



The Parish of St Mary's Long Ditton

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

29th May 2022

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 29th May 2022
AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting held on 25 April 2022
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. Report on changes in Electoral Roll since last year's Annual Meeting and a report on the numbers entered on that Roll
6. Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council and the activities of the Parish generally
7. The presentation to the Parochial Church Council of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2021, which have been independently examined
8. Report on Stewardship
9. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church
10. Report on the proceedings of the Deanery Synod
11. Report on the proceedings of Churches Together in the Dittons
12. Report on Safeguarding
13. Report regarding Music
14. Report regarding Children's Activities
15. Report regarding Community Engagement
16. Report regarding Eco Church
17. Report regarding Long Ditton St Mary's Junior School
18. Appointment of Tellers
19. Election of Parochial Church Council Members
20. Appointment of an independent examiner
21. Rector's Remarks
22. Any Other Business
23. Closing Prayers

ST MARY'S CHURCH, LONG DITTON
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
25th April 2021

MINUTES

33 adults present

1. Opening Prayers

The Chairman opened the meeting with prayers.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Tessa Vallings.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2020 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and unanimously approved by those present.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll report presented by Janet Critchley, the Electoral Roll Officer, was accepted. Janet explained that the Roll was reviewed and revised in September 2020. As at 31 March 2021, the numbers on the roll remained at 103, the same as in the previous year: one new applicant had been welcomed and one previous member no longer qualified for inclusion.

6. Annual Report of the PCC

The report on the proceedings of the PCC over the past year, presented by the Hon PCC Secretary, Penny Fussell, was noted. In particular, it was noted that Professor Alison Baverstock would join the parish in July 2021 as Curate during her four year part-time non-stipendiary curacy training.

7. Financial Statement

The Hon Treasurer, Kim Taylor, presented the financial statement for the church for the year ending 31 December 2020.

The Hon Treasurer reported that in 2020 total receipts for the year in the General Fund were £95,000 (2019: £132,000). This fall was caused by the reduction and interruption in all forms of giving and fundraising caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Planned giving had fallen to £69,000 (2019: £82,000); collections had fallen to £2,685 (2019: £9,308); income from the church hall had fallen to £5734 (2019: £15,011); and there had been no church fund raising activities.

In contrast, the PCC received an extremely generous legacy from the estate of Miss Jean Arscott totalling £58,000. In accordance with the benefactor's wishes, the legacy was for the benefit of the Fabric Maintenance Fund within Restricted Funds.

Expenditure in the General Fund had been £91,000 for the year (2019: £129,000). In response to the onset of the pandemic, the PCC had sought to economise wherever possible, and indeed managed to reduce expenditure outside the Parish Share from £55,000 in 2019 to £45,000 in 2020. However, a significant reduction in Parish Share contributions could not be avoided: this was £45,000 in 2020, down from £74,000 in 2019. Including the shortfall in payments in 2019 of £8,299, the accumulated shortfall in Parish Share contributions was £37,879.

The outcome of the economies made, and limited Parish Share paid was that the PCC was able to achieve a small surplus for the year on the General Fund of £3,592. The continuing impact of the pandemic on income had led the PCC to agree to limit the Parish Share contribution to £3,000 a month whilst the pandemic and its effects persisted.

The Financial Statements as published in the Annual Report 2020 were accepted.

The Rector thanked the Hon Treasurer, Katharine Lankey and Brian Rogers for their hard work behind the scenes in managing the church's financial affairs.

8. Stewardship

The Stewardship Report presented by Katharine Lankey, Hon Stewardship Treasurer, was noted.

Income from Stewardship was considerably down in 2020 (£68,322 compared to £88,982). Prompted by a question from David May about the number of donors, Katharine explained that whilst the number of donors remained the same the donors were not the same people - some of the more generous givers had moved away or died; some who had previously given in the collection plate had switched to giving through the Stewardship scheme.

The reduction in church services, including weddings and funerals, during the pandemic also had meant a loss of occasional gift aid contributions.

Katharine expressed her thanks to all those who had continued to financially support St Mary's during this difficult time. She also thanked Lucky Thobela for taking over the process of claiming the Gift Aid from HMRC.

The Rector thanked Katharine and Lucky for their work over the past year.

9. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

The report by the Churchwardens was accepted. In response to a question from David May pertaining to the five-year maintenance plan, Peter Topp advised architect was due to undertake the quinquennial review in two years' time. He advised that all the urgent issues identified in the last review had been attended to.

10. Deanery Synod

The report presented by Cat Smith, one of the appointed Deanery Synod representatives, on the proceedings of the Emly Deanery Synod was noted.

