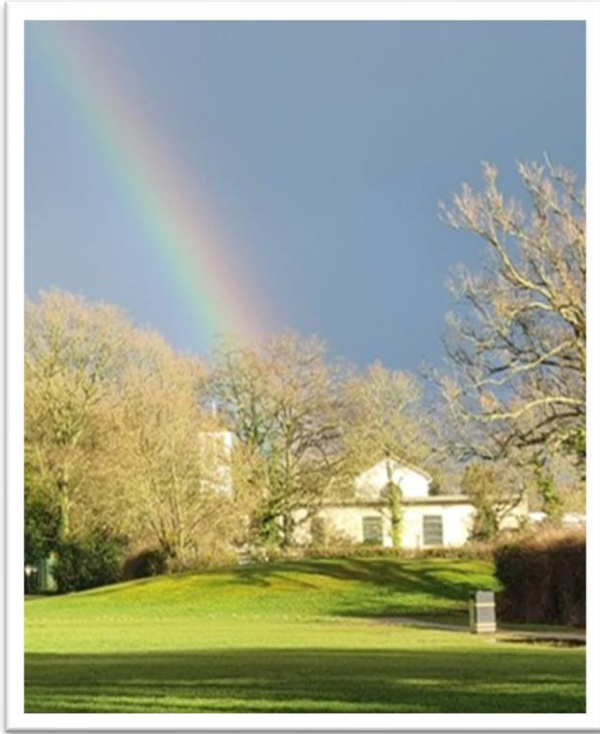


Annual Report 2023



Informal Reports

For the parish church of
St George the Martyr,
Wash Common





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Vicar's Introduction



I'm writing this in April three weeks after Easter, it's still rather wintry outside with a cold wind and frequent showers, but as I read through the reports in this booklet my heart feels as if spring has come. It's uplifting to be reminded of the life of our church community, with report after report testifying to the faithful and fruitful ministry of so many different people in such a wide variety of ways.



In terms of the overall picture, it's been a year where we have remained focused on our key vision and outreach priorities, though with challenges still to be overcome in terms of recruitment to the Children and Families Worker role, and the size and complexity of the exterior renovation project.

Our vision firmly remains to be a church where we 'are called by God and inspired by Jesus to encourage and equip one another to grow in faith and love, serving the community of Wash Common, reaching out to all people, especially those in need, and being good and faithful stewards of our gifts and the world's resources'. As you read through this booklet you will see how much has been achieved in fulfilment of this vision. We look forward to the continued expression of this mission throughout the coming year.

Heartfelt thanks go to all who give so generously of their time and talents, those who are faithful in prayer for the life of the church, those who offer support financially for the ministry and mission of St George's; every gift is an expression of our gratitude to God and our commitment to sharing God's life-giving love in our community.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Tuesday 30th April.

Thanks be to God.

Revd Becky Bevan
Vicar, South Newbury Benefice

'Therefore encourage one another and build each other up,
just as in fact you are doing.'

1 Thessalonians 5.11



Report of the proceedings of the PCC

St George's Church is a constituent part of the Benefice of St George and St John Newbury in the Newbury Deanery of the Diocese of Oxford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is St George's Church, 206 Andover Road, Wash Common, Newbury. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity (number 1133241) registered with the Charity Commission.

St George's Vision Statement

At St George's Church we are called by God and inspired by Jesus to encourage and equip one another to grow in faith and love, serving the community of Wash Common, reaching out to all people, especially those in need, and being good and faithful stewards of our gifts and the world's resources.

Responsibilities and Purposes

The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, in promoting the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. As the parish church of Wash Common, we have a special responsibility to be active in supporting and encouraging the community life of the parish, helping those in need and offering pastoral services. The PCC has overall responsibility for the church, St George's Centre and St Luke's Chapel situated on the same land. Safeguarding, Health and Safety and GDPR compliance are key responsibilities of the PCC.

PCC Membership

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) in accordance with the Church Representation Rules.

During the year the following served as members of the PCC:

Incumbent	Revd Becky Bevan
Associate Vicar	Revd Gary Collins
Associate Priest	Revd Terry Winrow
Wardens	John Huckle Linda Ling
Representatives on the Deanery Synod	Philip Read Ronnie Herd Kathy Winrow Sarah Pook
Elected members	Ronnie Herd Robin Clugston Linda Ling Philip Read Sarah Pook (Standing Committee) John Bolan (Standing Committee) Chris Foster Emma Moffatt Jon Houghton

Co-opted	Revd Rita Ball
Safeguarding Officer	Kathy Winrow
Secretary	Henrietta High
Treasurer	Francis Clayton

Organisational Structure

Working with the incumbent, the PCC is the elected leadership team of the Church ensuring full compliance with charity and ecclesiastical law as well as helping St George's to fulfil its aims and objectives. The Standing Committee has delegated powers to conduct PCC business between meetings – this committee is made up of incumbent, licensed clergy, churchwardens, PCC secretary, treasurer, and two elected members of the PCC. It met 7 times during 2023. A Safeguarding sub-group of the PCC, led by the Safeguarding Officer, ensures that the PCC's full commitment to excellence in this area is delivered. Additionally, there are 7 Working Groups of the PCC, which meet at least termly and report to the PCC: Communications; Children and Youth; Facilities and Fabric; Finance, Funding and Giving; Nurturing Faith; Pastoral Care Co-ordination; Worship and Liturgy.

Risk Assessment

The PCC is required to give consideration both to the major risks to which it is exposed, and to systems designed to mitigate those risks. The major risks requiring comment are summarised in line with the recommendations in the document 'The Charities Act 1993 and the PCC: The duties of the PCC', section 1.43.

Financial risk

Reporting to the PCC, the Finance, Funding and Giving Working Group, manages all financial dealings of the church and Centre and provides regular, updated reports for the PCC. These are in the form of management accounts, which are produced monthly. These detail actual income and expenditure, and a forecasted monthly cash flow for the total year versus the budget.

The treasurer, who leads the Working Group, provides detailed financial reports at every Standing Committee and PCC meeting and answers any questions related to the financial health of the church. The Church's Cash Handling Policy is reviewed annually by the PCC and implemented throughout the charity.

It is the policy of the PCC to hold minimum cash balances of £20,000 for the church and £10,000 for the Centre. At any time of the year, if the cash flow forecasts show that either of these balances is expected to fall below the minimum figure, the treasurer must inform the PCC and explain the circumstances.

