



The Parish of St Mary's Long Ditton

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

18th May 2025

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 18 May 2025
AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of last year's Annual Meeting held on 12 May 2024 and of the Special Meeting held on 30 June 2024
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 2024, 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. Election of Emly Deanery Synod representatives
22. Rector's Remarks
23. Any Other Business
24. Closing Prayers

ST MARY'S CHURCH, LONG DITTON

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

12 May 2024

MINUTES

1. Opening Prayers

The Chairman opened the meeting with prayers.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Judith Topp, Julia Watts, Tim Rennie, Chris Collins, Cat Smith, Janet Critchley, Diana Jemmett, Yvonne Jackman and Cathy Doyle.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 May 2023 and 30 July 2023 were accepted as a true record of the meetings 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. It was noted that there were 118 names on the Roll, an increase on the previous year. The meeting expressed its thanks to Janet who had stepped down from the role of Electoral Roll Officer, and her maintenance of the roll over the past 5 years. The Rector advised that Lucy McCullum had agreed to take over from Janet.

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. The key concerns of the past year had been the Parish Funding Programme, safeguarding, the maintenance of the church, churchyard and Community Hall, and risk assessments and safety. A major works project had been the refurbishment of the Community Hall for which the PCC was grateful to Ann Leeson for project managing and fundraising.

7. Financial Statement

The Rector advised that the financial statements of the year ended 31 December 2023 had yet to be independently examined. A Special PCM therefore would be held in due course to examine and agree the accounts.

8. Stewardship

The report on Stewardship presented by Sarah Carvahlo, Honorary Stewardship Treasurer, was noted. The report itemised the varying ways in which the church received donations whether it be planned giving via Standing Order, giving in church with Gift Aid, the collection plate/contactless payments or ad hoc donations including for the refurbishment of the Community Hall. The total received during the year was £101,129. Many of these donations were eligible for Gift Aid and therefore an additional £18,850 had been claimed.

9. Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

The report by the Churchwardens was accepted and Sue Rider and Robert Hancock were thanked for their work and care of the church, churchyard and Community Hall. Over and above the routine maintenance and care projects, works identified in the Quinquennial Report were being progressed and a major refurbishment of the organ was underway.

10. Deanery Synod

The report presented by Chris Howard (St Mary's Deanery Synod representative) on the proceedings of the Emly Deanery Synod was noted.

11. Churches Together in the Dittons

The report by Cathy Doyle, CTD representative, on the proceedings of the CTD was noted.

12. Safeguarding

A report presented by Cat Smith, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), was noted. Cat was thanked for her tireless efforts to enable the church achieve the highest level in the Diocesan Parish Dashboard (the online tool to assist each parish to maintain a record of all safeguarding issues) and for her dedication in fulfilling the role of PSO over the past three years. The Rector advised that Cat had stepped down as PSO and would be succeeded by Liz Smith.

13. Music

A report, presented by Julia Bowyer, Choir Director, was noted. The meeting warmly thanked Julia, Robert Woolley (the organist) and all members of the choir for their excellence in leading the worship at St Mary's.

14. Children's Activities

A report, presented by Christine Satkunanayagam was noted. Whilst activities continued and were enjoyed by participants, ideas to expand or deliver lessons in an interesting manner, volunteering to help and prayers for wisdom to guide the next generation, were warmly welcomed.

15. Community Engagement

A report by Diana Jemmett, a Pastoral Assistant, on community engagement was noted. Principal engagement was through the *Lychgate* magazine, Again, Friendship Lunches, the programme of BookBox and MusicBox events, the programme of events such as Film Fridays, a Parish Quiz, a Pet Service and Long Ditton Lights Up.

16. Eco Church

A report by Fay Tiplady, St Mary's Eco Champion, was noted. The churchyard continued as a haven for wildlife and for visitors cared for and maintained by a band of dedicated workers who were warmly thanked: Peter and Judith Topp, Paul Fagan, Don Anderson, pupils from Surbiton High School.

