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## The Online Link St. John's Hillingdon - Annual Report Special Edition



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*The PCC is a Registered Charity.  
Registered Charity Number: 1128058*

### Members of Parochial Church Council:

#### Vicar

Alan Bradford

#### Churchwardens

Rick Williams

Roy Munday

#### Elected Members

Carol Williams

Rodney George

Mildred Akullo Ogwal

Matthew Szurgot

Paul Clevett

Sue Taheny

Ray Pearce

#### Deanery Synod Representatives

Keith Lunn

Lucy Pike

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#### Associated Officers

Nikki Bell (PCC Secretary & Electoral Roll Officer)

Ursulyn George (Treasurer)

Richard Bell (Safeguarding Officer)

[CLICK HERE](#) for the minutes of the last **AGM/APCM** which took place on **21st May 2023**.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the Agenda of the **AGM/APCM -12th May 2024**



## Reading for Sunday 12th May 2024

**Theme:** Victory! AGM **Title:** "Let the Lord build the House"

**Reading:** Psalm 127:1-2

- <sup>1</sup> Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labour in vain.  
Unless the Lord guards the city,  
the guard keeps watch in vain.
- <sup>2</sup> It is in vain that you rise up early  
and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil;  
for he gives sleep to his beloved.

**Question:** *In what ways might have you laboured in vain in what you have built?*



Dear Friends & Members of St. John's

It's nearly time for our annual meeting again, and this is my vicar's report to you all.

Although this report and the all the other church reports should largely refer to last year 2023, I also like to mention more recent events to incorporate our current context, so that what is written doesn't seem too far removed from where we are now in Spring 2024.

As I write this report to you in reviewing the past fifteen months or so, I do so in a world that continues to feel unstable, and increasingly so. Yes, the pandemic seems a good while ago now, although the coronavirus is still around. However, the war in Ukraine continues and, since I wrote last year, we now have all the killing and unrest as a result of the war in Israel/Palestine, and the resulting ripple effect outwards as other nations and groups become involved. The news currently is about the possibility of growing conflicts globally and the need to spend more on defence. Within this context, we who have faith can thank God that He is our peace, and that He has everything in His hands and will bring all things to their rightful conclusion at the appointed time. Praise God!

This past year we have continued to prepare for the extensive repairs and renewal of the church building. This has included numerous surveys, meetings and discussions. In June we had a costings report for the works with an estimated sum of £3.7 million pounds!! In June we had a strategy options report which outlined the phases for doing the works. In December we had an Accessibility Audit and an IT/Audio survey and, in April this year, an Eco Audit was undertaken. Our hard-working Wardens are already implementing some of the recommendations of the Accessibility Audit. The IT/Audio audit is helping in our technological planning and the arrival of the Eco Audit report, when received, will trigger a grant for us of £150,000!

Just as a reminder, although the building is important, and most certainly needs vital repairs and restoration, the building isn't the most important thing about our plans. The building supports our vision for people. We are to fulfil God's mission in our parish, and beyond. For the church is a people in mission, not the building.

As we continue in our mission which is described in so many encouraging ways in this set of reports, we are also refining, redefining and articulating our mission as we move forward in seeking to serve our communities around us.

Our statement of intent for our outreach where the community engages more with the church as a base can be summed up as:

## St. John's: **H E A R T** for the community

where

**H** = Heritage What ways can our amazing Grade II\* building help all ages understand and value our local and national heritage?

**E** = Education How can St. John's offer further educational opportunities?

**A** = Arts How can we offer more in the area of the Arts in addition to what we offer already in terms of music (Jazz groups and Folk/Irish/Rock group) and art from our resident artist?

**R** = Restoration (of people!) How can we intentionally help people with their well-being in addition to it being a byproduct from engaging in any of the other opportunities we offer?

**T** - transformation (of communities). We are thinking that this is almost a 'freebie' in that the transformation of our communities will be a 'byproduct' of those engaging in any of the previous 4 areas. As individuals experience the heritage, education, Arts or healing opportunities on offer, they are transformed and in turn families and communities are transformed.

What are your thoughts on this **H E A R T** for the community vision?

We would greatly value your input and thoughts, so do be in touch and contribute via email or by visiting or phoning to discuss. We need your help in articulating things and our vision as we move forward to fund-raise and apply for a large grant from English Heritage Lottery. Thank you.