Reputational Risk and Publicity

The church publicises much of its work via the St George's website and Facebook page. With the move to online services and digital communications increasing since the pandemic, care has been taken to assess our position with copyright and GDPR. Our licence with CCLI has been duly updated and renewed for the changed circumstances.

A key responsibility of the incumbent and PCC is to ensure that the reputation of St George's is not compromised in any way because of publicity and external communications. There is contact with the Diocesan Communications Department to keep up to date with the changing responsibilities in this area.

Our GDPR privacy and data policy, which is reviewed annually, is published on our website. In March 2022 the PCC further adopted a Social Media Policy based on guidelines from the Oxford Diocese.

Statutory and Legal Requirements

Great care is taken to ensure that the PCC satisfies all statutory and legal needs related to St George's Church and Centre. The major aspects are in health and safety, safeguarding, cash handling, security, GDPR and personnel.

Duties of the PCC Members

All PCC members are aware of their legal and statutory responsibilities as Trustees of a charity as well as other obligations as leaders in the church. All new PCC members receive a document summarising the expectations of PCC members, and the responsibilities of trustees.

Health and Safety

Working within the parameters of our Health & Safety Policy all buildings within the St George's complex are regularly inspected by certain PCC members and by professional safety personnel to ensure that a safe environment exists. Emphasis is given to kitchens, fire safety, gas and electricity supplies. Fire extinguishers are tested annually by external professionals.

Safeguarding

In May 2023 the PCC reviewed and approved the Church's Safeguarding Policy and Kathy Winrow was re-appointed as St George's Safeguarding Officer. At every meeting a report is received from the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Group has ensured St George's is fully compliant with all aspects of safeguarding, using Oxford Diocese guidelines. All PCC members have received Safeguarding Training. The DBS register is kept up to date and volunteer agreements are being completed. During 2021/22 the Oxford Diocese introduced Parish Safeguarding Dashboards which were outlined to the PCC and reviewed throughout the year, being updated regularly to ensure excellence in this area.

Security

CCTV is fitted externally on site to deter vandalism and theft. Signs are posted to alert visitors of its use.

Operational Risk

All church buildings are fully insured with Ecclesiastical Insurance against all likely risks. This company specialises in the insurance of church buildings, including church halls. Regular examinations of both the internal and external structures take place, and preventative maintenance ensures that the buildings are kept in the best possible condition.

Activities of the PCC

The full PCC met 7 times during 2023 and one member joined meetings via a Zoom link. Typical attendance at meetings throughout the year was over 88 per cent.

Key focus areas for the PCC in 2023 have been:

- **Ongoing strategic focus on vision and outreach priorities:**

1. To serve the community of Wash Common by offering a warm welcome community café at St George's. The café enjoyed its first full year of operating and has become an established part of life at St George's. Run by volunteers, and open three days a week, it offers a welcoming and inclusive space for local people.
2. To reach out to and support people of all ages by investing in a paid part-time Childrens and Families Worker. The role was advertised in 2023 but we were unable to appoint. The vacancy will be readvertised in spring 2024.
3. To address the deteriorating condition of the church building with a full renovation project. Work was undertaken during 2023 to create a project brief and plan. Also, remedial works were undertaken to tackle serious problems with the guttering. The overall size of the whole project means that careful planning and coordination is vital; this has delayed the painting of the exterior of the church.
4. In connection with our going greener agenda, work began on the external space at the front of the church site to introduce new planting, including a fruit tree, to encourage bio-diversity. Work also began in 2023 on commissioning a new LED lighting scheme for the church building which will be installed in March 2024.
5. Supporting the neighbouring parish of St Michael's Enborne to find a sustainable future as part of a new three parish benefice with St George's and St John's. The relationship between the three churches has continued to flourish despite the slowness of the formal process overseen by the Church of England Church Commissioners. It is expected that we will officially become the South Newbury Benefice of St George, St John and St Michael in late spring/summer 2024.
6. Generous giving was another focus for the PCC, with a PCC member appointed to coordinate the disbursement of giving to other charities in accordance with our Mission Giving Policy.

Throughout the year, St George's saw continued encouraging signs of growth and renewal, despite the changed pattern of church attendance coming out of the pandemic (and seen in all churches). Services followed a familiar pattern and format, and livestreaming of services continued through the year.

During 2023 16 funerals and interments of ashes were taken by St George's clergy. There were 12 baptisms, and 2 weddings conducted at St George's.

All the church seasons were marked in full with services, study and fellowship groups, a walking pilgrimage across Hampshire to Christchurch Priory took place as well as various popular social events.

Along with the full provision of opportunities for worship, our provision for children and young people continued throughout the year, including a very successful Holiday Club in July. Groups met throughout the year on Sunday mornings, and in the evening for older teenagers. On Wednesdays our Toddler Group has been as popular as ever.

There are 195 people on the church electoral roll.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken during 2023 to ensure our facilities are in good order, including addressing ongoing issues with the ground source heat pump, and repairs to guttering and fascia boards.

The PCC was pleased to give full support to the Sabbatical due to be taken by Revd Becky Bevan in summer 2024.

Overall, 2023 was a year which saw good progress with our strategic and outreach priorities, though with challenges still to be overcome in terms of recruiting a paid children and families worker, and with the co-ordination and funding of the large church renovation project. Our vision firmly remains to be a church where we 'are called by God and inspired by Jesus to encourage and equip one another to grow in faith and love, serving the community of Wash Common, reaching out to all people, especially those in need, and being good and faithful stewards of our gifts and the world's resources'. We look forward to the continued expression of this mission throughout the coming year.

This report was approved by the members of the PCC on 19th March 2024.

Henrietta High, PCC Secretary

Electoral Roll

In line with Church Representation Rules, the Electoral Roll was updated and posted at least 14 days ahead of the APCM. There are 202 names on the Roll this year, up from 196 in 2023.

Margaret Blaine, Electoral Roll Officer

Sidespeople

The following have acted as Sidespeople during 2023/24: Phillip Bevan, Alex Brown, Rebecca Foster, Elizabeth Hanning, Helena Herd, Eila Orr, Simon Pook and Rita Gardner. Since Covid restrictions eased there have been fewer sidespeople than we have traditionally had. It is an important role, providing a welcoming friendly face at services. Our recent request for more volunteers resulted in three people coming forward but we are always keen to welcome new recruits to the team. If anyone would be interested in becoming a Sidesperson, please contact me or Revd Becky.