17. Long Ditton St Mary's Church of England Junior School

A report by Sarah Martin, Headteacher, was noted which highlighted the interaction between the school and church, the RE teaching schemes used by the school and the establishment of a hard federation with Long Ditton Infants School.

18. Appointment of Tellers

No tellers were appointed.

19. Election of Parochial Church Council members

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

- (i) Elizabeth Smith on the proposal of Joanne Hall, seconded by Peter Topp;
- (ii) John Olding on the proposal of Joanne Hall, seconded by John Fleetwood;
- (iii) Edward Howard on the proposal of Leone Selwyn, seconded by John Olding;
- (iv) Anne Rumbelow on the proposal of Don Anderson, seconded by Val Tanner;
- (v) Martin Skellern on the proposal of Joanne Hall, seconded by Brian Rogers;
- (vi) Linda Turner on the proposal of Judith Topp, seconded by Diana Jemmett;
- (vii) Michael Turner on the proposal of Judith Topp, seconded by Diana Jemmett;
- and
- (viii) Will Gallimore on the proposal of Chris Howard, seconded by Julia Bowyer.

The eight nominees were duly unanimously elected.

20. Appointment of an independent examiner

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

21. Election of Deanery Synod Members

On the proposal of Robert Hancock, seconded by John Olding, it was unanimously agreed to elect Chris Howard as the Deanery Synod representative of St Mary's Church.

22. Rector's Remarks

The Rector thanked all those who volunteered their time and efforts tirelessly and with dedication to the several 'front of house' and 'behind the scenes' activities which together sustained, developed and broadened St Mary's in its worship and mission to share our faith of following Christ and serving others. In particular he was delighted to advise that The Revd Prof Alison Bavistock would be staying on at St Mary's as an Associate Priest on completing her curacy.

23. Any Other Business

On behalf of the APCM, Peter Topp thanked the Rector for his leadership in worship and dedication to St Mary's Church and its wider community.

24. Closing Prayers

The Rector closed the meeting with prayers.

.....
Chairman

ST MARY'S CHURCH, LONG DITTON

Special Parochial Church Meeting

30 June 2024

MINUTES

47 adults present

1. Opening Prayers

The Chairman opened the meeting with prayers.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Bob Hancock, Linda Turner, Mike Turner, Ann Leeson, Cat Smith, Martin Skellern, Chris Howard and Sarah Spence.

3. Financial Statement

The Hon Treasurer presented the financial statement and accounts for the church for the year ending 31st December 2023.

After consideration the meeting unanimously accepted the statement and accounts as presented.

4. The Rector thanked the Hon Treasurer for her careful administration of the church's finances. He also thanked Martin Perrin for his independent examination of the accounts.

5. Closing Prayers

The Rector closed the meeting with prayers.

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Chairman

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Under the Church Representation Rules, a new Electoral Roll has to be prepared every six years and this takes place this year.

The last revision of the Electoral Roll took place in April 2024 when there were 118 names on the Roll.

It is usual when a new Electoral Roll is prepared that the numbers decrease considerably as people do not renew, move or pass away.

I am pleased to report that we have new applicants and that as of 22 April 2025 the number on the Roll is 131, of which 58 are living within the parish and 73 live outside the parish boundary.

Our Electoral Roll comprises of 80 females and 51 males, this includes 36 new members (20 female and 16 male).

23 names were removed from the Roll including four deaths – Robert Bailey, David May, Janice Mounter and Barbara White.

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.

Lucy McMullan
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 2024/25:

Incumbent	The Revd Dr Kuhan Satkunanayagam	Ex officio
Associate Priest	The Revd Professor Alison Baverstock	Ex officio
Churchwardens	Robert Hancock	Ex officio
	Joanne Hall	Ex officio
Honorary Officers	Sarah Carvalho – Honorary Treasurer	
	Penny Fussell – Honorary Secretary	Co-opted Member of PCC
Deanery Synod Representatives	Chris Howard	Ex officio
Elected Members of the Council	Catherine Smith	Retires 2025
	Sarah Carvalho	Retires 2025
	Sarah Spence	Retires 2025
	Ann Leeson	Retires 2025
	Will Gallimore	Retires 2027
	Edward Howard	Retires 2027

John Olding	Retires 2027
Anne Rumbelow	Retires 2027
Martin Skellern	Retires 2027
Elizabeth Smith	Retires 2027
Linda Turner	Retires 2027
Michael Turner	Retires 2027

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 on six occasions during the past year. The following is a summary of the areas of business and discussion.

