



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

Charity registration number: 1128277

**Report for period between 20/02/2024 and 18/02/2025**

**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 and the assistant clergy's house and stewardship of other assets.

**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), George Belfield (Ministry Lead: Youth) from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 and Kim Phillips (Ministry Trainee) until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

**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 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024:

**Clergy:** Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin.

**Churchwardens:** Gerardine Densham Brown (until she stepped down in July 2024), Richard Price and Christine Jones (appointed 27<sup>th</sup> October 2024)

**Diocesan Synod members:** Nigel Cundy (appointed as a lay member on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024).

**Deanery Synod members:** Warwick Croucher and Stephen Horn. Nigel Cundy was also an elected member of Deanery Synod and was on PCC in this capacity until his appointment to Diocesan Synod.

**Elected PCC members:** Matthew Cherukara, Warwick Croucher, Jill Howard, Charlotte Langdon, Margaret Molloy, Tim Parr, Simon Pearce, Reji Prasad, Helen Sankey, Neil Salt, Amir Sexton and John Sweet.

**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 Warwick Croucher, Jill Howard and Neil Salt are standing down from PCC having served three years, and Amir Sexton 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.

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

During the year, the patronage of St John's was transferred from the Rector of St Peter's Old Woking to the Church Society Trust.

### **Achievements and Performance**

The numbers on the electoral roll to be reported at the APCM are St. John's 200 (last year 234) and Emmanuel 12 (last year 19). This makes a parish total of 212 (last year 253).

The average Sunday attendance during October was adults 180 (194 in 2023) and children 34 (45 in 2023); there were approximately 2,185 attendances (including schools services) over the Christmas period (2,670 in 2023).

During 2024, there were no baptisms and 1 Service of Thanksgiving (8 and 1 in 2023); no confirmations (9 in 2023) and 3 weddings (2 in 2023). During 2024, 9 funerals (14 in 2023), 4 cremations (5 in 2023) and 9 interments of cremated remains (4 in 2023) 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 major festival services, with other preachers visiting occasionally. Monthly coffee mornings took place, usually attracting some 30 local residents. A monthly daytime parish prayer meeting at Emmanuel has been introduced. 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. Maintenance of the church buildings and grounds included replacement of a storm-damaged fence.

## **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.

The expenditure for our ongoing activities in the year exceeded our income by £16,712, which is an improvement on last year's deficit of £49,932. In addition, we incurred final costs on the sale of the Willowmead flat of £11,777 and raised £135,475 for the extension to the Hermitage Woods Crescent property.

Leaving aside the appeal for the extension, giving from the church family is down about 8% (£27,000) from last year, mostly due to a drop in one-off amounts received which was less than half the £45,000 received last year. Lettings income and interest, however, were up nearly £18,600, which meant total income was only down by roughly £9,000.

Costs were also down compared with last year (about £42,000 or 10%); our staff costs were a little higher as our new Youth Minister joined us during the year, but the main difference is in property upkeep, which last year included church stonework, the refurbishment of Willowmead prior to sale and the refurbishment of the Small Halls.

As stated in note 7 to the financial statements, our policy is to maintain our regular cash reserves at three months' expenditure, or roughly £90,000. They currently stand at roughly £81,000.

### **Maintenance of buildings and other assets**

During 2024 there were two major building projects: firstly to replace the problematic conservatory on the Associate Minister's house with a proper extension and to re-order some of the downstairs internal space, and secondly to replace the asbestos cladding panels over the windows around the 1970s extensions to the Church with plywood panels. Both projects were completed successfully: on time and within budget. Thanks must be made to many of the congregation who generously donated funds for the work on the Associate Minister's house.

The central heating system in the St John's Church building has caused recent problems which have proved difficult to diagnose and repair. It has now been fixed. While the main St John's Church boilers are not particularly old (14 years) and are quite efficient, they may need replacing sooner rather than later, given recurrent problems. While we continue to make improvements to the lighting to help reduce our Church electricity bill, we also need to consider improvements to insulation in all buildings wherever practical to reduce heating costs and make the buildings more comfortable. The church was awarded Bronze under the Church of England's Eco-church scheme this year.