Now, to continue with looking back: We have noted some encouraging signs of growth in our 10.30am Sunday services. This service style is a 'blended service' where we have traditional and contemporary hymns and choruses. We have communion and we continue to offer the service via 'Zoom'. Our services in church have a 'buoyant' and encouraging atmosphere. Our tech team, musicians, welcomers, leaders, readers, servers and hospitality team play a vital role in this. Our amazing Tech team and musicians Ray, Paul, Andrew and Dan serve us virtually every single Sunday of the year, and more besides. We will all miss Dan when he goes off to Uni this autumn. We have seen encouraging numbers of children coming to our monthly Junior Church which were reintroduced last September. Teams, you all are a real blessing! Thank you all. It is also great that children take part in our services through helping, craft making and other activities.

The Peters family of Amer, Joy and Jasper have joined St. John's! Amer is an ordinand-in-training, and we are blessed and benefitting from the Peters family being a part of our community. Caroline Reed, our previous ordinand-in-training, is serving her curacy in the Uxbridge parish and she is enjoying the ministry and settling in well there.

As vicar, I am indeed so privileged for having the support and encouragement of an amazing wife and partner-in-ministry. Anne works virtually full-time for the church with all that she does in so many key areas, in her encouragement for all to grow in faith, and in her building of community. Churchwardens Rick Williams & Roy Munday also continue to be pillars of support and stability in our church community, and their contribution in servant leadership to the life of the church, and to the upkeep of the building, is truly immense.

I continue to also thank God for the gift of Nikki Bell as our Administrator. We are indeed very blessed with Nikki's leadership, organisation, resilience and diligence. The energy, skill, care and love Nikki puts into St. John's is incredible, going far beyond her role as administrator. We also praise God for our Commissioned Minister Carol Williams, for her leading and preaching ministry at St. John's which has been exercised so competently and skilfully over many years. Carol has such a wonderful serving heart and is so reliable and amazing in all the ways she serves St. John's and the community. I find Carol's support and wisdom so invaluable. Further, our PCC team of trustees have provided valuable leadership, support and discernment. Those mentioned and you all who serve play key and pivotal roles in our life and growth as a community in mission.

Our dedicated gardening team continue to work so consistently to maintain our garden areas so that they are a blessing for the community. We are so grateful for all the hard work of the team in presenting the lovely surroundings we offer.

This year we again offered free knitted and crocheted items to the community which were placed on the hedges outside as part of our Easter project which is now in its fourth year.

We continue to baptise and confirm those taking next steps in their faith. In February 2023, seven people were confirmed at our special Confirmation Service when we all met our new Bishop, Bishop Lusa, for the first time. He has since visited us twice on pilgrimages. Throughout 2023 we had a number of infant baptisms and on 2nd July two adults had a full immersion baptism in our pool. Then in February 2024 we baptised seven of our key members who had originally come from Iran, including a family of three who were baptised together with their seven-year-old daughter.

I reported last year that we held funerals for Shelia Everest and Mary Hughes (Verger). We also celebrated the life of Peter Heyes in June. Sadly then, in under a year, we have also had to say goodbye to six much-loved and integral church members who all played a key and active role in the life of the body here at St. John's. Last summer we said goodbye to Kim Rogers and Liz Sands. In the autumn we lost Beryl Burrows and Kate Weller. Then this year Brenda Hogg and Marigold Marsh have gone to be with God. We celebrated the lives of each one with well-attended celebration services in church. I can imagine all this crew all being 'St. John's' and having fun together in heaven!

Our Wednesday evening Life Group in church helps people grow in their faith, to look at the Bible and to pray and share life experiences together. This has been very well supported. We have been meeting regularly in the Grundon Room which has a much better atmosphere since we bought new chairs and removed the old piano. The group ran an Alpha course and did our Lent course together. Thank you to everyone who provided meals, including the lovely Iranian food! More please!

At Christmas it was great to welcome again so many from our community into church, primarily through our Christingle services and Midnight Communion. We also continued to maintain and develop even further our links with the local schools. As an example, in March, on two separate visits, I welcomed all the year 2's and all the year 6's from Hillingdon Primary School into the church. The children looked around the church and had a go at quizzes. We also looked at the local heritage setting and acted out part of a pantomime! Then we visited the tomb of 'The Father of Pantomimes' John Rich, who is buried in our churchyard.