Finances and funding. Increasing annual income has remained a high priority for the PCC in the first instance to cover day-to-day costs of running the church but also with the aspiration to develop prioritised, planned programmes of works for the church building, churchyard and Community Hall and of activities within the church and local communities, whilst meeting the church's financial obligations to the Diocese. Through the invaluable efforts of the Parish Funding team efforts continue to encourage members of the congregation and the wider parish community to adopt a planned giving scheme using Gift Aid where applicable. Fundraising initiatives also have been held most notably a Gift Day recognising that people sometimes prefer to give towards an identifiable project. The PCC too has been hugely grateful for the funding that has been obtained through grants from external bodies. However, particularly appreciated have been Ann Leeson's sterling efforts in successfully applying for grants for the refurbishment of the Community Hall kitchen and the replacement of the shed and fence in the Hall's playground. The generosity of those who have left legacies too has been invaluable and much appreciated.

Future planning, development and mission. The PCC has reviewed its Church Development Plan which the Archdeacon of Dorking, on his visitation to St Mary's, went through with the Rector and Churchwardens providing helpful advice and comments supporting the Plan's four key priorities to (i) help those around the church discover faith in Jesus Christ; (ii) develop and strengthen the church's links with its community; (iii) engage a new generation with the good news of the Gospel; and (iv) deepen our discipleship and spirituality. The PCC is grateful to the Rector and Associate Priest for leading the way in furthering these plans and for encouraging the PCC in the ongoing process to review and identify strengths and weaknesses of present activities, culture and engagement. The PCC too has begun the process to enhance its planning for the future maintenance the church building, Community Hall and churchyard as well as reducing, and ultimately eradicating, the church's carbon footprint, the latter which will involve planning and up front financial investment. This is inextricably linked with the PCC's drive to build assured, and ideally growing, income as well as the PCC ambition to encourage more people to volunteer their time, experience and knowledge to further the work of the church during worship, its activities and ad hoc events. This will not only enable new projects to be developed but also to ensure that 'volunteer fatigue' can be avoided amongst the present cohort of dedicated and vital volunteers.

The church within the Long Ditton Community. The PCC has been hugely grateful to Ann Leeson, in her role as chairman of the Community Hall committee, in planning and managing the completion of the refurbishment of the inside of the Community Hall, the upgrade of storage facilities at the Hall and replacing the fence around the play area. The PCC recognises that the Hall is a valuable asset for the church, and a source of income, but also as an asset for the wider community. The PCC was honoured that the Major of Elmbridge attended the

opening of the new shed in the play area. The PCC has worked with the Hon Treasurer (Sarah Carvalho), Janet Burton (editor of the magazine) and Edward Howard (PCC Member) to get the Lychgate magazine on a good financial position. The PCC reiterated its belief that the Lychgate is a valuable resource and means to communicate with residents and that it should remain free. Again, building a team, supporting Janet in the production of the magazine, to ensure advertising payments are gathered and to deliver the magazines is vital. The PCC has been delighted to support a programme of events – the ever-burgeoning BookBox, new initiatives such as the Silent Disco and MusicBox, and the more ‘usual’ but equally important events such as the Friday activities and Quiz Night. People volunteering with the Social Team once more are key. The PCC values its responsibilities towards Long Ditton St Mary’s Junior School (LDSM) which celebrated its 150th Anniversary in 2024. With the formation of the Long Ditton Federation of LDSM and Long Ditton Infant and Nursery School, the PCC has been determined in its efforts to support both in particular in the appointment of governors and most recently in participating in the successful campaign to encourage the Hinchley Wood Learning Partnership not to amend the admissions criteria for Hinchley Wood School which potentially would have been to the disadvantage of pupils from St Mary’s Long Ditton Junior School.

