halls and lounge to help reduce our Church electricity bill – which is now approaching £12,000 per year.

There are a large number of routine maintenance tasks required every year. Annual service requirements including the organ, fire protection, lightning protection, central heating, clearing gutters and roofs of leaves and others. There were also a large number of smaller repairs needed which have been completed; some by professionals and others by volunteers.

Risk management

The major risks to which the PCC is exposed have been reviewed and systems and procedures designed to manage or minimise those risks have been established. A rolling annual review is established and appropriate updates will be incorporated into our policies.

Safeguarding

The Parish of St John's, Woking is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children and young people within our church community, and also to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

We are also committed to the implementation of the Diocese of Guildford Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the relevant statutory legislation and guidance for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We have complied with the duty to have due regard to section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

Our safer recruitment policy for anyone wishing to volunteer/work with children, young people or vulnerable adults includes the completion of an application form and interview/informal discussion. If the role is in regulated activity, a minimum of two references will also be sought unless the individual has been volunteering at either of our churches on a regular basis in another area of regulated activity for at least 3 years.

Anyone working with children and/or vulnerable adults, both on a paid or voluntary basis, is required to complete a DBS check and, if the role is in regulated activity, this will include the completion of a Confidential Declaration Form. This also applies to members of the pastoral team and PCC members as the PCC approves activities involving children and vulnerable adults. The validity of a DBS check is 3 years and has to be renewed if still in role.

PCC members, children's and youth leaders and helpers and members of the pastoral team are required to complete basic awareness and foundation courses in safeguarding which are available online. Certain roles require additional safeguarding training on leadership, safer recruitment and people management and domestic abuse sessions. PCC members are also required to complete the domestic abuse module as are members of the pastoral group. The leadership sessions are delivered via zoom by the diocese and the safer recruitment training is available online. All training modules are valid for 3 years.

We use the Parish Dashboard which is an electronic management tool used by many parishes across the country to monitor safeguarding arrangements in the church. It is designed to make church safeguarding life simpler and clearer and enables the parish to keep up to date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements.

Every year the PCC agrees the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Policy Statement. A copy of the Policy Statement is displayed in the church both at St Johns and Emmanuel and a copy is sent to the Diocese for their records.

Youth Work

At St John's we are blessed to have a church family stretching in age from 0-100, with every generation well represented. We give thanks for those aged between 11 and 18.

This year we have continued to run regular groups on Sunday mornings, and Tuesday evenings. The groups are known as "1:eighty" (for school years 7-9) and "iNsight" (for school years 10-13). On Sundays the 1:eighty group meet during the 10 o'clock church service, after first sharing the opening 20 minutes of the service with the adults, as the younger children's groups also do. The iNsight group re-formed at the start of this academic year, now that we have a viable group of young people from school years 10-13. They meet on a Tuesday, along with 1:eighty from 7:45-8:30, for bible study.

At Sunday 1:eighty, young people from our church family have been disciplined as they studied Colossians, Luke's Gospel, Proverbs, Exodus 1-19, and a topical series about "Sex, Love and Relationships".

On Tuesdays the programme focusses on providing an apologetic for Christianity which will be accessible for those standing outside the faith and looking in. It included talks/discussion about the evidence for the reliability of the Gospel accounts and Jesus' resurrection using Lee Strobel's "The Case for Christ – youth edition" as a guide; a bible overview; discussion of social media; some parables with a "sting in the tale"; how wide/long/high/deep Jesus' love is; and some Psalms that connect with our emotions. That programme is accompanied by games and activities in the sports hall and the coffee bar in the Youth Centre, and at St John's Lye in the summer.

Numbers aren't everything, but they are significant. On average we saw 6 young people at 1:eighty on Sunday mornings during the Autumn term, and 4-5 each Tuesday evening, drawing from a pool of 12 on our register. In addition iNsight averaged 6-7 on a Tuesday evening, with 10 different people attending. Many of these are regulars at the 10 o'clock church service too.

It has been wonderful to see our young people playing an active part in the life of the church, serving coffee (not only when doing Duke of Edinburgh award!), in the music group and on the sound desk, performing in the production of *The Hill* and helping at events such as the Nativity on Christmas Eve and at our Holiday Club.

One of the most joyful days for our church this last year was when 2 of our young people, who have grown up in the family of the church, were baptised in November. They were included among 5 young people who were confirmed later the same day by Rob Munro, Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Please continue to pray for their growth in the faith.