Ronnie Herd

Safeguarding

Safeguarding runs through all aspects of church life and everyone has a responsibility for the safeguarding of others. The Safeguarding team consists of Kathy Winrow (until January 2024 when she handed over to Alison Gill as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer), Jon Houghton and Kavashni Bamfield. All members are experienced in safeguarding and trained appropriately. The team meets approximately 6 times per year and reports to every PCC meeting. We work in line with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidelines, and with the Diocese of Oxford policies.

Key areas of focus in 2023-2024 were:

DBS Checks Currently there are 42 people on the register. These are required to update as required every three years.

Training Online training at the appropriate level has been completed by all members of the PCC, Pastoral Working Group, Young People leaders, those working with vulnerable adults, café volunteers, some choir members and the Benefice Office Manager.

To date, Basic level (33), Foundation (17), Leadership (8), Safer Recruitment (2), Domestic Abuse (5). All members of PCC are required to complete both Basic and Foundation levels. Training must be updated every 3 years.

Tracking Documents Working Group Leaders are required to update the safeguarding tracking documents which include details of training, role outlines, and volunteer agreements. These are reviewed by the Safeguarding team.

A Safeguarding Dashboard was introduced by the Diocese in 2021-2 to ensure all parishes fulfil the expectations of the National Safeguarding Team. The dashboard requires responses on Policies and Action Plans, Procedures, Roles, Reviews and Reports, church activities, displayed information, non-church information, safer recruitment and people management. The workload is demanding but beneficial. The PCC have been updated on actions taken. The PSO and Revd Becky can interact with the dashboard and Jon Houghton can access. The dashboard is regularly reviewed and updated by the Diocese and at our Safeguarding meetings.

Church Action Plan. The dashboard generates an Action Plan which is reviewed and updated by the Safeguarding Team and reported to PCC.

Advice. There have been several enquiries for advice since the last APCM. Individuals have been supported by the PSO. There has not been any reason to report to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding Hub. Towards the end of 2023, the Diocese added a new feature to be used alongside the Dashboard – The Hub. This has a suite of tools to help a parish with Safeguarding. The first three tools will enable us to keep track of DBS checks and safeguarding training, create Role Descriptions and Person Specifications, and track the safer recruitment of volunteers. Kathy and Alison attended a workshop where the various features were demonstrated, and expect to start using it in 2024 in agreement with the PCC.

Next Steps. Kathy produced a detailed handover document to the PCC in January as she handed over to Alison Gill as the new PSO. Next steps are to create a robust policy for Safer Recruitment (both volunteer and paid roles). To understand how we can best use the Hub and present a plan for this to PCC. To continue to review training requirements and ensure all required training is completed.

Kathy Winrow/Alison Gill

Churchwardens' Report

Exterior repair and refurbishment

A large project to refurbish the external decoration of the church was identified. However, the external decoration of the church has many aspects and as we discovered will not be to 'simply' paint or render the building: During discussions and initial investigation, both with the Quinquennial Architect and subsequently with a paint supplier about the most appropriate type of external finish to apply to the church, it became apparent that most of

the defects that have been revealed relate to water ingress into the church. Details of the scope and likely costs of this project will become clearer throughout 2024.

In the meantime, initial works to reducing water ingress into the church have either been performed or are waiting on the weather:

- Repair to the guttering outside the annex and on the hall.
- Repair to the coping stones on the roofs over the sacristy and flower vestry.
- Re-routing the guttering over the sacristy and flower vestry.

Interior Church Lighting

The lighting had been failing, as the performance of the halogen bulbs last year has been disappointing. After reviewing a number of quotations, we have selected CES to install a new dimmer with LED luminaries. An appeal has been launched to raise the money with the goal of having the new system installed and operational for Holy Week 2024.

Other matters and thanks

The two meeting rooms in the annex have been repainted, and other maintenance tasks and site management tasks have been undertaken by volunteers.

The Ground Source Heat Pump has again caused problems, but it was operational by Christmas. We are looking at options for improving the regular maintenance of the system.

A significant number of the things reported in this document have relied on the efforts of volunteers, who have contributed to many other of the tasks that keep St George's running. To have mentioned them all would have made this report unmanageable and there are some we have no knowledge of, as things 'just happens' – a sign they are well managed. A large number of people from the church and their connections have given time and effort to all these tasks. We will not attempt to name them out of fear of missing someone out. You know who you are. So a very big thank you to you all: however big or small your efforts are very much appreciated.

On the subject of volunteers, several of our long-standing ones would love the opportunity of being able to hand over to someone younger who could bring fresh ideas and renewed energy to the church. So, if you feel moved, please don't be shy. Come and talk to us.

Finally...

From John H.

The APCM in 2023 saw Rita Gardner hand over her keys and retire as Churchwarden after years of real commitment to the role. I am very grateful to Rita for leading me through my initial steps as Churchwarden, and think we all should be equally thankful for the work she has put into this church. It was a pleasure to work with her. Linda Ling picked up those keys and has brought a new set of ideas to the role. We have spent some of this year working out how we best work together. This has been a rewarding activity as I have found Linda easy to work with and yet prompted me to extend my own attempts at fulfilling the role.

I would also like to thank all the others I have worked with over the year for their help forbearance, support and the challenges which keep me young!

And finally, a plea: if you are unhappy about the way something (other than the liturgy) is going or think that I am doing something wrong please speak to me and I will see what can be done about it. But I give no promises.

From Linda

Well, my first year a Churchwarden is flying by. I was very grateful for the handover from Rita and I've appreciated everyone's support and encouragement, especially John's and the ministry team. I'm still getting to understand how this great community functions and fulfils its mission. It's AMAZING what we all achieve.

You will have realised I'm a 'do-it now' sort of person. I'm not keen on endless discussions with no decisions made, (and then talking about it again next month). If I go too quickly, slow me down a bit - but don't quash my enthusiasm.

I am looking forward to my 2nd year when hopefully I won't spend quite so much time wondering which key fits which lock! My greatest joy is seeing all your faces as I walk back down the aisle. We all have a lot to offer each other on our journey together.