Thank you all, EVERYONE, for all your contributions and for what you do to serve in the body of Christ in and through your connection with St. John's. (There are too many names

**to mention individually, so please count yourself thanked!)**

**Please read through the following reports, and I look forward to seeing you all at the AGM on Sunday 12th May at 10.30am.**

**Keep loving, growing and sharing!**

**Yours for Christ and His Kingdom,,**

**Alan**

**Vicar of St. John's**

**24th April 2024**

***Nikki Bell Administrator***

I am still very much loving the role as your administrator. Was it more challenging than the previous year? YES! Would I want it any other way? Absolutely not! I enjoy growing and learning with you all.

**2023 was an exciting time for St. John's here are just some of the highlights:**

6 Baptisms took place 2 of which were full immersion

7 confirmations

1 lovely wedding and 1 external blessing

St. John's was used as a Polling Station for the By- Elections in July 2023.

We were blessed with another magnificent display for the Easter Flower Project 2023.

Our second Tearfund Big Quiz night with a Fish and Chip supper! Thank you to Brenda and everyone involved in organising this fantastic event.

We had the largest amount of weekday visitors from near and far. If you get a chance please look at the visitors book at the back of church and see the lovely comments about our beautiful church. also welcoming so many local schools to St. John's at Easter and Christmas which was wonderful.

In October 2023 we held a Christmas Craft Fair which was very well attended by the congregation and local community I would like to Thank Karen, Wyn, Jacky, Gail, Ken, Beryl and everyone who donated and supported this amazing event.

Our Christmas Events were also very well attended. Our 2 Christingle events had the highest attendance in 12+ years!

There were so many highlights but I will try and keep this as brief as possible. It felt like a hive of activity at St. John's. We had many audits take place in 2023 in preparation for the refreshing, rebuilding and renewing St. John's.

The flower guild were extremely busy! I want to take this opportunity to thank them for all they do for St. John's. It is wonderful to see St. John's in bloom with beautiful floral displays.

I feel so blessed to be working in an environment with wonderful supportive friends, I would like to first thank Alan for being such a great support to me and a great boss!

I would like to thank some people who make my role easier:

Thank you to Anne for her constant support and for all the hard work she does for St. John's.

Rick for all of his support with our beautiful building.

Roy for his encouragement and support always.

Our Ministers Alan, Father Ken, Carol, Caroline, Matt, Rodney, DJ and Amer, Communion team,

Service readers, Welcoming team, Musicians, All the Tech team, Bellringers and our

Refreshments team -all who ensure our services run smoothly.

Our wonderful PCC members.

Jacky for her organisational skills and continuous support in the office without Jacky I would be swamped in paperwork and endless counting!

Mark and the Churchyard Team who are all so passionate, supportive and dedicated in making St. John's grounds such a lovely, inviting tranquil space.

Our knitting ladies who help me to relax, I enjoy your company and our chats and look forward to many more in 2024.

Those that help with the Fortnightly Link sending in Blogs, Stories, articles, prayers and especially Chris and Brenda for continuing to support us to think about how we can all make a difference to our environment and protect the Earth and all living things.

Our cleaning team, Thank you for always turning up and being willing to do whatever is necessary. And to those that come in weekly to clean an area- Thank you.

To all that help. You are always willing to help in whatever way you can. Thank you so much for all that you do.

Finally to our wonderful groups that hire St. John's thank you for the music, friendship, chats and all your support.

If anyone would like to get more involved at St John's we always welcome volunteers no matter how small the contribution is. We also welcome any ways in which you feel we can improve at St. John's. Please do contact me if you would like to volunteer or if you have any suggestions.

***" Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the heart."- Elizabeth Andrew.***

I am one lucky lady, as I get to be a part of something so special. I look forward to what the future holds for us all...

### **Churchwarden Roy Munday & Rick Williams**

#### **Roy Munday**

2023 was another busy year for the upkeep of St Johns. Care of the fabric of the building continued apace with regular maintenance, such as visual inspection of the Font-cover pulley system and management of our regular Boiler maintenance. We also continued to inspect for and stabilise internal stonework issues, including minor cracks and blown plaster (e.g. South Aisle), and address minor rainwater leaks. Though we await longer term resolution through our planned re-ordering, work carried out to-date has been successful in providing a safe and dry environment for our worship.

Safety at St Johns was further increased by an improved handrail to the tower – our thanks here to Robert Pridham of the St Johns Bellringers for his sterling work. We looked at 'Accessibility' in St Johns by testing and mapping the performance of our existing hearing-loop system in November – my thanks to Ray Pearce for his assistance with this. A formal Access Audit was commissioned and carried out in December. The resultant report has now been received and is currently under review.

Work continued throughout the year to progress the complex planning and grant application stages for our proposed Re-ordering. This included meetings with Architects and Archaeologists and the commissioning of expert review and advice regarding our Audio-Visual system needs.