11. Churches Together in the Dittons

The reported by Cathy Doyle, CTD representative, on the proceedings of the CTD was noted. Despite the pandemic, Zoom meetings had continued via Zoom enabling mutual support and encouragement to each church community. It was noted that the Spear Road United Reformed Church would be closing in June/July. The Rector asked that prayers be raised for the congregation as they moved to worship elsewhere.

12. Parish Child Protection

A report presented by Diana Jemmett, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, was noted. She commented that DBS renewals had recommenced having been on hold during the pandemic. She also gave an update on Diocesan training provisions.

13. Music

The Rector advised that Douglas Tang had resigned as Music Director in December 2020 and that Julia had taken on the role of Choir Co-ordinator.

A report, presented by Julia Bowyer, Choir Co-ordinator, was noted. In the absence of the usual calendar of services, visits and outings, the choir had kept in regular contact and managed various activities including Zoom socials, quizzes and talks. Rehearsing and training continued and as soon as permissible, recordings were made for special services. Members of the choir played a key role in enabling live streaming of services too.

Joanne Hall, on behalf of the congregation, expressed her thanks to the choir for their role in leading worship during the pandemic. The Rector too thanked Chris Collins, Martin Bowyer, Cat Smith and Dona Anderson for their invaluable work setting up and managing the system enabling services to be live streamed. This had been important and very much appreciated by the congregation.

14. Children's Activities

A report, presented by Christine Satkunanayagam, was noted. Chris Howard and Tashi Lasalle had held Pizza Nights online for the young people aged 9-13 providing opportunities for discussion and fellowship. The need for leaders for Sunday Club had been accentuated following the decision by Christine and Tashi to step down.

The Rector advised that there were no plans to restart Sunday Club or the Creche earlier than perhaps the Autumn. It was commented that advice and clarification would be needed over the sharing of toys and equipment.

15. Community Engagement

A report by Diana Jemmett on community engagement was noted. The pandemic had curtailed all group activities. However, the Pastoral Assistants had maintained contact with the church community through phone calls, emails and, when permissible, visits and practical help such as shopping. The Lychgate magazine had continued to be produced for which Janet Burton, Edward Howard and Peter Brown were to greatly thanked.

16. Appointment of Tellers

No tellers were appointed.

17. Election of Parochial Church Council members

The Chairman advised that four nominations had been received for election to the PCC:

- (i) Joanne Hall on the proposal of Diana Jemmett, seconded by Judith Topp;
- (ii) Robert Hancock on the proposal of Janet Critchley, seconded by Peter Brown;
- (iii) Sue Le Rue on the proposal of Peter Topp, seconded by Joanne Hall; and
- (iv) Timothy Rennie on the proposal of Peter Topp, seconded by Diana Jemmett.

The four nominees were duly unanimously elected.

18. Appointment of an independent examiner

It was unanimously agreed that Martin Perrin be re-appointed as the independent examiner.

19. Rector's Remarks

The Rector gave an overview of the past year ...and what a year! The decision had been made to conduct services using Zoom focussing on the 1015.am Holy Communion service. The PAs had done a great job keeping in touch with those who were vulnerable and isolated. When restrictions lifted, the key priority had been to resume services in church. He thanked the churchwardens who had enabled this to happen, keeping abreast of the ever-changing guidelines.

Sadly, Douglas Tang had resigned but the church was blessed by Julia Bowyer and Michael Stevenson who had stepped in as Choir Co-ordinator and organist respectively. He thanked adult choristers for their cantor singing in the live-streamed services.

The pandemic had affected St Mary's in every aspect, but the Rector highlighted two particular areas adversely affected: finances and connectivity with families and young people. He expressed his concern that should the church find it impossible to pay its way in the Diocese, then the long-term prospect of the position of Rector being filled would be jeopardised. Similarly, if the church did not provide a ministry for young people then the congregation would wither away. There were opportunities to partner with other churches to determine how to engage with young people.

The Rector commented that St Mary's would not be able to go back to how things were before the pandemic.

He thanked all those who supported him and who worked, may behind the scenes, in the administration and activities of the church:

- the Churchwardens
- Steve, the Parish Secretary
- Diana and Jo on Safeguarding
- the choir
- Tessa Vallings for single-handedly keeping the church clean
- the stewards
- Tashi Lasalle and Chris Howard for leading the Pizza Night evenings
- the flower arrangers

- the Lychgate Magazine team
- Chris Howard for managing the website
- the officers of the PCC (the Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer)
- the team who managed the church's monies (Katharine Lankey, Lucky Thobela and Brian Rogers).

20. Any Other Business

20.1 The Rector reported that Chris Howard, Cat Smith, Kim Taylor and Tashi Lasalle were working on a parish funding campaign which would seek to rectify the existing annual deficit of £30,000. He re-emphasised his concern that poor finances would undermine the likelihood of a full-time Rector being appointed in the future.