Our benefice churchwardens with Becky and Gary before the Bishop's Visitation service in June 2023.

John Huckle and Linda Ling



Worship and Liturgy Working Group

The aim of the group is to plan, review and develop our Sunday and weekday worship. The group meets 4-5 times a year and members during 2023 were Revd Becky (facilitator), Revd Terry, Robert Bigg, Jenny Blakeley, Helen Tuck and Elizabeth Pook.



In addition to the full range of seasonal worship, various special services were arranged including a benefice service of evensong at St Michael's, a very well-attended Blessing of Pets service, and the annual memorial service in October.

The outdoor act of remembrance on Remembrance Sunday attracted very large numbers including local uniformed organisations and representatives from Park House School.

During 2023 it was wonderful to see new people join the Sunday team of servers and acolytes, and for Terry Rayson to join Robert and Elizabeth as a deacon.

As far as weekday worship is concerned, Morning Prayer took place in church Tuesday to Friday every week attended by a faithful small group of regulars and occasional visitors. The Thursday Eucharist saw a continued decline in numbers. The group discussed possible options for relaunching the service to attract new worshippers.

Overall, during 2023 there were 403 services at St George's including 16 funerals and interments of ashes, 12 baptisms (see separate report) and 2 weddings.



Revd Becky Bevan

Baptism Team

In 2023, there have been 12 baptisms held in St George's Church. The team of Jenny Bell, Val Bolan, Jackie Cogswell, Janet Wycherley and Heather Rasman have assisted at each of them and offered a warm welcome to each family. We meet as a team with Becky three times a year to discuss previous and forthcoming baptisms, and ways forward to improve the service and encourage parents to bring their children forward for baptism. Many thanks to Becky and Terry for officiating at each service, to Alex for all her administrative work and to the team members named above.

Heather Rasman

Children and Young People

Strategy Group. This group was formed to oversee the implementation of the CYP Strategy agreed by the PCC in 2019. Much has been achieved and a new strategic plan will be presented to PCC later in the year. There are two areas of focus still remaining: provision for Early Years and appointment of a Children and Families Worker. An advert has been agreed for a very part-time paid job to lead volunteers at Tiddlers and Toddlers. The Children and Families Worker post was readvertised after Easter. This is a paid part-time post with a focus on strengthening links with young families. There will be a revised CYP Strategy Group after the APCM to oversee the next stage of planning.



Justacross consists of 12 young people aged 13-18, who meet with Terry & Kathy on a regular basis every other Sunday evening at their home. In September, Skye went off to college and we gave her a good send off with a meal at The Swan Inn, Newtown.

As usual, there has been a varied programme of activities including serious discussions as well as fun evenings and always food! The group sat down to a full Christmas meal, Pancakes before Lent and Pizza evenings. The programme has included topics such as, 'Responsibility – Fear or Freedom,' 'God and Hot Chocolate,' 'Feed my Lambs' as well as seasonal discussions linked to the Church Year. Members of the group contribute regularly to All Age Services, including acolytes, support the Crib Service and were very much involved in the preparations and running of Holiday Club.

CIA/Sunday Club There is some flexibility between Justacross and CIA. This older group meets in the Breakout Room with Kathy, and they have some very challenging conversations based on the Lectionary theme of the week. Sunday Club meets in the LMR with Henrietta High, Mary Nichols, and Kay Gorbold. This is a small but very faithful and active group. Again, themes follow the Lectionary with crafts, stories, films, and games. Kathy prepares for both groups, which varies between 8-13 in number. We are grateful to Jeremy Gorbold for arranging tables and chairs each week.

Confirmation Five of our young people were confirmed in January 2024 following specific sessions exploring their faith.

Special Services The youngsters contribute regularly to All Age services as well as special events. They were responsible for producing and presenting at Harvest, Christmas, Mothering Sunday and during Holy Week.

Holiday Club This year's St George's Holiday Club was themed as 'Seaside Surprise' with all things 'seasidey' including the song 'Oh I do love to be beside the Seaside'. Almost 70 young children gathered 'On the Pier' on Monday morning on 24th July for a week of fun based on an adventure by the seaside. After a smooth registration process, they gathered in their 'Beach Huts' before all coming together for some singing, dancing, and stories back 'On the Pier'. We covered the stories of the call of the disciples, the miraculous catch of fish, storm on the lake, house on the rock, and Jesus' resurrection appearance by the Sea of Galilee. Numbers of children steadily grew further during the week as others heard of the fun being enjoyed.



A Celebration Service was held in the Hall on the Sunday and an encouraging number of young children, and their parents attended. This gave the adults a good taste of what we had been doing through the week. A number of the children presented their crafts they had made, some read Bible readings and others short prayers. We finished the Club thinking about Jesus as the Light of the World. We will be looking for volunteers again this year.



Whole Church Focus Children and young people are the church of today. Their spiritual development is as important as their physical, emotional, and academic development. As a church we continue to pledge to encourage and value each one of them.

The picture is of a surprise visitor to the Easter Garden service on Good Friday!

Kathy Winrow

Tiddlers and Toddlers

Tiddlers and Toddlers is a group that meets weekly during term time for pre-school children and their parents, grandparents, carers and Child Minders.

The purpose of Tiddlers and Toddlers is for St George's to offer a group for pre-school children in our community. It is a popular group with 80 families and 103 children registered, on average we have thirty families attending weekly.

The group meets in St George's Hall with free play, occasional craft, singing and musical instruments. We have a few parties throughout the year and go into the Church at Christmas and Easter. When children leave us to start school they are presented with a Bible.

A highlight in the past year was celebrating the Coronation of HRH King Charles III; each child received a wooden



medal to commemorate the occasion. The children sent a handmade card to the King and Queen and received a lovely Thank You card in return.

In 2023 I advised Revd Becky that I would prefer to share the responsibility of running the group with another person, however, no one came forward after an appeal in the church and the newsletter. I have now made the decision to stand down from September 2024.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers for supporting the group. We have a team in the kitchen: Emma Moffat, Frances Rayson, Heather Rasman, Janet Higgins, Rita Gardner, Sandra Goodyear and Val Bolan. Our Hall team is Revd Becky, Carol Melville and Katrina Jones.



Thank you also to Mary Bishop for all her craft preparation, Elizabeth Pook for baking cakes, Revd Terry for helping at the Christmas Party and Phil Bevan for clearing away tables and chairs after every session.