Rick and I continue to work as an effective team. We even managed to pass the team-building challenge of assembling & disassembling the Nativity Crib.... (many thanks to Mark Hamlin for his expert guidance). Our thanks, as always, go to Nikki for her invaluable and enthusiastic support

to us both over the year that made our work possible.

### **Rick Williams:**

Together with Roy, we have continued to support Alan in his ministry at St John's. The 10.30 Sunday morning service remains our main worship format, which continues to be available via zoom and telephone links. Alan is to be thanked for keeping these aspects alive and he has been ably assisted with the technical elements by Daniel and a small team of young dedicated helpers. The sound desk has been improved and continues to be competently operated by Ray Pearce, for which we are most grateful. The congregation numbers have been steadily rising over the past few months. Meanwhile Anne ensures our social media and on line presence is kept up to date and relevant.

During the past year Alan's ministry has been supported by Carol, Caroline, Lucy, Matt and Rodney and DJ. Following her ordination in July, Caroline was assigned to St Margaret's in Uxbridge to continue her training. She is greatly missed by us all. At the end of 2023, we welcomed Amer, who has been allocated to Alan as a trainee ordinand. Amer is expected to be with us for three years whilst he undertakes his training. He, his wife, Joy, and son Jasper have been warmly welcomed into our St John's family.

Musical support for Sunday services continues to be provided by Paul and Andrew, with additional vocals supplied by Winnie when she is able to join us. They are to be thanked for their dedication in all they do to enhance our worship. Similarly, we are grateful for the wonderful work our dedicated Gardening Team undertake in maintaining the churchyard to such a high standard. Their work is appreciated, not only by St John's, but also by members of the general public. I would also like to record my thanks to Anne, Ray, Daniel and his team for all they do, as well as the members of our Flower Guild and those who undertake church cleaning tasks throughout the year.

In his part of this report, Roy makes mention of the substantial repair and improvement work which is being proposed for St John's. This will be a dominant issue for us all over the next two or three years, and its cost will need careful management. The revenue we receive from our residential properties, and the mobile phone installations within the tower, will assist in meeting part of our contribution towards this work, but it will be a challenge.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Roy for his dedication and the considerable assistance he has given to Alan and to me during his first full year as a Churchwarden.

I would also like to conclude by joining Roy in giving a substantial vote of thanks to Nikki, our Church Administrator. She works tirelessly, mostly behind the scenes, to ensure St John's operates smoothly and efficiently. Well done Nikki, and thank you.

### ***Carol Williams Commissioned Lay Minister***

During 2023 I have continued to lead services and to preach at our mid morning service. The year has been one of many partings – we said farewell to several of our St John's family who went to be with God, and also bade a fond farewell to my "partner in crime" Caroline when she became ordained in July and moved to the Uxbridge Team Ministry. I felt very privileged to be one of St John's family who went up to St Paul's Cathedral to see Caroline's ordination. The year has also been one of welcoming new members to our St John's family – it is lovely to see a church full of friends when I am leading a service. We also welcomed Amer, as a Ordinand in training, along with his wife Joy and son Jasper to our church family and have enjoyed their interaction with us all on Sunday mornings.

Caroline asked me if I would take her place in leading worship at Parkfield House Care Home – and she and I went together to lead the Harvest service there. Since then Brenda, Rick and I

have been to Parkfield on two further occasions – for Remembrance Sunday and for Christmas. The residents and staff at the home are lovely and make us very welcome.

Two further events during the year are worth recalling – in February Bishop Lusa visited on his 2023 Pilgrimage of Prayer and met with us and other members of St John's. He led us in prayers in the churchyard, which was a very moving experience. The second occasion was when Matt preached to us and we draw up our St John's Prayer together. I keep a copy of it in my purse, so it is always to hand.

As always I would like to say a huge "thank you" for all the support I receive from the St John's family in my lay ministry. I finish by recalling some words which I always find uplifting:

*To serve God is to love him with all that we are, obeying, and enjoying him forever.*

Thank you for allowing me to serve and love God in the way that I do.

### **Richard Bell Children's Safeguarding Officer**

Safeguarding means protecting an adult/child's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

I can confirm that all person with contact with children and vulnerable people, have an updated criminal disclosure check. Failure to hold a current disclosure check will result in those person/s not being able to fulfil their duties with children or vulnerable people. There is adequate safeguarding training in place for all to refresh, and I am happy to revisit any items on a 121 or group level.