20.2 The Rector was thanked for his leadership over the past year, supporting the parish and congregation.

21. Closing Prayers

The Rector closed the meeting with prayers.

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Chairman

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

The last revision of the Electoral Roll took place in March 2021 when there were 103 names on the roll.

At this revision, we have reviewed all additions to the roll since then and have also removed those who can no longer be on it.

I can, therefore, report that as at 14 May 2022, the numbers on the roll have increased by six to 109. We have welcomed eight new applicants and two previous members no longer qualify for inclusion.

Under the Church Representation Rules, a new Electoral Roll has to be prepared every six years and this will next take place in 2025.

Being on the Electoral Roll gives you the opportunity to take a greater part in church life and to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. If you would like to be on the roll, please contact Janet Critchley, Electoral Roll Officer, for more information.

Janet Critchley
Electoral Roll Officer

REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Vision: *Following Christ, Serving You*

The Vision of St Mary's Church means that we prioritise:

- (i) helping those around us discover faith in Jesus Christ;
- (ii) developing and strengthening our links in the community;
- (iii) engaging a new generation with the good news of the Gospel; and
- (iv) deepening our discipleship and spirituality.

A ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The general functions of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the Parish of St Mary's are set out in the Parochial Church Council Measure and The Church Representation Rules. It is the duty of the Rector and the PCC to consult together on matters of general concern and importance to the parish. The PCC works in co-operation with the incumbent in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the church: pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. Additionally, the PCC is required to consider and discuss matters concerning the Church of England or any other matter of religious or public interest, but not the declaration of the doctrine of the Church. The Charities Act also enjoins all charities to demonstrate that their aims are for the public benefit. Accordingly, the PCC has had regard, where relevant, to the public benefit guidance issued by the Charity Commission in carrying out its activities, as described below.

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance and repair of St Mary's Church building (which is Grade 2 listed) and situated in a conservation area at the junction of Church Road, Rectory Lane and Woodstock Lane North (OS grid reference TQ173659). The PCC is registered with the Charity Commission Number 1128898. The correspondence address for St Mary's Church is: The Rectory, 5 Church Meadow, Long Ditton, Surrey KT6 5EP or The Parish Office, St Mary's Community Hall, Church Road, Long Ditton Surrey KT6 5HH.

PCC Membership:

Members of the PCC are appointed in accordance with the Church Representation Rules or co-opted by the PCC during the year. The following served as members of the PCC in 2021/22:

Incumbent	The Revd Dr Kuhan Satkunanayagam	Ex officio
Curate	The Rev Professor Alison Baverstock	Ex officio (from July 2021)
Churchwardens	Peter Topp Susan Rider	Ex officio Ex officio
Honorary Officers	Kim Taylor – Honorary Treasurer Peter Brown – Honorary Treasurer Penny Fussell – Honorary Secretary	Co-opted Member of PCC (to December 2021) (from January 2022) Co-opted Member of PCC
Deanery Synod Representatives	Cat Smith Diana Jemmett Chris Howard	Ex officio Ex officio Ex officio

Elected Members of the Council	Janet Critchley	Retires 2022
	Lucky Thobela	Retires 2022
	Peter Brown	Retires 2023
	Tashi Lasalle	Retires 2023
	Julia Watts	Retires 2023
	Timothy Rennie	Retires 2024
	Robert Hancock	Retires 2024
	Sue Le Roux	Retires 2024
	Joanne Hall	Retires 2024

3 vacancies

PCC Advisers

Bankers	Barclays Bank plc, Barclays Business Centre, 6 Clarence Street, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 1NY
Buildings	The PCC currently employs John Bailey as its architect
Independent Examiner	Mr Martin Perrin MA, FCA, Chartered FCSI

Sub-Committees

The PCC operates through a number of sub-committees which meet at agreed times during the year and then report to the PCC:

- (i) **Standing Committee.** This is the only committee required by law. It has power to transact the business of the PCC between its meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC. The Standing Committee elected by the PCC for the year comprises the Rector, the Churchwardens, the Honorary Treasurer, the Honorary Secretary and Diana Jemmett (an elected Deanery Synod Representative and therefore ex officio member of the PCC).
- (ii) **Community Hall.** This committee is responsible for the maintenance and management of St Mary's Community Hall for use by the parish and local community. The committee works to maintain proper budgetary control whilst ensuring external funding requirements are met and health and safety matters comply with current legislation. Appropriate licensing laws and insurance cover is maintained.
- (iii) **Social Team.** This team aims to co-ordinate a regular programme of social events and to provide support for any special or fund-raising events.