Care and responsibility. The PCC throughout the year has reviewed and amended as necessary the several policies pertaining to Health and Safety, Risk, Food Hygiene. Of particular concern are the Safeguarding policies and procedures for which the PCC follows the Diocesan Safeguarding Action Plan and Dashboard. Especial discussion was given to creating a ‘positive culture of safeguarding’ and noting the new codes of conduct agreed by the General Synod of the Church of England which will take effect from September 2025. As promoted by the Diocese of Guildford, the PCC discussed and agreed to adopt the Diocesan Racial Justice Covenant (committing to follow the principles of disciples, diversity, representation and accountability) and the Diocesan Dignity at Work Policy.

**THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF LONG DITTON SURREY
(ST. MARY'S CHURCH LONG DITTON)**

**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST DECEMBER 2024**

**REGISTERED WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSION
NUMBER: 1128898**

To follow

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

To follow

Sarah Carvalho
Honorary Stewardship Treasurer

CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC, GOODS AND ORNAMENTS REPORT

Regular hiring of the Community Hall and outside functions in the Church have continued to increase further during 2024, which is good news for the church finances.

Maintenance work to keep the buildings well maintained and to comply with our building insurance has continued throughout the year. Routine maintenance inspections include the roof and vestry fire alarm, Hall alarm, boilers, portable electrical appliances, lightning conductor and fire extinguishers and defibrillator. The organ and Hall piano are tuned, the organ blower and humidifier serviced. The gutters are cleared regularly to avoid water leaking into the church and prevent the build-up of leaf mould.

The church organ has undergone further refurbishment to improve performance. This is now complete and we return to normal twice-yearly servicing.

The Quinquennial Report in March 2023 also identified the need to replace the guttering around the church porchway. This was carried out with a 50% grant from the Diocese. Replacement of the chancel lighting, which has not been fully functioning for some years, was also carried out in the summer by Tom Flynn our electrical contractor. Again, we were able to get a 50% grant from the Diocese for this work.

The Hall Committee led by Ann Leeson has continued to improve the facilities in the Hall and play area. A new storage shed has been erected in the play area and an outside tap for general cleaning of the area. The Hall floor has been treated to retain its colour and this will occur on a 3-year basis.

The main drain from the Community Hall, which caused a number of problems with blockage, is now fully operational following the replacement of the duct under the second drain cover.

All checks and inspections in the Health and Safety Policy are being carried out with the help of Peter Topp. The annual check on memorials in the churchyard has resulted in those requiring attention being stabilised, none requiring the attention of the stonemason.

The cutting of grass, pollarding of trees and removal of leaves is the responsibility of Elmbridge Council. This work has generally improved in 2024 thanks to our representations to the Council. We have also got permission from the council to allow Don Anderson and Paul Fagan to cut back low hanging branches. Their general housekeeping work and Peter Topp's gardening party are a great asset in keeping the churchyard neat and well presented. Surbiton High School also made their yearly visit, painting an outside seat, clearing excess leaves and planting a small flower bed near the bug hotel they installed a couple of years ago.

The Churchwardens carried out the annual Church inventory which was satisfactory. Three items have been added to the list: a framed photo of King Charles III, an electric piano keyboard donated by Jo Lee our previous Hall Manager and the cabinet for the AV system at the back of the church (mounted on the old organ stool).

Flaking paint in the choir vestry and on the north wall of the congregation area has deteriorated over the year. There is also a crack in the paint on the north chancel although this is not seen as a structural problem. A recommended local painter has examined the offending areas and we await his estimate.