I am in the process of conducting and reporting upon the 2024 annual safeguarding audit to the diocese and PCC with no serious issues or incidents reported. I have provided an updated version of the 2024 Safeguarding Policy Statement for the PCC which was approved and currently online and on our notice boards in church.

I will continue to monitor and review all church activities to assess and address any identified safeguarding issues immediately.

I want to thank Lucy our Safeguarding Champion for her continued support, as we continue to mature everyone's understanding of what safeguarding means to us all.

Safeguarding is not just my business, it is everyone's.

Please contact me via [childsafeguarding@mail.com](mailto:childsafeguarding@mail.com) if you wish to talk or have any concerns about the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

### **Deanery Synod Keith Lunn**

Hillingdon Deanery now has both a new Area Dean, Rev Peter Mackenzie, and an Assistant Area Dean, Rev Canon Andrew Studdert-Kennedy, who led well-attended sessions over the past year, including a talk by Dr Krish Kandiah OBE on the growing influx of refugees to churches, some refreshing thoughts on the Diocesan 2030 vision led by the Bishop of Willesden Rt Rev Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy, a session at Bishop Ramsay school on the aim to 'grow younger' and Dr Paula Gooder from St Paul's Cathedral on praying with Psalms. There is a growing sense of retaining the best from all churches.

Sometimes one learns of interesting initiatives in other churches, but often one finds one could contribute much from one's own experience, including good practice from St John's eg when it helps young people to integrate, when it tries to involve people of various cultures, and when it



makes thoughtful use of audio, IT and social media.

At Diocesan Synod, there is a new focus on reviewing the way meetings are held in church processes, with many keen to find new or better ways to influence decisions, and try to secure unity amidst disagreement from different traditions. For example, lay expertise could be much better utilised in clergy-led environments eg facilitating group work, summarising and circulating Synod issues for subsequent resolving or using the training & experience of some lay people eg on diversity issues, while ensuring theological legitimacy. If only presentations were as professional as church song overheads! Diocesan officers' slides can contain too many, or too faint, words to read at a distance! Fortunately the Bishop has introduced more group discussion!

The Deanery Synod has so far managed to avoid recent controversies at the level of Diocesan and General Synod, where views can be polarised especially over what kind of blessings a church may offer those in 'non-traditional' same-gender relationships, and some have considered alternatives to existing church oversight structures. Even among the earliest followers of Jesus, there were controversies about some aspects of Christian faith and certain scriptural passages have been similarly put to use down the centuries to bolster opposing views eg on slavery or women's rights. Opponents are hopefully learning to listen carefully to each other's experiences and reflections, to study scripture with real insight, and to follow Jesus' injunction to love opponents.

In school religious education too, thorny issues can arise, such as recent controversy over prayer time for various faiths, but there is much good practice on which to build and it is ideal to keep improving quality and consistency so it is important to gain as much as possible from specific opportunities to reflect on experience from a range of contexts so that good practice can be captured and spread across all Synod churches and schools. St John's reps Keith and Lucy are keen to pass on perspectives gleaned, and discuss further so as to make optimum use of Deanery & Diocesan experiences.

#### **Electoral Roll *Nikki Bell***

At the time of producing this report the Electoral Roll stands at 139.

#### **The PCC- *Nikki Bell* -PCC Secretary**

The PCC are vital to the running of our church. If you are interested in becoming a PCC member please contact Nikki. It's never too late to join.

The PCC met a total of 4 times in person during 2023.

#### **Sacristan- *Kay Sweetman***

We have a small core pool of 10 people to administer wine at communion and we now offer a choice of alcoholic and non-alcoholic wine. At the moment we don't have any servers as all the setting up is currently done by other people but I'm responsible for purchasing wine, candles, wafers etc.

#### **Archivist- *Kay Sweetman***

Once again the number of people making enquiries for their genealogy research from the records of baptisms, marriages and burials we hold at St John's is still very low: in fact I think I think I've only had one enquiry the whole year! I think this is mainly down to the fact that many of the records are available online.

#### **Life Events -Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals**

During 2023 we had just 1 wedding at St John's which was truly beautiful and unique.

We were very fortunate to have Father Ken Buckler who conducted this wedding for us.

We also hired the church for a blessing

We had a total of 6 Baptisms including 2 full immersion Baptisms which was fantastic to see and share this amazing event with each of them.

We had 7 confirmations led by the Bishop of Willesden Rt Rev Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy.