Churchyard, buildings, health and safety

The Rector and Churchwardens continue to liaise with Elmbridge Borough Council to ensure the grounds are kept safe and presentable. Rob's Garden Services are employed to undertake 'gardening' tasks particularly in the Garden of Rest. The Rector and Churchwardens are also responsible for oversight of the maintenance and development of the buildings and churchyard structures (old mortuary, Garden of Rest walls, stone tablets etc.), as well as any relevant legislation relating to the building, staff, and visitors' and volunteers' health and safety. They are supported in these responsibilities by several volunteers from the church community.

Safeguarding

The PCC considers that it has, to the best of its knowledge, taken all reasonable steps to comply with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have due regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

General Data Protection Regulation

The PCC, to the best of its knowledge, considers that all reasonable steps have, and continue to be taken to comply with the GDPR that came into effect in May 2018. A data audit was conducted, and a Privacy Notice published.

B REVIEW OF PCC PROCEEDINGS OVER THE PAST YEAR

The following report is provided by the Hon Secretary

The PCC met eight times over the past year.

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic heightened the key concerns of the PCC: finances and the numbers of people attending services and volunteering to fill the several roles required to manage and develop the church's activities. The PCC therefore has taken action to determine ways to attend to and resolve these concerns.

Principal of these was the establishment of the Parish Funding Programme. The PCC devolved responsibility to a small team to develop the programme who gave careful thought to the messaging and marketing of the aims of the Programme: to remind the people of Long Ditton of the value of the church to the local community; to share news of the activities and services available at St Mary's; and to generate financial support to further the church's work and to maintain its heritage building and churchyard. The Programme was launched on 4 November 2021 to which all parishioners were invited. The response to the event, and to the subsequent request for committed financial giving, was positive and an excellent starting point upon which to build over the next year.

The PCC re-affirmed its commitment to the Vision of St Mary's, the integral aspects of which were to strengthen links with the local community and spreading the Good News of the Gospel.

One key element of this is the provision of activities and support for young people which was sorely hindered by the pandemic. The PCC is grateful to Chris Howard and Tashi Lasalle for so adeptly continuing the Pizza & Bible Nights using the wonders of Zoom, that technology which became so vital to so many during the pandemic. As Government guidelines eased so Chris and Tashi have navigated their way to holding meetings face-to-face once again. The pandemic brought to a head the diminishing numbers of children attending Sunday Club and the Creche and prompted a pragmatic review of what St Mary's could/should provide and how this provision should be developed. For the immediate future, it was decided to merge the two groups pooling the also reduced number of volunteers who help lead and run them. The PCC is most grateful to Christine Satkunanayagam and Ann Leeson for their leadership respectively of Sunday Club and the Creche prior to this merge, and to Cat Smith who has taken on the leadership of the new format Sunday Club. The PCC is determined that, building on the present small band of attendees, Sunday Club will grow into a vibrant and relevant group for the young people of the congregation.

Inevitably, the pandemic affected the church in many not necessarily so overt ways. For example, many of the businesses who advertise in the *Lychgate*, the parish magazine, were financially affected. The PCC, keen to support such businesses, and with an admittedly selfish aim of keeping them as advertisers in the future, took the pragmatic decision to permit advertisers to delay paying the advertising fee. The PCC is most grateful to Peter Brown who has worked assiduously with advertisers to collect fees in an expedient manner.

The PCC also is most grateful to Janet Burton, the editor, for her continuing flexibility and dexterity over the magazine's collation and publication. She too has worked hard to find advertisers to ensure fee income covers the publication costs. Thanks too must be given to the volunteers who, throughout the pandemic, have continued to distribute magazine to the parish.

The pandemic brought guidelines and advice for all to follow. The interpretation of these, in particular as they were eased, was challenging to keep up to date with but the Churchwardens proved to be more than up to the task which was much appreciated by the PCC.

For all the profound difficulties the pandemic wrought there have been positives. As restrictions began to ease, the PCC took the opportunity to review practices and activities that had had to be stopped, what had started; what were missed; what should continue. Such a review aided prioritising reintroducing and continuing activities whilst recognising the increasingly limited resources both financial and in terms of people.

One of the great positives to come from the pandemic was the use of live streaming and recording of services. The PCC initiated research as to whether this facility should be retained and therefore be put on a permanent footing with church owned, appropriate equipment rather than the excellent but temporary and borrowed equipment that was being used. The research produced a recommendation to retain this facility it being judged a valuable way to connect with the wider community. After a careful and long debate, the PCC supported the recommendation commissioning a complete upgrade to our existing audio-visual system. The PCC is confident that this will not only provide for the sharing of services to those unable to attend in person, but also improve audio facilities within the church and provide flexibility and opportunities for activities within the church other than services such as concerts and talks.