There are likely to be a number of high-cost repairs needed in the near future. The roof over the Lounge and Narthex will need to be replaced. The Church will need some redecoration and there are a number of improvements needed to the Youth Centre – the electrics and plumbing need updating; the ceiling and lighting in the main hall is not in particularly good condition; the ceiling to the upstairs room is made from asbestos panels.

We have a quinquennial inspection booked at St John's for June 2025 which will undoubtedly identify a number of repairs needed to the fabric of the Church. A number of problems (some listed above) are already known; however, the inspecting architect may identify problems of which we are not aware.

There are always a large number of routine maintenance and repair tasks required every year. Annual service requirements include those for the organ, fire protection, lightning protection, central heating and intruder alarms. These must all be done by professionals – generally at high cost! However, there are a vast number of other jobs and smaller repairs needed which have been completed; some by professionals and others by volunteers. The contributions made by our Tuesday work group and ad hoc Saturday morning work parties, which have been able to accomplish a good number of smaller jobs such as grass cutting, maintenance of seats, car park and drive clearing as well as the preparation of holes for the interment of ashes, all of which keep the church working properly, are warmly welcomed and much appreciated. There is no shortage of work but a shortage of people able and willing to do it, so more volunteers would be welcomed.

### **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 are 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 three 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 three 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 in the form of 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 normally delivered via zoom by the diocese and the safer recruitment training is available online. Many of our team renewed their training during the course of last 12 months as all modules are valid for three 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. The Dashboard has three levels and during the course of last year we progressed to level three (the highest level).

Every year the PCC agrees the Parish Safeguarding Policy and Policy Statement. A copy of the Policy Statement is displayed in both St John's and Emmanuel churches and a copy is sent to the Diocese for their records. Our safeguarding officer is Mary Kirkman and our DBS Administrator is Ann Abraham.

## **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.

We welcomed George Belfield as our Ministry Lead: Youth last summer. His time so far has been spent starting to get to know our young people, in prayer, and setting a vision and strategy, with the Lord's guidance, for the youth ministry here which, with our great youth team, has begun to be put into practice.

Our aim is a simple and yet high one. We want to work hard to wisely proclaim Jesus Christ to young people from our church and beyond, and to see them put their faith in him and grow to maturity in him. We also want to offer them belonging in church and youth group, to a community that is different; one that is growing in love for Jesus and each other; welcoming to newcomers; authentic and honest, and worth committing to. We aim to do all of this in partnership with church parents. It sounds big and lofty, but it looks rather simple and ordinary each week. Still, God is at work amongst us.

Our Youth Group meets on Tuesday nights. The group aims to be a space where our young people can hang out together in the week and deepen the friendships with one another through activities, chat, talks and discussion time. We also hope this can be a place where youth either on the edges of our church or from outside the church feel welcome too.

A few updates on this:

- Previously there used to be two separate groups on Tuesday night. One for the years 7-9 and one for 10-13. These groups have now been combined so that there is the critical mass to give more momentum. This has largely worked well and has been enjoyed by everyone. There are regularly between 12-14 youth attending.
- Teaching has been on a range of different topics such as 'The gospel from different perspectives', 'Things God cannot do' and 'A New Community: How Church is to be different'
- There has been the encouragement of seeing a few youth from outside our church join us and several move up from the younger groups.

Eighty is the discipleship group for ages 11-14s. They meet during the morning service on Sundays. Last year, they looked at the 'I am sayings of Jesus', Ruth, 'Messiah Prophesied', and this term the studies are going through Genesis and the lives of Abraham and Isaac. There are usually between 6-8 young people attending.

iNsight is the discipleship group for years 10-13. At the start of this academic year their bible study group was moved to a Sunday so that Tuesday night could be kept more guest friendly. Typically the group has a meal together before the evening service, catches up, prays and studies the bible. They have recently looked at Mark's gospel and done a series on 'why we do things at church'. Once a month this term they have started meeting after the morning service over snacks to chat about the sermon they have just heard. This group is still finding its feet with attendance having fluctuated a lot last term.

Schools Work. Despite multiple attempts to approach our local secondary school by a variety of means, this door seems closed for now.