We celebrated the lives of very much loved members of the congregation, those that sat with us, worshipped with us and supported us and those that lived in the parish or had close connections to St John's 18 wonderful people who all went to be with God in 2023.

We also had 2 burials of ashes in the Garden of Remembrance.

### **Groups & Church Activities**

#### **Bellringers Captains Report *Michael J Palmer.***

#### **REPORT for 2023 by CAPTAIN of the BELLRINGERS GUILD**

We have managed to hold practices almost every Monday evening during the year and attendance and ability has increased to the point that we are able to ring Grandsire and Stedman Triples, Plain Bob Major and Grandsire Caters more weeks than not. However, we still practice Doubles, Minor and Plain Hunt as required. This indicates progress that we have not seen for many years.

Ringling has resumed at St Margaret's Uxbridge and Cranford. On Sundays, our ringling has continued to be before morning service at two towers every Sunday, one of these being Hillingdon and the other at Harlington, St Andrew's Uxbridge or St Margaret's Uxbridge. In addition, once a month we try to ring at Hayes after their morning service. Sunday ringling at Cranford has yet to be regularised and on special occasions we ring at Iver when requested. However, Sunday attendance still varies a lot and all the above is subject to there being enough of us available to ring.

Ten quarter peals were rung during the year, one each in memory of Peter Kemp and Ron Russ, former members of the guild, one in memory of Mary Hughes, former Verger at Hillingdon, one to celebrate Simon's fifty years of ringling which was dedicated to Ron Russ who taught him to ring and one to celebrate Tricia's forthcoming 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. On Coronation day, May 6<sup>th</sup>, we rang two quarter peals which were separated by a special ring of thirty rounds in which three learners: Grace, Bob's grand-daughter Becky and Helen rang rounds for the first time. Subsequently Bob arranged for suitable commemorating boards to be made which are now hanging on the walls of the belfry.

Regarding our Social events, Louise organised an outing in June when we rang at four towers in the Gloucestershire area. We also enjoyed dinners at the Javitri in September and at the Uxbridge Beefeater just before Christmas, both arranged by Bob.

Thanks to you all for your support this year. Special thanks go to Louise for arranging our outing, Robert and Ray for numerous jobs in the tower through the year including erecting the Coronation boards and Jan and Julia for organising the mid-practice refreshments.

Lastly, a very big special thank you to Bob, not only for arranging all our Sunday ringling during the year, organising our dinners, wedding bands, training, the arrangement and procurement of the Coronation ringling and celebration boards, but also for his service to the Guild over the last eight years which included keeping the band together during the Covid times and the extra work involved.

Michael J. Palmer

## **ECO Church Report *Chris Rodrigues and Brenda Thomas***

It is vitally important for us all to think about how we live, and the materials we use, and the effects this has on the environment and our relationship with planet earth, ***our home, given in love and trust by God***. The damage to the earth has, and continues to become, more obvious to us all, so any action we can take is really important.

An Environmental Policy, drawn up by the Eco Group in 2022, was ratified and adopted by the PCC last year. A copy can be found on our website and on the noticeboard at the back of church. An Eco group as such, no longer exists, as the PCC now takes the lead in ensuring St John's continued commitment to its principles to maintain the practices which make us an Eco Church, and also to continue to check if there are any areas where improvements can be made.

Chris Rodriguez, Brenda Thomas and Nikki Bell, continue to add helpful tips and relevant information in the Link to focus on encouraging us all to be aware of the need to use the earth's resources with care and wisdom.

### **The Churchyard *Mark Hamlin***

Following completion of the 7-year Churchyard restoration project in 2022 the Churchyard Maintenance team has been continuing to maintain the grounds. With several acres of churchyard this task is not inconsiderable and never ending.

Our 6 regular members continue to meet every Monday morning at 9:30 am but only 1 person is a regular member of St John's congregation so new members would be particularly welcome. There are 2 regular tasks that we would appreciate help with that do not require any horticultural skills; grass cutting and moss clearance from tombs.

The church has 2 petrol-powered lawn mowers that are stored outside the church (see illustration) so it is possible to carry out grass cutting at any time if you aren't able to join us regularly on Monday mornings.

Moss-cleaning only requires a stiff brush and a plastic scraper and can be very satisfying as highly visible results can be achieved quite quickly as illustrated.

If you would like to help then either come along to meet us any Monday morning or if you can't make Mondays then please get in touch with us via the Parish Administrator.