Other highlights this year included:

- Days out at the 'Sorted Nano' youth event in May, and 'Sorted' in November – both 'big days out' in London with top quality bible teaching and worship.
- A weekend away at Runways End Activity Centre in the February half-term holiday, run jointly with Send Evangelical Church. 13 of our young people came and enjoyed outdoor activities and teaching on the theme of 'Sacrifice' by Jonathon Burrows, an experienced youth minister from Christ Church Cockfosters.
- Socials including a pancake party, clip-and-climb, a barbecue with the youth group from Send, bonfire and a Safari-supper, with a film-night also coming soon.
- Summer 'camps' were well attended. Several young people went to 'Contagious', 'The Beach', and Gatton CYFA Venture.
- A small handful of school friends have joined us on Tuesdays, at events, and even on the youth weekend away. We give thanks for this opportunity to get to know them and introduce them to Jesus.

We thank God that the pool of regular leaders on Sundays and Tuesdays has been maintained with new members joining in place of old-hands who have moved on.

We are also thankful for the coffee Bar re-decoration, which included some extra cupboards being built, a fresh lick of paint, and new sofas bought with a donation generously given.

Children's and Families Work

Sunday Mornings - This year we have covered Luke (Easter), Acts, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Luke (Christmas) and Mark chapters 1-3. The team has grown and at our termly meetings we have started some training videos by Andy Gawn. The team also attended the Equip day conference. Children numbers have grown slightly with around 25-30 each week aged from 3 to 11.

Schools - Work with our primary schools has been really encouraging. We continue to go into Oaktree weekly to do Open the Book, Hermitage fortnightly to do "What Christians Believe" assemblies and St John's Primary fortnightly to do Open the Book. We have also been invited in to several RE lessons at St John's school which has been really positive. Alongside this we have had lots of school visits to the church including for their seasonal services and also RE visits. We have run stalls at school fetes and helped out in various other ways across the year.

Christmas/Advent - Following feedback we brought back a Christingle event this year alongside a Family Drop in event and Nativity service. All these were really well attended and over Christmas we welcomed hundreds of visitors through our doors.

Dangerous Kids Club (7-10 year olds) has been running for almost 18 months. Attendance has stayed consistently between 20-25 children over the last year. There is a team of six regular leaders. The evenings format hasn't changed – the hour-long meeting being split approximately into three even blocks of a game or a craft, then refreshments and the Bible talk, and finally a portion of a film. In warmer months we add outdoor and off-site activities. Additionally DKC has had a social evening where parents were invited to a BBQ, and hosted the 'Bonfire Light' event on October 31st as it fell on a club night.

Achievement of certain levels of attendance, children receive a club-logo t-shirt, a Christian book, then a youth bible. This has proven popular.

All-age spots - The team of all-age 'spotters' continue to provide lively and engaging teaching for the children through the year. The team have engaged well with the introduction of certain aspects of the series theme that are reinforced each week so to provide continuity across the series and embed key teaching. Topics covered this last year have been Names of God, The Beatitudes, and Parables. Song special slots dedicated to learning new or enjoying known children's songs are also included in the rota.

All-age services - The pattern of all-age services was slightly changed in 2023 to ensure they were evenly spread across the year. This worked well and continues into 2024. There is much enjoyment in planning this more informal style of service and seeking ways to best engage with the whole age-range.

Holiday Club - In July we had another successful and fun week with over 60 children coming to learn about Jesus our hero and rescuer. Many of these families had been to previous outreach events or have been to events since and we are pleased that we are starting to see the same faces and build some relationships with families from the local community. None of this would be possible without God and the team would also like to extend their thanks to the teams of volunteers for all their commitment and hard work.

First Steps (Babies & Toddlers) – This meets weekly in term times. We have a handful of families who come regularly each week, a few that come every two or three weeks and a lot of new faces coming through our doors each Thursday. We are pleased to see First Steps parents attending events outside of the group and coming into our church for Christmas and Easter events. We even had a professional photographer come and set up in late November, to take family photos of children and carers with a Christmas backdrop; the uptake was very positive. We have been learning about the

Parables of Jesus and how to live with the fruits of the spirit. Children love the music and songs we do and we have been teaching them a few songs that we sing in church.

Pastoral Support Group

The pastoral support group is a small team of volunteers (along with the clergy) who continue to meet monthly. The group is available to support adult church members in need and is accessible by contacting the church office or the clergy/volunteers directly.

During the year April 23- Mar 24 the number of requests for pastoral support to the team has reduced significantly. Also, several volunteers have re-located out of the area or are no longer available due to other commitments.

The PSG have dedicated link volunteers with the prayer ministry team and the church prayer team who compile the monthly prayer diary and church prayer rota.