Thanks to the good offices of the Diocese, we were able to get the services of a professional company to carry out an Eco report on the church and Community Hall. It provides an understanding of the costs in terms of heating and electricity usage over the coming years. Their report has been sent to the PCC for comment and decisions before we decide on an eco-strategy for both buildings. Further estimates on the cost of replacement lighting in the church and Community Hall have been obtained and can be discussed in tandem with the eco report.

Robert Hancock & Joanne Hall

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

Our May synod meeting was on Ascension Day and started with a service of Holy Communion. We had Steve Collins, Deputy Diocesan Secretary and Alison Moulden, Diocesan Environmental Officer giving us a presentation on the Net Zero Carbon strategy for the diocese and wider Church of England.

The October meeting was due to have a presentation on 'Generation Alpha' by Revd Alastair Etheridge, Diocesan Mission Enabler for Youth but owing to a family illness he was unable to be with us and Andy Poole, School Hub Leader in Dorking stepped in at the last minute. Andy walked through the presentation and also added some of his own experiences of how to engage with Generation Alpha.

Chris Howard
Deanery Synod representative

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE DITTONS (CTiD) REPORT

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;
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 2024 we were able to join again together in fellowship face:

- **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** and a **joint service** held at St Mary's with our wonderful choir leading the worship and great support from our social team for the tea afterwards.
- **Good Friday** - several churches joined together at Giggs Hill Green for an outdoor service of Witness and hot cross buns!
- **Private tour of Westminster Abbey** – a special out-of-hours tour with beautiful music from the Purcell Club formed of former choristers at the Abbey.
- **Prayer Tent and Plant crèche** at the Annual Dittons Scout Fair on Giggs Hill Green.
- **St Luke's Tide Healing Service** at St Nicholas's Thames Ditton

CTD continues to strive to show to the wider community that we are all committed in embracing our similarities rather than being concerned with the differences. This is done by celebrating and worshipping together and 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
CTD representative

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Parish Dashboard, an online tool to assist each parish to maintain a record of all safeguarding issues, is now well established. It automatically keeps us up to date with local and national changes in safeguarding requirements. The safeguarding audit is also contained in the dashboard. The dashboard also produces action plans and these are discussed at PCC meetings and are used to inform all safeguarding decisions.

We have developed role descriptions 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.

Of course, safeguarding goes beyond a DBS check or attending training, and it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that St Mary's is a safe place for all.

More safeguarding information is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>

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

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

Liz Smith
Parish Safeguarding Officer

MUSIC REPORT

St Mary's Church choir continued to enjoy leading the worship at St Mary's, with Julia Bowyer as Music Director, organist Robert Woolley and help from choristers and choir members with various duties. Particular thanks to Christina for the major wardrobe sorting, Ped for taking on registers and chorister pay, and Daniel and Theo for librarian duties. We also had a vestry clear-out this year and are much enjoying the increased space.

We are grateful to Cat Smith for all she has done supporting the choir and glad she can continue to sing with us occasionally. We were pleased to continue to welcome new juniors and adult singers throughout the year.

We marked women composer's Sunday in March and enjoyed continuing the important tradition of choral evensongs, including a special evensong marking 150 years of LDSM school in June. We sang a range of anthems during morning services, baptisms and weddings and enjoyed various social events throughout the year.

The Christmas services were a wonderful way to end the year after much hard work and dedication.

Our junior choristers grew in confidence and achieved various levels of RSCM Voice for Life awards –congratulations to them all.

Julia Bowyer
Choir Director

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES REPORT

Sunday Club continues to run twice a month on the second and fourth Sundays. The sessions are pitched at those aged 4-7, with younger children allowed to attend if a parent accompanies them. Huge thank you to Julia Watts who prepares the material for each session with great care, always finding activities which the children will enjoy. Our aim is to teach the younger children about the love of God through songs, stories and activities and in addition for the older children to reflect and connect the bible teachings to their daily life.

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 monthly Pizza Night sessions at the Rectory. Most of the young people do not come to Sunday services but appreciate the opportunity to explore aspects of faith in a fun and safe environment. We hope a number of them will be confirmed at Easter 2025.