### **“Let’s Go” Baby ‘n’ Toddler Group**

‘Let’s Go’ Baby & Toddler Group meets in church on Friday mornings during term time. It is a delight to see the children have fun and sing and grow in their learning through the activities and in playing with other children. We experimented with using the Grundon Room during the winter, rather than the church, so we could be warm during the winter. This went quite well. Thank you to leaders Gill Pearce, Alyson Munday and Roy Munday for helping and serving, particularly when I couldn’t be at the group due to other pressures.

*Alan*

### **Junior Church**

We started ‘Junior Church’ up again last September with the aim of providing a time together once a month, in addition to the activities for children available in every service. Wow! – what a great turn out to our times together. Thank you, Alexis Szurgot and Kate Anderson for being there to support the leading of the sessions.

*Alan*

### **YOUTH Anne Bradford**

We are very grateful to the youth and students who help in various ways within St John’s, especially with our hybrid services and our tech team.

We continue to support some students at Brunel University and local colleges through Fusion, and through developing our connections with the Brunel Christian Union.

We also continue to offer encouragement and support to young refugee and asylum seekers as they seek safety and a place of belonging.

### **All Stars**

We have held two ‘All Stars’ Friday evening events in church, for Children in need and ‘Red Nose Day for ‘Comic Relief’. These events are mainly for primary school children, with younger siblings and parents in tow! For both events we were full to the brim! We have a meal together, play games, sing, worship and have drama and challenges. Thank you to all who have sponsored the children so that we can raise money for charity. A ‘big up’ to the teens who have led the teams – well done! Thank you, also, to all who have helped with serving in various ways, in washing up and in helping with the activities. You wonderful people include Alyson Munday, Gill Pearce and Adi Tanwar, amongst others.

*Alan*

### **ONLINE PRESENCE Anne Bradford**

'Online Presence' covers our website, our social media platforms, and our profile on the Church of England national resource hub, along with information on our online services.

St John's has a website and is on social media on Facebook, 'X' (was Twitter) and Instagram. We can also be found on 'A Church Near You'.

The statistics marked with \* below are from information collected on 24/04/2024.

We have had people contact us and had visitors to our church who have discovered us through our online presence.

### **WEBSITE**

Our church website is: [www.stjohnshillingdon.org.uk](http://www.stjohnshillingdon.org.uk).

Our website also has a 'button' for us to donate online to our church. There is also a link to this via our page on 'A Church Near You'.

### **FACEBOOK**

Our church Facebook Group is a positive way in linking our church family and supporting each other. This is a private group so that we can share with each other with a degree of confidentiality, but all from St John's are welcome to join.

The group page is 'St John's, Hillingdon (Group)' and the link is:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/116263285313>

The group has 185\* members.

The church also has a public community group page that we use to connect with beyond our immediate church family, and the link is:

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsHillingdon>

The page has 524\* likes and 536\* followers.

### **'X'**

The church 'X' (was Twitter) is another means of a presence within the area and an engagement with others in the local community.

We currently have 200\* followers.

Our Twitter is: @SJohnHillingdon

### **INSTAGRAM**

Instagram is a popular online app and helps to engage with a wider social network.

We have 255\* followers.

Our Instagram is: [stjohnschurch.hillingdon](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnschurch.hillingdon)

### **A CHURCH NEAR YOU**

St John's is also on 'A Church Near You'. This website is a Church of England digital communication national resource hub.

'A Church Near You' lists every church in the Church of England, with contact information, service times and events. It publishes special campaigns such as at Christmas and Easter. It is a good way for people to find local churches and services in their area.

We have had 168\* views this week, 879\* views this month, and 10,056\* views this year.

### **ZOOM**

Our Sunday morning service has continued to be a hybrid service being in person and on zoom. It means that those who would be unable to physically join us, are able to still worship, pray and meet with us.

Our Christmas, Ash Wednesday and other special services have also been hybrid.

We have also been able to use zoom for some funerals, to let family and friends from a distance join the services.

Zoom can be accessed via the internet from a computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone, via this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89481452808> It can also be accessed via a landline telephone on 020 3481 5237 or 020 3051 2874.

### **LENT, HOLY WEEK & EASTER** *Anne Bradford*

Last year in Lent, we used the book 'The Nail' by Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. This year, we explored the theme 'The Cross – the Greatest Hope of All' for a course I wrote using different resources. We met together on Wednesday evenings in the Grundon Room and explored the deeper meaning of the words of Jesus on the Cross in Mark 15:34, and how they pointed to Psalm 22.

On Maundy Thursday, we were able to share 'The Last Supper Experience' together in church, followed by a personal quiet time for 'The Watch' around the High Altar.