The PCC has been delighted to witness the development of the choir under the leadership of Julia Bowyer to whom they are most grateful. Thanks too goes to Michael Stevenson who played the organ in services for many weeks in early 2021 and to Caroline Yalden thereafter. The choir and the tradition of music are great assets of St Mary's which should be proudly advertised to and shared with the local community and friends.

The usual annual reviews of the health & safety and fire risk assessments were held. The PCC also took the decision to purchase a defibrillator viewing this as a valuable asset not just for those attending church activities but users of the Community Hall and others in the near vicinity. It will, therefore, be located in the churchyard near to the entrance into the Community Hall. Generous donations from members of the congregation, Long Ditton Village Hall and charities sourced by PCC member Robert Hancock, made this acquisition possible.

Safeguarding similarly features as a standard item on the PCC agenda being a hugely significant responsibility of the PC. Led by Cat Smith, the Safeguarding Officer, and the Rector, the several Church of England guidance documents and template documents had been reviewed. All procedures and documentation for St Mary's have been reviewed and where necessary, updated such as the reporting of Serious Incidents; to ensure safer recruitment; and the risk assessments of activities. As part of this, time was taken to identify all those activities specifically covered by safeguarding policies e.g. transporting people, Pizza Night, junior choir. Role descriptions for positions related to these activities have been written to ensure that volunteers understand what the respective roles involve, and seeking to ensure that all volunteers acknowledge and agree to adhere to the church's safeguarding principles.

Similarly, it was decided that all members of the PCC are DBS will be checked on appointment irrespective of whether they work within the church directly with children or vulnerable adults, and undertake safeguarding training. The PCC is keen to be open about its safeguarding policies, practices and actions.

Looking to the local community, the PCC has been pleased to support local initiatives and organisations whether it be through appointing governors at Long Ditton St Mary's or providing help for the Long Ditton Lights Up. The PCC, as ever, is most grateful to all those who volunteer to help with these activities enabling the church to serve its local community.

And finally, the PCC said farewell and thank you to Steve Welch, the Community Hall manager and Parish Secretary; and to Kim Taylor, Hon Treasurer. Both had held their respective roles for several years, in particular Kim whose voluntary management of the church's finances had been invaluable over a long period of time. The PCC was pleased to welcome Jo Lee in place of Steve, and Peter Brown, on an interim basis, in place of Kim. The PCC was especially pleased to welcome The Revd Professor Alison Baverstock who joined St Mary's as assistant curate having been ordained as a deacon at Guildford Cathedral on 4 July 2021.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

	2020	2021
Donor Numbers		
Regular Non Gift Aided	2	5
Regular Gift Aided	79	78
CAF/PAYE	1	1
Occasional CAF	0	2
Income		
Regular Non Gift Aided	276.00	876.00
Regular CAF/GAYE	1260.00	1260.00
Occasional CAF	0.00	400.00
Regular Gift Aided	49273.00	55763.75
Occasional Gift Aided	1788.00	800.00
Payments via SumUp	1688.00	2830.00
Tax Repayments	12037.00	15526.23
GASD Repayments	2000.00	1069.27
Total Stewardship Income	68322.00	78525.25

2021 started with 79 regular donors who were able to gift aid their contributions. By the end of the year this had decreased to 78. During the year 8 people had cancelled their payments but there were 7 new contributors.

The new contributors were largely in response to the parish funding programme. The losses were mainly names I have never recognised and I suspect during the last year people have been looking more carefully at their bank statements.

I have included donations using SumUp because these figures can be included in the GASDS repayment scheme.

I would like to express my thanks to Lucky Thobella who has been forwarding the tax reclaims to HMRC for me.

As always, many thanks to all those who contribute so loyally to St. Mary's

Katharine Lankey
Honorary Stewardship Treasurer

CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS REPORT

The easing of the coronavirus pandemic has enabled greater use of the church and hall than in the previous year although some precautions are still in place. The need for greater ventilation has meant it was not practical to keep the church as well heated as usual so the thermostat has been set at a lower temperature. With the cost of energy increasing the temperature is likely to be kept at this level.

Maintenance work to keep the buildings well maintained and comply with the requirements of our building insurance has continued throughout the year. Routine maintenance inspections include the roof and vestry fire alarm, hall alarm, boilers, portable electrical appliances and fire extinguishers. The organ and pianos are tuned and the organ blower serviced. The gutters are cleared regularly to avoid water leaking into the church.

There has been no significant work to the structure of the church this year however the hall boiler continued to lose pressure. This was eventually traced to the heat exchanger which was replaced and this resolved the long-standing problem.

There are currently a number of outstanding repairs that will receive attention in the near future:

- replacement of a movement sensor in church which is part of the lighting system;
- replacement of faulty emergency lights in the hall;
- re-erection of the main church noticeboard blown down in a recent gale.