Helena Herd

Choir and Music Group

Throughout the year Mike Harris has continued as church organist. On a voluntary basis he has also continued to lead the choir whose singing has greatly enhanced church services.

During the service on Good Friday 2023 the choir gave a rendition of Stainer's Crucifixion. For this performance several people who do not normally sing in the choir came forward to enhance the depth of the singing. All the singers enjoyed the social aspect of singing together to produce a special rendition which concentrated on getting across the deep message behind the words.

During the Christmas period the choir took part in the traditional Carol Concert in the church, singing four Christmas carols. In the new year the choir sang several anthems during the Good Friday service and has also sung anthems during the morning services.

Mike has indicated that he cannot continue to lead the choir on a voluntary basis and, although he will continue to serve the church as organist, the church has now advertised for a new Choir Director in the hope that somebody can be appointed to start their service by September 2024.

The Music Group has led the music for all-age services during 2023. Our thanks go to John and Jane Kane and our other instrumentalists and musicians for sharing their talents and time to enliven and inspire worship.

Mike Harris

Nurturing Faith Working Group

This group meets 4 or 5 times per year to plan, prepare and review nurturing faith activities and resources. Members are Revd Becky, Revd Terry, Revd Rita, Elizabeth Pook, Chris Foster and Kathy Winrow (Facilitator).

After the last APCM, the congregation was asked to take part in a survey to help the group shape our future programme. Thank you to those who responded and who offered to lead / host groups.

Advent Course 2023 Three sessions (day and evening) were held in the LMR reflecting on the Advent Antiphons: O Sapientia, O Oriens and O Emmanuel. The evening sessions were concluded with Compline. Approximately 20 people attended in total. Thank you to Rebecca Foster for arranging the Advent bookstall.

Quiet Day In preparation for Lent, and in response to requests through the survey, a Quiet Day was held at St Mary's Convent, Wantage in early February. This was led by Bishop Andrew Proud, former Bishop of Reading, who focused on 'Jesus at the Margins'. There was good attendance from both St George's and St John's.

Lent 2024 As Lent arrived early in the year (soon after Advent) it was decided not to offer a course, as in previous years, but three evenings of Compline worship with Dwelling on the Word. There were also Lent Lunches for Christian Aid followed by an informal Eucharist. Again, we are grateful to Rebecca Foster for providing a Lent Library.

Study Sessions George Carey has led several study sessions. The Greek course finished in July 2022 and since then there have been 6 sessions on the Reformation.

Pilgrim The Pilgrim group meets on a monthly basis. They identified themes they wished to pursue relevant to daily life such as Guilt, Anxiety, Prayer, Thankfulness. Kathy Winrow leads the group, but other members have taken sessions. There is always a time for chat and occasional meals out. Henrietta High arranged a pre-Christmas meal and there was a visit to the Chinese in January.

If you want to know more, offer suggestions or assist leading a group please speak to me.

Kathy Winrow

New Testament Greek course

I am delighted that six members of the Church are continuing to learn the language. We are now in the third year and deepening our knowledge of what is called 'koine' Greek. This year, however, we are combining language learning with understanding how the New Testament was formed. The Group meets fortnightly in the large meeting room.

George Carey

History course

With Becky's support and blessing I offered a course entitled 'How did Catholic Britain Become Protestant?'.
We met for six weeks earlier in the year studying the roots of the Reformation and key figures such as Martin Luther, Desiderius Erasmus, William Tyndale, Henry VIII, William Cranmer, Queen Elizabeth 1st and many more! The aim was to deepen our knowledge of the Tudor period which was so pivotal to the formation of the United Kingdom as we know it today. More than 30 people attended the course!

Another and different course will be offer in Autumn 2024.

George Carey

'As I have loved you, love one another ...'



Pastoral Care Co-ordination Group

Members: Revd Terry Winrow (Facilitator), Revd Becky Bevan, Elizabeth Pook, Cathie Read, Avril Bainbridge

The team meets on a fortnightly basis. Pastoral care is all our responsibility. This group exists to co-ordinate and monitor pastoral care in 4 specific key areas, maintaining confidentiality and adhering to Safeguarding procedures.

Maintain the bonds of church community through Home Communion

This ministry is primarily aimed at the permanently housebound or those who may be temporarily housebound due to illness and unable to attend regular services. The numbers receiving Communion on a regular basis has increased to between 8-10 people, usually monthly or fortnightly.

The team were instrumental this year in the re-establishment of the Sunday Prayer Ministry during Communion under the oversight of Margaret Blaine.

Keep an eye out for those facing new and challenging circumstances

Primarily illness / accident who may just need a pastoral visit / phone call, but with a specific focus also on the recently bereaved. Condolence cards are sent immediately we are notified, followed by calls and a further card on the first anniversary of a bereavement. We have seen an increase in further cards sent at Christmas and Easter to our members now living in Residential Homes. Hospital visits are undertaken where necessary.

Try to ensure we demonstrate to everyone how we value each individual

This is about maintaining a focus, as far as is practical, on the individual as well as maintaining the integrity of the St George's community. It entails a regular review of any we may not have seen for some weeks and following this up with a phone call to check all is OK. A specific focus is also placed on new members of the congregation to ensure we encourage and monitor their integration into the community with a sense of 'belonging'. When necessary a 'Welcome Meeting' is organised to provide new members with more information.

Services in the Community

The team co-ordinate and deliver services in the community, specifically at Falkland Grange Care Home. Small teams are organised involving other members of the congregation. The services are held on monthly basis.

Revd Terry Winrow

Welcome Café

The aim of the Welcome Café is to provide a warm and friendly café space for our community. It is run solely by volunteers, all members of St George's. We were able to open the Welcome Café on 3 sessions a week from 25th January – 13th Dec 2023. This added up to 133 sessions – an amazing 1,197 volunteer hours. We served 1,068 customers, - an

average of 8 customers per session. Over the year, with coffees given out to parents at the school gates and also to voters on polling days, we served over 2,000 hot drinks.