Home communion for the sick/housebound is co-ordinated by the PSG team who also support the clergy during these visits. The regular times for organising this are at Easter and Christmas.

Hand-made cards are made by a church member and are sent to people in our congregation who are sick, bereaved or going through a difficult time.

The aim of the PSG for 2024-25 is to continue to provide support for those in need when requested.

Music

We continue to be blessed with a large team of talented musicians, singers and technical support and alongside the usual musical activities (weekly services, events, holiday club) there have been lots of exciting things going on for music at St John's this year.

We have been invited to run "Christian singing assemblies" at St John's School, which has involved teaching the whole school songs we sing in church and also talking about why we sing them.

In September we performed our evangelistic play, *The Hill*, with both script and music written by members of the church. Many members of the church played a part in bringing this together for two packed-out audiences and it opened up lots of opportunities to talk to people about our faith.

In October, those involved in our music ministry benefited from some team training from Andy Fenton from Music Ministry. This was a great chance to remind ourselves why and how we serve in the team and also work on some practical skills.

Our bi-annual Remembrance concert was performed in November, showcasing lots of talent from the congregation and raising money for the Royal British Legion.

The seasonal choir was brought together for Good Friday, Easter, Remembrance and Christmas; this comprised good numbers and a real enthusiasm for singing to people about our amazing God and what he has done. Christmas in particular was a busy time with the Carols by Candlelight service, the Emmanuel Carol service and also caroling at The Rowbarge pub.

On a more practical note, the side aisle speakers have now been repaired giving a better spread of sound across the building and the new sound desk is working well and proving a good investment.

Sidesmen

Around twenty-five people have served as Sidesmen during the year at the regular Sunday Services and the additional Christmas and Easter ones. Many thanks to all who have served in this way.

The Wider Church

Woking Deanery This is one of 12 subdivisions of the Guildford diocese, and has representatives from each of the churches in Woking and the surrounding area. The deanery synod meets three times a year, and each meeting has an open presentation on a topic of interest, followed by a short meeting for the clergy and elected lay representatives sharing news and needs from the Woking churches and the wider diocese. Motions can be raised by parishes to be passed onto the deanery synod, then the diocesan synod, and into general synod. The meetings this year discussed ways to implement small groups, the learning and education opportunities provided by the diocese, and how resources can be shared between parishes. St Johns has been allocated four lay representatives to the synod. Our current lay representatives (see above) were elected at the 2023 AGPM and stand for three years. There is one vacancy. Glyn and Peter are also members of the synod, and meet more frequently with other clergy in the deanery.

General Synod and Diocese of Guildford

Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin are our representatives on Diocesan Synod.

St Johns Church does not currently have a representative on General Synod.

Mission

St Johns with Emmanuel support a number of mission partners through recognised organisations which share our convictions. We support them financially, by regular contact with a member of our congregation and through our corporate prayers. Our current partners at St John's are:

- Robbie and Lizzie Bellis (Crosslinks) who have been engaged in work on a church plant in Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium since 2019 and evangelism amongst university students. The family visited us in October 2023 and Robbie spoke at our morning service.
- Josh and Cathy Hooker (Crosslinks) who moved to Northern Ireland a year ago where they are leading training ministries and local mission. This is a continuation of the work they were doing in Namibia to where they hope to return in January 2026.
- Matt and Andrea Vaughan (Interserve), Mission Enablers based in Bordesley Green, Birmingham developing outreach networks with Afghan and Pakistani communities and developing a breakfast club at their local church. Matt visited us in December 2023.
- Brendan and Jo (SIM) are both involved in various mission initiatives at their local church, school and university in Asia. Brendan teaches at a university in Asia but is also involved developing local Christian leadership while Jo runs women's study groups.
- Maddie Lewis (UCCF), who has been the CU staff worker in UCCF's south east region since September 2022, supports the Christian Unions at Surrey University, UCA Farnham and UCA Epsom.

One of our Lent groups in 2023 focussed on our mission partners with interviews with each partner giving an opportunity to find out more about them and their families.

St John's also gives regularly to the following local projects: ACROSS, which helps Christians to share faith across cultures in Woking, the York Road Project, which provides emergency and longer-term accommodation for those experiencing homelessness and Engage which supports Christian work in

local primary and secondary schools. Emmanuel supports the Christian Institute, which seeks to promote the Christian faith in the public square, the York Road Project, and Interserve.

Both St Johns and Emmanuel commit to giving 12.5% of their unrestricted income to their chosen organisations.

Signed: 

Approved by St John's PCC – 20 February 2024