#### Other highlights of the year

- We thank God for the great team of leaders who love the Lord and are keen to serve our young people, and for godly and supportive parents, who want the best for their children. This isn't to be taken for granted!
- Sorted and Sorted Nano. Youth leaders took a group of our older teens to Sorted in London back in November for teaching on Ecclesiastes and great sung worship with hundreds of other teens and youth leaders. Our younger teens will have a trip to Sorted Nano soon.
- Socials. Recognising the importance of quality time together, a few fun things were organised last term: a bonfire night, a bring and share Christmas dinner, and a BBQ & Air rifles social.
- Summer Camps. The Lord greatly blessed our young people through camps last summer and some of our adults served as leaders.

#### **Children's and Families Work**

In our ministry to children and families, we aim to show them and teach them about the love of Christ, how he died for our sin and how we need a saviour to restore our relationship with God. We aim to support parents in our congregation and partner with them in raising their children to know Christ as their Lord and Saviour and we aim to reach those in our community who do not know him through events, activities and schools' work.

Sunday Mornings continue to be fun and well attended, usually with 20-25 under 11's each week across the groups. We have an amazing team of volunteers who plan and lead the sessions.

This year we have covered Acts, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew (Christmas) and Mark as we reach the half way point of our 4 year cycle of teaching. There has been positive feedback from parents and we are excited to hear how their children are growing in faith.

Schools Work has grown even further in 2024-2025, with more visits to and from the local primary schools. The Children's Team continue to visit Hermitage Infants weekly and St John's Primary fortnightly to deliver the Open the Book scheme, and visit Hermitage Juniors approximately fortnightly to lead "What Christians Believe" assemblies. Each term we deliver three music assemblies at St John's Primary. Our Ministry Lead for Children and Families has been to visit classes in school and teams of church volunteers run stalls at school fetes.

Alongside these regular visits to the schools, the Ministry Lead for Children and Families and the clergy are involved in the schools' trips to the church to cover a range of curriculum topics, as well as the local Beavers group studying for badges. We continue to welcome the schools when they come to the church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest to hold their services.

We have also built on our relationships with two local pre-schools, Seedlings and Mayford this year.

Events – We have hosted lots of different types of events this year including a family film afternoon, Christingle, Lego club and Fun days.

Dangerous Kids Club (DKC) (7-10 year olds) has been running for over 2½ years. Attendance has stayed consistently around 20 over the last year. Our team has lost one regular leader, leaving the core team at five. This number is still adequate but has less accommodation for absences. Thankfully we have a couple of additional volunteers that are happy to be called in at these times. The

evening's format has not 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 join their children for fireside food and then a firework display as the 5<sup>th</sup> Nov fell on a club night.

Once certain levels of attendance have been achieved, children receive a club-logo t-shirt then a youth bible. This remains popular.

In September 2024 a significant number of our regulars 'outgrew' DKC. Pleasingly, many have moved onto 1:eighty or their own church youth activities. A good number of new attendees were gained, so numbers have remained fairly level.

The upstairs room at the Youth Centre has been made available during club time to enable parents to remain onsite in more pleasant surroundings, rather than their car, and this has been used by families.

All-age spots – The team of all-age 'spotters' continue to provide lively and engaging teaching for the children through the year during the main morning service at St John's. The team have engaged well with the introduction of series that are reinforced each week through certain aspects; this provides continuity across the series and embeds key teaching. Topics covered this last year have been God's Promises, Big little words and Generosity. Song special slots are also regularly on the rota where we can focus on revisiting or learning great songs suitable for children.

One recent change has been the replacement of an all-age spot during Sunday morning Communion services with an informal discussion at the front with children at the end of the service about their learning that day.

All-age services – All-age services are held in February, at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Day and Christmas. Now that we have a Youth Minister in position, we are better able to coordinate inclusion of children and young people routinely in these services.

Summer Holiday Club - was well attended and the move to the last week of the holidays seems to have worked well with increased attendance. Again, we had a really great team of volunteers.

First Steps (Babies & Toddlers) – This group meets weekly during term time on Thursdays from 9.40-11.00am. This year has been very encouraging, with a lot of new faces coming through our doors each Thursday and the vast majority of those attending coming from outside our church family. We have also added a couple of new helpers to our team and new bakers to our cake rota. Thank you to everyone who gives their time and energy to serve God in this way.

We have a bible story and themed craft each week and finish with music and songs. The children love the musical instruments our ministry lead for children & music brings each week.

We are pleased to see some First Steps parents attending events outside the group and coming into church for Christmas and Easter events.