But what these statistics don't count is the service and friendship we have been able to offer people who are lonely, looking for company, friendship or a break from the usual four walls. We've shared memories, jokes and supported each other in difficult times. We've played games, done jig-saws and sung our favourite songs together. When the weather was warm, we had some lovely chatty sessions in the sun under stripy umbrellas. Many of those who come, come regularly; and for some it is a highlight of their week. All cakes and biscuits have been donated by church members and included wonderful homemade bakes. You can be sure that in whatever way you are supporting the Café it is a really worthwhile venture that we will continue to develop.



Linda Ling and Ronnie Herd – Café Leads

Followship and the Community

Social Events

The committee met once during the year to plan a range of events; in addition, there was a degree of informal liaison during the year. Catriona Moffatt stepped down from the committee, but continued to assist on events, and Mike and Sue Harris offered to join the committee.

In January, over 130 people enjoyed the Themed Quiz - the theme this year was The Beatles (it was 60 years since their first number one hit). The winning team received a hamper of goodies based on Beatles' song titles.

At the beginning of May, we gathered for a large-scale picnic in the Church Hall, bedecked with bunting, to celebrate the King's Coronation. There were games outside for children (and adults as well), a Coronation cake competition and a singalong. We finished with a rousing rendition of Jerusalem and the National Anthem.

The weather in June can be iffy, but the sun shone on the barbeque in the Vicarage Garden - although there were some gusts of wind which led to parasols being chased around the garden.

In the following month, concert goers enjoyed listening to the sounds of the Summer Serenade in the church, whilst tucking into their strawberries and Pimms.



In November, we held a Scottish Evening in the Church Hall. The evening included a three-course meal with Scottish flavours, a short quiz, indoor highland games (with much merriment over passing the banana), singing by the choir and finished off with a traditional ceilidh.

Finally, in December a mixture of choirs, musicians and singers took part in the annual Christmas Concert in the church. The audience enjoyed mulled wine in the interval and the proceeds were donated to the West Berkshire Homeless charity.

Not all social events are intended to raise funds, but those that did raised £5,759 in total. The split was as follows:

Themed Quiz	£2,139
Barbeque in the Vicarage Garden	£155
Summer Serenade	£860
Scottish Evening	£1,713
Christmas Concert	£892

Peter Wright

Community Festival

St George's once again joined the Community Festival which took place at Falkland Cricket Ground on 10th September. This has fast made itself a regular feature on the Wash Common calendar.

We were delighted to welcome many people for a chat and to help entertain their children for a while.



The Monday Meet

The Monday Meet is a community group that meets monthly, every third Monday, at The Bowler's Arms. enjoyed a varied programme of events in 2023, beginning with Peter Wright's animated talk on St George's pilgrimage, between St Cuthbert's Church in Osborne and Bristol Cathedral, with Peter highlighting the great scenery that was experienced by the walkers, the indulgence in hearty fare, the shared faith, and the great company amongst the band of travellers.



In February, Carole Neal delivered a talk on the work of the Charlie Waller Trust which seeks to improve young people's understanding of their mental health and wellbeing and to equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to look out for themselves, their friends and those around them.

The following month saw Neil and Maggie Taylor give a fascinating talk about their 30 years of adventures on a tandem bike. We were in awe of their bravery as they told of heading off with only their outward flight tickets and first night's accommodation.

April brought us an excellent talk from Claire Blundell of Falkland Grange Care Home, outlining what the team there does to provide superb care provision when infirmity intervenes.

In May we moved from care homes to building homes and enjoyed a tremendous evening as Phil Bevan danced around the architect's equivalent of the Hippocratic oath, with tales from the drawing board and his experiences in dealing with Tristan and Chardonnay Quick-Bucks of Soapy Water House, Wish You Were Here Common.



Gary Collins removed his dog-collar in June to take us through his 'Musings on Modern Art', a journey through the 20th century art landscape, beginning (surprisingly) in 1872 and concluding with Banksy, illustrating how subversion still has an important part to play in 21st century art.

The nettles and brambles failed to deter the nineteen travellers who joined on this year's Three Pubs Walk, strolling six miles and pausing for refreshments at The Craven Arms, The Furze Bush and The Bowler's Arms. Glorious weather and even more glorious company made for a super event.

After August's sabbatical, we reconvened on 18 September to hear Dave Stubbs' relate Wash Common's day in national history, with his historic talk on The First Battle of Newbury. The unearthing of a 380-year-old musket shot led to Dave's lifetime of discovery, which accompanied with his passion for the subject brought much light to an extraordinary event in English history.

Remaining embedded in history, October's presentation was from Simon Davidson who delivered an excellent talk on 'Navigation before GPS'. The acquisition of a silver pocket watch as a 16-year-old led Simon to develop a phenomenal knowledge of chronometers and their history, along with a beautiful collection of the instruments, some of which he brought along for us to view.

For the first (and possibly only) time, The Monday Meet had two events in November. The first, on the sixth, was a talk from Letlapa Mphahlele, supported by Howard Grace, entitled 'Beyond Forgiving', which included the partial viewing of a documentary which set the foundation for a thought-provoking question and answer session, delving into the theme of 'Our Shared Humanity'.

The second meeting, on 20 November, saw Jane Fletcher take us through the work that she does in her community interest company, The Art of Giving. Jane's work explores the use of everyday items to create evocative artwork that is both motivational and inspirational, converting the ordinary into the exceptional.

Our final event of the year, the annual Christmas supper, was a buffet affair compered by Ian MacDonald who very kindly stood in for Laura Farris, MP, who was subject to a three-line whip on the evening of our event and unable to attend. We had a lovely and lively evening with Ian reminding us how important laughter is within our lives.

Thank you to all those that supported The Monday Meet over the past year. Attendance numbers are steadily growing, with an average attendance of 35 people, up from 2022's average of 30. I'm also delighted to say that we donated £596 shared between The Charlie Waller Trust, The Countess of Brecknock Hospice, The West Berkshire Foodbank, The Art of Giving Community Interest Company, and Swings and Smiles. The Monday Meet also donated to St George's Church in memory of Tony Calvert.

It was a pleasure to hear from our speakers across the year and a privilege to share their stories. We have another great year ahead for 2024 – athleticism, wine, stately homes, battlefields and sabbaticals are just some of the topics we'll be covering. I look forward to seeing many of you at one of our meetings.

The Monday Meet is a community group that meets monthly, every third Monday, at The Bowler's Arms. It is open to all to attend, with no booking required. Feel free to join us, we meet at 7:30 for an 8:00pm start unless otherwise noted.