It is anticipated that the hall toilets will require some refurbishment before too long.

Work is currently underway to install an audio-visual system in the church to improve the church's facilities for livestreaming services. A fundraising campaign has financed the purchase of a defibrillator which is on order and will be installed outside the hall near the entrance.

Cutting the grass in the churchyard is the responsibility of Elmbridge Council but the PCC is responsible for some items and, in particular, maintenance of the Garden of Rest. A firm of gardeners is employed to carry out this work. We have also organised some Saturday working parties to improve the appearance of the churchyard by tidying the flower beds, trimming low hanging branches and removing fallen wood. An area of the churchyard near the Garden of Rest has been identified as suitable for an "eco-garden" and work on this has started. The wooden gate at the entrance to the churchyard near the Garden of Rest will require replacement soon.

A small patch of invasive Japanese knotweed in the churchyard has continued to be treated and is reducing in size. It remains cordoned off.

The checks and inspections specified in the Health and Safety Policy are being carried out. A number of memorials in the churchyard, which were at risk of toppling, have been stabilised – two heavy memorials required the attention of the stonemason. From time to time memorials in the churchyard are cleaned and straightened at the initiative and expense of the family concerned. The inventory has been checked.

This report has been presented to and agreed by the PCC prior to the APCM.

Peter Topp & Susan Rider, Churchwardens - March 2022

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Our first synod meeting focused on Eco Church with a presentation by Alison Moulden, Diocesan Environmental Officer. From this meeting a Deanery Eco Church group has been formed to share ideas and best practice.

The next meeting looked at the recently published Church of England report 'From Lament to Action' with a question and answer session between the Revd Andrew Cowie, Area Dean and the Revd Folli Olokose, Vicar of St Mary's, Oatlands who is also the Guildford Diocese's Minority Ethnic Vocations Champion and a member of the Diocesan Racial Justice Focus Group.

The final synod meeting focused on how we as a deanery can be a greenhouse that can design, grow and cultivate fresh expressions of church. The Revd Jens Mankel, Diocesan Mission Enabler for Fresh Expressions, introduced the Greenhouse concept and Alistair Etheridge, the Diocesan Mission Enabler for Youth also spoke.

Cat Smith, Diana Jemmett and Chris Howard
Deanery Synod representatives

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE DITTONS (

Churches Together in the Dittons consists of clergy and lay representatives from the following churches in the Ditton area:

All Saints' (C of E) - Weston Green;
Christopher's (C of E) - Hinchley Wood;
St Nicholas (C of E) - Thames Ditton;
Our Lady of Lourdes (Roman Catholic) - Hampton Way;
Speer Road Church (URC) - Thames Ditton
St Marys (C of E) - Long Ditton

The group usually meets 4/5 times a year to plan the various ecumenical activities and services. During 2020, however, like everyone else, meetings became virtual and usual various activities had to be abandoned or rethought.

As we were in lockdown during January 2021 we joined together in online fellowship for the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** with Zoom prayer meetings hosted by the different churches.

On **Good Friday**, thanks to the continued wonders of Zoom – churches and members of the congregations joined together for an online Good Friday Joint Service enriched with wonderful music from Julia Bowyer and choristers from St Mary's.

Meetings continued on Zoom until September – offering mutual support and encouragement and sharing ideas of how each church was reaching out to its congregation.

By October we able to have an in-person **St Luke's tide Healing Service** at St Christopher's Hinchley Wood.

CTiD gives us the opportunity to celebrate and worship together, sharing our similarities and faith. You are very welcome to join us at any service or event.

THE CT PRAYER- Lord God, we thank you for calling us into the company of those who trust in Christ and seek to obey His Will. May Your Spirit guide and strengthen us in mission and service to Your World, for we are strangers no longer but pilgrims together on the way to Your Kingdom. Amen.

Cathy Doyle
CTiD representative

ANNUAL REPORT ON SAFEGUARDING

This has been a busy year for reviewing and updating the safeguarding processes within the church.

- DBS renewals now need to be done every three years, rather than every five
- The parish dashboard has been introduced to ensure easy monitoring of all relevant safeguarding procedures
- A policy for the recruitment of ex-offenders has been written and agreed by the PCC
- The safeguarding training matrix has been reviewed by the CofE and relevant people have undertaken (or have been requested to undertake) the relevant training modules. This is a significant step up from what has previously been required in various roles.
- Cat Smith has been appointed as Parish Safeguarding Officer and DBS validator
- The PCC has reviewed the list of church activities that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults, and has written and reviewed the relevant risk assessments
- The parish website has been updated to better signpost available support, how to report concerns and the Diocesan Safeguarding Review
- Role descriptions are being created for key roles, to increase the transparency over what a volunteer is required to do, and what support is available from the church.