On Good Friday, we gathered for a time of reflection around the foot the Cross.

On Easter morning, after the service, the children took part in the Easter Egg Hunt.

### **EASTER PROJECT** *Anne Bradford*

This Easter was our 4<sup>th</sup> year as we made even more knitted, crocheted, and sewn items for the local community. We made over 1,500 items – including a mixture of flowers, butterflies, birds, and crosses, that looked amazing all along the footpath. Once again, we were overwhelmed by the positive response and messages from the local community. So many people came to look at the beautiful display, and they then took an item, shared and encouraged others with them.

Comments on social media from the local community included:

"Love my local church. Well done to all you knitters creating this bloom of colour for Easter. Beautiful."

"Such a wonderful new tradition you have created .... Many thanks for all your hard work."

"These were so lovely my children took one. Such a lovely thing to do. Thank you."

"A lot of time, effort and energy put into such a wonderful display."

"Married at St John's in 1967. Nice to see it so cared for."

"The volunteers are wonderful and keep the grounds looking very special."

"Beautiful"

"Special church"

"Fabulous! Well done!"

"Just lovely to see."

Many thanks to all who helped with this project, the making and hanging up. You all helped to bless the community, and have encouraged people to come into church.

### **STATISTICS FOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

Each year, we fill in details for the 'Church of England Statistics for Mission'. These are some of the statistics for 2023:

- Usual Sunday Attendance (this is the average and does not include peak holidays or major festivals) = **64** adults, **8** children
- Usual Sunday Attendance on zoom (this is the average and does not include peak holidays or major festivals) = **7**
- Number of communicants on Easter Day 2023 = **96**
- Total number attending worship on Easter Day 2023 = **122**
- Number of people attending special services Advent – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 = **290**
- Number of people attending special services for schools Advent – 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 = **584**
- Number of communicants on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day 2023 = **109**

- Number of people attending worship on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day 2023 = **582**
- Weddings in Church in 2023 = **1**
- Baptisms in 2023 = **4x** infant, **1x** young person, **1x** adult
- Confirmation candidates in 2023 = **7**
- Funerals in Church in 2023 = **14**
- Funerals just at crematorium in 2023 = **2**
- Burial of Ashes in 2023 = **2**
- Memorial Services in 2023 = **2**

### **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, HILLINGDON BRANCH**

Alan is Chaplain for the Royal British Legion Hillingdon. We continue to support their work and pray for them.

Each Remembrance Sunday, we have our annual service together with the Royal British Legion and with North Hillingdon Boys' Brigade, and joined with other uniformed organisations.

### **CHARITIES & FUND RAISING**

At Harvest, we had a collection for HILLINGDON FOOD BANK and WATER AID the total raised was £257.00 cash donations each charity received £128.50

For our Remembrance service we donated the collection to the Hillingdon British Legion total of £122.15 in cash. We also support by selling Poppies in church which raised a further £77.25 for the Legion.

We joined the Tearfund Big Quiz for the second time, thanks to Brenda and all those that helped with the event. This was a great evening and we raised £215.20 for Tearfund.

Sponsored books of the bible challenge which helped to raise an amazing £1,094.00 for the Gwakabbo School Project.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the annual SHOE BOX APPEAL for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child we managed to send 38 boxes in 2023. This includes some that had been sent online. These were delivered in early November.

St. John's held a Craft Fair in November 2023 where we raised over £600.00 for the church.

We raised £210.00 for Children in Need from our All Stars sponsored event.

We also donated £703.42 to the Children's Society for our two Christingle Services cash donations.

The knitt and natter group made some lovely items which were donated to Hillingdon Hospital for Children to hold and play with when undertaking tests that may cause anxiety. Items included were crocheted octopuses, teddy bears, hearts etc.

This year on 15th March 2024 our All Stars raised £200.00 for Comic Relief for our Red Nose day sponsored event.

Thank you all for your contributions to our amazing charities and for your ongoing support at St. John's.

If you would like to view or print the Financial Report 2024 (On 2023 Accounts) Please [Click Here](#)

**CHEQUES**

Payable to:  
Hillingdon Parochial Church Council  
St. John's Church  
Royal Lane  
Uxbridge  
UB8 3QP

**STANDING ORDER**

Set up a Standing Order with your bank or building society using these details:  
Barclays Bank, 142 High St,  
Uxbridge, UB8 1JX  
Sort Code: 208916  
Account No: 20465615

[Click here](#) for pdf file of the AGM report

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