There is no charge for attending, but donations are welcome which go toward charities nominated by our speakers.

Do you have something that you'd like to share with a wider group? Contact Craig Brown if you'd like to present at one of our gatherings.

Craig Brown

Friendship Group

St George's Friendship Group continues to meet on the third Tuesday of the month. We spend the afternoons having time to chat with others, playing games, doing quizzes or having discussions as well as enjoying cups of tea/ coffee and usually cake. We meet at 2.00pm in the Large Meeting Room. We would be pleased to see you there.

Sandra Goodyear, Norma Murray and Rita Gardner

St George's Mothers' Union, Wash Common Branch

Branch Meetings: Members and guests met on the first Tuesday of the month in the Large Meeting Room at St George's Church and enjoyed a varied and interesting programme. We enjoyed hearing from outside speakers and also 'in-house' speakers.

The garden party in July was relocated to the Large Meeting Room because of the very heavy rain; scones tea and excellent cakes were enjoyed by all. On 19th December, the Retirement Fellowship/ Mothers' Union Carol service was held in the church and the congregation enjoyed singing by the Falkland School Choir, mince pies and warm drinks. Thank you to all who helped.



Membership: We admitted 2 branch members in 2023 and have a Branch membership of 31. Everyone is invited to our meetings.

Supporting Diocesan Projects: Christmas cards were written for Bullingdon prisoners and blank cards donated for prisoners to send to others; jars of coffee, tea, sugar were collected in August and were taken with toiletries to the John Radcliffe Ronald McDonald House Project; MU greetings and occasional cards, gifts and books were purchased from MU enterprises with 10% profit to MU Oxford.

Worship and Prayer: Holy Communion was enjoyed by members on two occasions at the Annual Branch Meeting and at the August meeting.

Fundraising: A 'Bring and Buy' table in March and April raised funds for the MU Appeal Make a Mothers' Day; Funds were sent to Mothers' Union Charities including 'Away From It All' holidays and the Overseas Literacy project.

Branch Committee: Elected at the ABM

- Branch Leader: Val Bolan
- Secretary : Gwyneth Stevenson
- Treasurer: Sandra Goodyear
- Revd Rita Ball, Heather Rasman, Frances Rayson, Sandra Harris

Mission: Mothers' Union is a Christian charity with a mission to bring about a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful and flourishing relationships.

www.muoxford.org.uk www.mothersunion.org

Gwyneth Stevenson

St George's Pilgrimage

This year's pilgrimage was close to home - we started in Longparish, only 15 miles from Newbury as the crow flies. We walked to Christchurch Priory, a distance of 48 miles. It was mainly downhill to the sea, but there were a few inclines along the way. Sixteen people completed the journey and on various days additional people joined us to walk that day's route.



The theme of the pilgrimage was water. We were travelling down two river valleys and finishing by the sea so we would be physically close to water for much of

the time. As pilgrims we would be subject to the vagaries of the weather - we were lucky in that we only suffered minor rain showers during our journey.

Our route took us principally through rural Hampshire, initially following the Test Valley to Mottisfont, before crossing the New Forest to Ringwood and then following the River Avon to Christchurch. Overnight accommodation involved halls in Romsey, Wellow and Ringwood. In Romsey, we took the opportunity to visit the abbey for a morning service. The priest showed us a recently installed window dedicated to Florence Nightingale and, in the afternoon, we visited her grave in the churchyard at Wellow.

During the journey, we were lucky to spot a variety of wildlife - the most memorable was the smooth snake we encountered whilst crossing the New Forest and the peregrine falcons nesting on Christchurch Priory. As usual, we stopped at pubs for lunchtime refreshment. All of them made us welcome, some were more efficient than others - I will say no more!

We arrived at Christchurch Quay on Sunday afternoon slightly footsore, but spiritually refreshed. It had been an interesting journey with a great bunch of people, and I am already looking forward to next year's pilgrimage to Lichfield Cathedral.

Peter Wright

Falkland School

We enjoy a good relationship with the school and were delighted by the appointment of Kavash Bamfield as Headteacher in 2023. Revd Becky and Revd Terry take assemblies in school on a fortnightly pattern. Additionally, the school held its Leavers' Service and Carol Service at St George's. It was also lovely to welcome the children from the school choir who came to sing at the Mothers' Union and Friendship Group Carol service in December.

Park House School

After a long gap it was lovely to be invited to take a Remembrance Day assembly at Park House in 2023 which was followed up by pupil representatives and teacher Mrs Smith joining the outdoor service at St George's to lay a wreath on behalf of the school. We are delighted that the school now uses our upper room in the Annexe for off-site space to work with pupils.

Part of the wider Church family ...



One Benefice – three churches



South Newbury, St George, St John & St Michael

Arguably the biggest development over the last year has been our growth into a benefice of three churches and how smoothly and well the creation of our new benefice has been. It's been frustrating how slow the formal and legal process has been with the Church

Commissioners but even so we have simply got on with organising ourselves and working together as a team of three parishes, each distinctive and run by its own PCC, but working together with a shared ministry team, administration, website and other resources. I couldn't be prouder of how everyone has worked together in mutual support and flourishing.

St John's has grown in all sorts of ways over the last few years including in attendance and community engagement. Fr Gary's warm hearted, generous and inclusive ministry, along with a growing number of active laypeople, has opened up St John's literally with the front door now open most days, and in its welcome to those who might feel excluded elsewhere.

St Michael's has also grown over the past year. Numbers on Sunday mornings remain small but are more than double what they were when the relationship began, and Forest Church attracts around 50 people of all ages. The relationship with Enborne Church of England Primary school is excellent, and special services and events have proved popular throughout the year. Huge thanks go to Glenn Wycherley who helped get the parish finances into good order, and to John Bolan who has become part of the St Michael's PCC and is acting churchwarden until elected alongside Julian Dickins this May.



You can read the Annual Reports of our churches on our website www/stg-stj.org.uk/apcms-2024 – I encourage you to do so.

Forest Church, a benefice initiative, takes place outside at St Michael's Church six times a year and attracts people from across the area seeking informal and inclusive worship.