Thank you to everyone involved in activities for adults and children for your hard work and for your commitment to the safeguarding, nurture and care of everyone in our community.

Anybody who would like to give information or make disclosures about church-related abuse is asked to contact Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Jackie Broadfoot
jackie.broadfoot@cofeguildford.org.uk [07918 559387](tel:07918559387)

If anyone has any questions about safeguarding, or is made aware of any specific concerns please contact me or the Rector.

Cat Smith
Parish Safeguarding Officer

MUSIC REPORT

There were three key parts of 2021 for St Mary's Church choir:

1) **New experiences and achievements**

- Zoom choir rehearsals for juniors and adults (including some much-needed social games/chatting time...)
- Recording and mixing music for streamed special services (Mothering Sunday and Good Friday).
- Various cantors sang at services when that became possible, which also gave us the opportunity to try new mass settings.

2) **Boosting and nurturing junior choir**

- We welcomed three new young singers this year who have settled in brilliantly. This has also enabled others to support and help them during services.
- Started monthly 'juniors only' Sunday morning services which helped increase their confidence in singing and sense of responsibility
- In-person Friday practices for juniors were fun and also focussed on learning and performing all the music, especially in the run up to Christmas.
- These give the opportunity to learn vocal technique and musical terms/notation, develop sight singing and reading/language skills, then socialise and relax in the short break before the adults join in for the last half hour of the rehearsal.
- Awarded various choristers the 'next stage' RSCM ribbons/surplices after their hard work, dedication and musicality – congratulations to them all.

3) **Music choices, carols and community**

- Overall the aim was to sing a variety of music that all can enjoy to enhance our worship and sense of community, while extending a warm welcome and enabling the comforting power of music for all singers.
- This was particularly evident at Advent/Christmas: the whole choir with extra special friends and family visitors worked very hard with Friday practices and extra Sunday rehearsals to sing for two amazing carol services despite a few unplanned absences.

The choir also sang at weddings and funerals as needed throughout the year.

Admin/comms

Actions to facilitate smooth running of the choir included:

- Set up detailed music plan in Excel that was shared with choir members on google shared drive
- Prepared evensong crib sheets and orders of service for carols
- Communicated via Music@stmaryslongditton.org.uk and WhatsApp groups

Social activities

- Junior choir zoom practices/games in early 2021
- Crazy golf June 2021
- Carol singing in the Angel pub 10 December for Shooting Star Chase

People

Music at St Mary's has been a real team effort this year and particular thanks go to:

- Caroline Yalden, Michael Stevenson and all the organists who have played for services;
- Cat Smith who continued to work hard behind the scenes as choir music librarian, wardrobe coordinator, safeguarding officer, socials organiser and more;
- Ann Allen for helping at juniors rehearsals;
- Kate and Tim Hamilton for musical support and enthusiasm, plus Tim's carol compositions;
- Martin Bowyer for setting up zoom practices, mixing recordings and general support;
- Chris Collins and Don Anderson for tech streaming;
- Friends and family who joined us for the evensongs and Christmas 'special' services; and
- Kuhan who arranged organists, planned the hymns, supported and encouraged.

Julia Bowyer
Acting Music Director

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

We re-started Sunday Club on a provisional monthly basis in the summer of 2021. Numbers were small, but those who attended seemed to enjoy. A meeting of volunteers was held to discuss the way forward, and a big emphasis has been placed on making the sessions FUN. The sessions are pitched at those aged 4-7, with younger children allowed to attend if a parent accompanies them. It was felt, at this stage, that having a wider age range would make the planning extremely hard, and it would be better to provide something smaller, better, than overstretch ourselves.

We do have children's provision for those aged 7 and over via the Junior Choir, and then for those aged 10 and over at the Pizza Night sessions.

From the start of the Autumn Term, Sunday Club sessions have been run twice a month, with the aim of providing an activity pack for children in church on the remaining Sundays. We have subscribed to Roots, an online provider of ideas and material, which helps inspire some of the sessions at an age appropriate level. However, we are always looking to extend from this and create ideas that the children can identify with, in a different way from the formal teaching at school.

Pizza Night has had a slight pause, but is looking to re-start during Lent with sessions using the Youth Alpha material, which will also Confirmation preparation for those who wish to be confirmed. The numbers interested continue to be steady.

Cat Smith
Sunday Club Co-ordinator

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

St Mary's organises a range of activities to support and engage with the community of Long Ditton. During the lockdown periods many in person activities were suspended, or moved online, but from September 2021 onwards we have slowly been able to resume many activities.