One of our Church Development Plan priorities is to try and offer Sunday Club every week. This can only happen if we have more people volunteering to help. Please pray and consider if you could join the rota. The more people who can join, the less onerous the role will be.

Please continue to pray for us to guide the next generation in the rightful path and for more young people to come to church to know God's love.

Christine Satkunanayagam

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

St Mary's organises a range of activities to support and engage with the community of Long 1Ditton. 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.

Friendship Lunches are held on the first Friday of the month. We welcome diners from all parts of the Parish and have the capacity to welcome more so, if you know of anyone who may care to join us as a diner or helper, please let us know. This is a welcome opportunity for people to meet and share fellowship over a hot lunch. As always, grateful thanks must be extended to our very loyal, ever cheerful and extremely hard-working team of meal planners, cooks, shoppers, drivers, helpers and washers up.

BookBox events – masterminded by our amazing Associate Priest Alison Baverstock, we have built a solid programme of monthly community events centred around shared-reading. 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. Our January BookBox is a Burns Night Supper with a live piper and poetry reading. Huge thanks as ever to our talented social team for providing refreshments at all the BookBox events.

Film Fridays – held in the Community Hall every two months. A chance for members of the community to gather to watch a film and chat afterwards over tea and cake. Many thanks to Joanne Hall for co-ordinating and Don Anderson for tech support.

Parish Quiz – we have experimented with having two quizzes a year in Long Ditton Village Hall on the basis of BYO picnic. This has worked really well and thanks as ever to the Watts family for the setting the questions, our quizmaster Ped, Don for AV and our amazing social team.

Pet Service – in September we had a very successful Pet Blessing Service with worship led by our wonderful choir. Local professional photographer, Darren Salanson, kindly took photos of pets being blessed for a donation to St Mary's.

Long Ditton Lights Up! held again on a Sunday evening to mark the start of the Christmas season and aiming to involve the whole community. Due to the forecasted bad weather this was relocated to the Royal British Legion. We had a strong presence during the evening running the Raffle and 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

We continue to mark Creation tide 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.

Again, this year, students from Surbiton High School came and volunteered their time spending time cleaning graves and clearing away a huge bramble hedge.

Peter and Judith Topp continue to do regular churchyard tidy-up mornings and we are very appreciative for all their efforts and all the others who come to keep our churchyard looking beautiful.

Special thanks to Paul Fagan and Don Anderson for their continued hard work and care in looking after our churchyard – it really is noticeable that our churchyard is a well-loved space.

Our Bible Garden plot is maintained by 1st Long Ditton Guides and associated Rainbows, Brownies and Rangers units planting to attract a greater variety of insects and wildlife.

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.

Fay Tiplady
Eco Champion

LONG DITTON ST MARY'S JUNIOR SCHOOL REPORT

At Long Ditton St Mary's Church of England Junior School, we are proud to be the faith school serving the local community. The children enjoy our link with St Mary's and have visited the church to celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year as well as to enrich their RE learning and share project work with the local community.

In March an Ofsted inspection graded us as Outstanding – a testament to the continued hard work and dedication of our staff and governors alongside the support of our community. As the inspectors wrote in their report 'Pupils delight in attending this inspirational school. They form very positive friendships and show a genuine care for the well-being of others. The school's values of 'love, respect, compassion and aspiration' enhance the character of the pupils.'

In June we celebrated the 150th Anniversary of our school with an amazing musical showcase celebration at the Rose Theatre in Kingston involving all our pupils and staff. We also held a special service of Holy Communion and Rededication at the school led by the Lord Bishop of Guildford in the presence of the Mayor of Elmbridge and Jim Babbington OBE, a deputy lieutenant representing the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey who represents HM The King in our county.

Our close working relationship with Long Ditton infants as a 'soft federation' worked very well and from September 2024 this became a 'hard federation' with the aim of providing an excellent education for all of the children in Long Ditton.

Sarah Martin
Headteacher



Registered Charity
Number 1128898