### **Pastoral Support Group (PSG)**

The pastoral support group is a small team of the clergy and approved volunteers, which is available to support adult members of the church in need, through fellowship and friendship. At Christmas and Easter they also support the clergy in taking home communion to the more frail and housebound members of the parish.

The prayer ministry team is a dedicated part of the PSG and meets before the service each Sunday, and then afterwards to pray for anyone with a particular need.

One of the PSG also liaises with the compiler of the prayer diary and those leading prayers in church.

Handmade cards prepared by a church member are sent to anyone in the congregation who is sick, bereaved or going through a difficult time.

## **Music**

Music at St John's exists to lead and encourage the congregation in communal praise and worship of God, proclaiming gospel truth in line with the theological views of the church, connecting head and heart through the use of well written multi-generational songs and hymns.

Music on Sundays continues to be blessed with a good number of musicians and singers serving in the morning service. It would be great to have a few more musicians for Sunday evenings but we have always managed to find someone each week. We have introduced a number of new songs this year and have brought back some old songs into regular use again.

Choir: The seasonal choir has had a good turn out with over 30 people for Christmas and strong numbers for Easter and Remembrance Day. Carolling at The Rowbarge pub and Woodbank Retirement apartments meant we were able to strengthen relationships with the community, as did Remembrance Sunday and the return to processing to and singing outside St John's Memorial Hall.

Singing Assemblies have continued at St John's Primary School and are an amazing opportunity to bless the school through music and teach them what Christians believe through song.

Singing workshop: We had an exciting training day for singers with a singer who sings professionally in the classical world but also leads worship with the group Joyful Noise. This was well attended by a mixture of our band singers and choir members and feedback has been very positive.

## **Sidesmen**

Around twenty-three 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**

The Woking Deanery is one of 12 subdivisions of the Guildford diocese, and has representatives from each of the churches in Woking and the surrounding area. Representatives serve for three-year terms, and were last elected in 2023. St John's has been allocated four lay representatives to the synod. Our current lay representatives are Warwick Croucher and Stephen Horn; Nigel Cundy was also elected alongside them in 2023 but was appointed to Diocesan Synod in October 2024 and thereby vacated his Deanery Synod seat. We therefore have two vacancies. The Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin, as clergy, are also members of the Deanery Synod.

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 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 the needs of different generations and how to reach across to them.



Diocese of Guildford. The Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board of Finance oversee the work of Guildford Diocese, including its education programs, training and clergy support. It can also discuss issues passed down from General Synod for review, and can raise motions to be discussed in General Synod.

The Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin, as clergy, finished serving their three-year elected term for Woking Deanery on Guildford Diocesan Synod in August 2024. Nigel Cundy was appointed as a lay representative on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

General Synod. St John's Church does not currently have a representative on General Synod.

#### Other Links

The church is a member of both the Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship and the Surrey Gospel Partnership. The Rev Glyn Lucas and Rev Peter Chamberlin both hold positions on the committees of these two partnership groups and members of the church are encouraged to attend their events.

St John's also has membership status with the Church Society and Evangelical Alliance and supports the Christian Institute.

#### **Mission**

St John's with Emmanuel financially support a number of mission partners through recognised organisations which share our convictions. For each family or individual that we support there is member of the congregation who is a key contact, someone who maintains regular contact with them. We also support them 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. This year they have also run a holiday club and held a Carol service.
- Josh and Cathy Hooker (Crosslinks) who moved to Northern Ireland a couple of years 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.
- Maddie Lewis (UCCF) who has been a CU staff worker in UCCF's south east region since September 2022, supporting the Christian Unions at Surrey University, UCA Farnham and UCA Epsom. In September 2024 she also took responsibility for supporting the CU at Royal Holloway College.

We ended our formal support for Brendan and Jo Beaton at the end of 2024. They returned to the UK in the summer of 2024 and stayed with their mission organisation (SIM) until December. Since January they have been employed by a church in Cambridge. Consideration is being given as to the best way to redirect the financial support that went to them in a way that meets the conditions of our Mission Policy.

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.

Again this year the parish supported the Samaritan's Purse shoebox appeal, sending over 120 boxes with a variety of toys, toiletries and stationery to children in need, which are distributed with the good news of Jesus Christ.

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

Signed: 

Approved by St John's PCC – 18 February 2025