We publish the **Lychgate magazine** every other month and deliver it to all the households in the Parish. The Lychgate includes articles about community and church activities and is funded by advertising from local businesses.

Babes and Tots sessions on a Friday morning during term-time provide a mixture of soft play, dressing up, puzzles, craft, and, of course, the outside area is a great attraction. After juice/water and biscuits for the little ones and tea, 'real' coffee and biscuits for the grown-ups – we clear away and enjoy 25 minutes of singing action songs, and enjoying musical instruments. We use the opportunities to spread the Christian message by singing a grace before refreshments, giving an Easter gift and Christmas book and inform and invite families to events and services throughout the year.

A monthly **Drop-in Café** started in October 2021 on a Friday afternoon from 2-4pm. Hot drinks and biscuits are served and people are invited to stay for as long as they want for a chat and natter with others. From the moment we began this, a healthy attendance followed.

BookBox events - we have built a programme of community events centred around shared-reading and writing, on the basis that offering common ground with our wider parish would build relationships and encourage them to get involved with us. This began with two events on how to get published and has proceeded with several talks from authors, both those known to us and from our parish.

Writing a book is such a common life-ambition, we have found this has created inroads into our wider community and led to more of these people coming to services. We advertise these events on our website, within our newsletters – and within wider local and regional media, which seem ready to share stories about what is going on.

Long Ditton Lights Up! is held on the first Thursday evening in December marking the start of the Christmas season and aims to involve the whole community. Around 500 people attend and enjoy a raffle, tombola, BBQ, hot drinks and carol singing and of course, a countdown to the tree lights being switched on. This year St Mary's handed overall responsibility for the running of the event to Friends committee of our village schools but were actively involved in the planning beforehand and also had a strong presence during the evening not least of all in running the Raffle. We used the opportunity to hand out attractive postcards with information on the Christmas services, and these were very well received.

Diana Jemmett
Pastoral Assistant

ECO CHURCH REPORT

Our Climate Sunday service on Sunday 26th September 2021 included a presentation our Eco Church Silver badge by Andy Atkins, head of A Rocha UK. Our wooden Eco Church Silver badge sits proudly in the History Corner at the back of church to the right of the front entrance. We are now on the journey to the Eco Church Gold badge.

We plan to have another Climate focussed 'What's next after COP26?' Trees/Sustainable Homes' Sermon in 2022. We continue to mark Creationtide in September/October each year. Our hymns throughout the year celebrate God's creation and our intercessions regularly includes prayers for environmental issues.

Our churchyard is a haven for birds and animals with bird and hedgehog boxes and a bug hotel. Every Spring uncovers a full and glorious blanket of daffodils, crocuses, bluebells and other planting which helps maintain biodiversity. Our Babes and Tots leaders and Church Stewards maintain a biodiverse productive area next to the church and Bridal lawn, and we look forward to roses, sunflowers and a wide range of insect and bee friendly planting.

Our churchyard continues to be well used with benches around the church often occupied with those seeking rest and contemplation. Our local 1st Long Ditton Guide group are maintaining an old section that used to be a Bible garden, including letting weeds grow through the daffodils and carrots planted! A mapping project of the trees by the Guides in the churchyard has been aided by Peter Topp locating a St Mary's Church Tree Map.

During 2021 an Eco Church deanery group was formed and in connection with the diocese, is formulating an environmental policy. As our Eco Champion I am working with the Eco Church deanery group and we hope to publish this policy and share this in 2022 to aid further discussion, engagement and action.

Fay Tiplady
Eco Champion

LONG DITTON ST MARY'S JUNIOR SCHOOL

At Long Ditton St Mary's Church of England Junior School, we have continued to enjoy excellent relationships with St Mary's Church. The Rector visits the school weekly to lead collective worship, often linked to the liturgical calendar and significant world events.

In September, we had the 'Blessing of the Backpacks' with Canon Colin Powell which was a wonderful way to start the school year. In addition, once a term we hold the Wednesday Holy Communion service in school to which St Mary's parishioners are always welcome to attend.

Our school faith ambassadors are also helping lead the Parish Communion service once a term which again builds stronger relationships between the two St Mary's.

As COVID restrictions have lifted this academic year, we have once again been able to visit St Mary's to celebrate special events including our Harvest and Easter services. The children thoroughly enjoy coming to the church and parents have commented on how wonderful their singing sounds inside the church. Some year groups have also had the opportunity to visit the church as part of their RE curriculum, helping them to understand more about the Christian faith.

In February of this year, Long Ditton St Mary's was inspected by the Church of England. The inspection report commented on the school's clear Christian vision and effective partnership with St Mary's Church, which is enriching the worshipping lives and spiritual development of the whole community.

Sarah Martin
Headteacher



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