Revd Becky Bevan

Newbury Deanery

St George's is well represented on Deanery Synod: Revd Rita Ball, Revd Becky Bevan and Revd Terry Winrow are in the House of Clergy, while Ronnie Herd, Kathy Winrow and Sarah Pook are in the House of Laity. Philip Read served as Deanery treasurer throughout 2023 as he had for many years, but sadly due to ill health it became increasingly difficult for him to attend meetings towards the end of the year. His recent death is a great loss to the churches of the Newbury area, and the thoughts and prayers of all in the deanery are with Cathie and the family at this time.

The Deanery Synod met three times during 2023, one on Zoom and the others in person at St Mary's Shaw (with Zoom link) and at St George's. At the May meeting a new triennial began and elections took place for officers of the Deanery and the Standing Committee.

Apart from discussions at every meeting about parish finances and the allocation of the parish share, a major focus was the cost of living crisis and how as churches we respond to help those in need. Warm Hubs were created and co-ordinated across the deanery, including ours at St George's.

The Deanery faces a major challenge as it looks to the future with vacancies for all key roles.

‘Unless the Lord builds the house ...’

Generous Giving

‘All things come from you, O Lord, and of your own do we give you.’

In addition to all the usual channels through which St George’s Church serves others, and being mindful of the need for prudence in maintaining a small cash reserve, as well as demonstrating good stewardship, we seek to be as generous as possible to other charities, prioritising those which cohere most closely with the Church’s remit and mission.

During 2023 the PCC approved the church’s Mission Giving Policy (which can be viewed on the website) and endorsed the aspiration to give at least 10 per cent of gross regular income, less the Parish Share, to other charities. Jon Houghton was appointed by the PCC as Charitable Giving Co-ordinator.

The main donations during the year went to Christians Against Poverty’s Newbury Debt Counselling Centre and The Children’s Society. Additionally, money was donated in a one-off appeal in February to support relief work following the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

A further £500 was raised at the Lent lunches for the work of Christian Aid and £892 was donated at the Christmas Concert for the work of West Berks Homeless. Toys were donated at the Crib Service for local charity Homestart.

The picture is of one of the Lent soup lunches in March 2023.



Support for West Berks Foodbank



St George’s Church congregation makes regular donations to West Berks Foodbank. There is a donations collection crate in the cloisters that is used frequently by church members and others. The collected food is then taken to the Foodbank warehouse. In 2023, our donations of food to West Berks Foodbank totalled 1,900 kilogrammes. This is the second highest of the churches in the area.

The Foodbank has a volunteer responsible for Churches liaison and communication. Alex and I receive communications from her and then assist in initiatives when we can. Ronnie Herd and I are trustees of the Foodbank and others from St George’s volunteer their time and skills regularly. Several people deliver food to the food bank clients; some volunteer at the distribution centres and others have been involved in coordinating the Foodbank workload. St George’s continues to make a valuable

contribution to the work of West Berks Foodbank. The picture shows the fantastic response from the congregation to the 2023 Lent appeal.

Phillip Bevan

Finance, Funding and Giving Working Group

The Finance Group aims to assist in the mission and outreach of the church by ensuring good stewardship of our financial resources, encouraging giving and securing funding, so that we can be generous in fulfilling our aims and objectives. The group members are Francis Clayton (Treasurer), Simon Pook (Planned Giving), Mike McKenzie (External Funding), Linda Ling and John Huckle (Church Wardens).

The Finance Group met once in 2023 prior to the budget to discuss and agree the proposed 2024 budget. One to one discussions and communications also take place on issues not involving the full team. Monthly Finance Updates are shared with the PCC and Finance Group.

Church income and expenditures in total were close to budget although there were variations in individual budget income items. On the income side reduced Wash Commoner income, delayed Gift Aid payments, and cash allocations related to the Warm Café were compensated by a large photocopying refund, higher than budgeted church fees / digital income and underspending (in 2023) on the guttering project in relation to a grant received (although the remaining expenditure will appear in the 2024 accounts). On the expenditure side higher than budgeted expenditure on stationery / photocopying, maintenance and major projects (mainly guttering project) was compensated by under-expenditure on Children & Young People, the Wash Commoner and Music Leadership. The Church bank balance increased from £22,832 to £25,738 during 2023.

The Centre income was significantly higher (ca £5k) than budgeted and is showing an encouraging post Covid recovery although pre-Covid income levels are yet to be achieved. The Centre bank balance increased from £13,609 to £33,059 during 2023. The increase was mainly due to higher than budgeted rental income and a large electricity refund received during the year.

Key initiatives during the year were:

- Completion of a guttering project partly funded by matched funding from the Greenham Common Trust. This was part of preparatory works needed before commencing the Church repainting project.
- The launching of an appeal to raise £36,000 for upgrading the church lighting to a modern LED system that will ensure both reduced electricity consumption costs and reduced halogen bulb replacement costs.
- Temporary resolution of the 2022-23 Ground Source Heat Pump problems.

Work planned for 2024 includes:

- Repair of the Ground Source Heat Pump that was damaged by flooding during the January 2024 storms.
- Implementation of the church lighting project supported by two Greenham Common Trust matched funding projects.
- Definition of the Church exterior renovation project.
- Recruitment of a Choir Director.

Francis Clayton - Treasurer

Fabric and Facilities Group

Revd Rita Ball – Co-ordinator

John Huckle – Churchwarden

Linda Ling – Churchwarden

Terry Rayson; Bruce Blaine; Lyn Evans; Rita Gardner

In 2023 F&F had 9 formal meetings and frequent informal meetings of some or all of the group to respond to emergencies. In close cooperation with the Incumbent and the Office Manager, F&F has oversight of regular maintenance of church and centre – this includes cleaning, waste collection, utilities, equipment, annual service agreements eg fire alarms; regular and occasional rentals; and response to breakdowns, breakages, and any health and safety issues. Two church cleaning days were organised in 2023 and these were well supported by the congregation and community.

The Community Service group under the supervision of Chris Gwynne are largely responsible for maintenance of the church grounds.

F&F also have a responsibility for researching larger projects and making recommendations to the PCC.

Throughout 2023 there have been failures of the GSHP system which have been (and remain) difficult to resolve – this resulted in unlooked-for use of the gas boilers in the church and consequent increased expenditure. Some remedial work has been done and more is needed.

The Large Meeting Room and Annexe room were repainted – thanks to Lyn Evans and Ken Ling for their DIY skills.

Plans were finalised and the fundraising project launched for replacement of church lighting with LED units; this was a recommendation of an environmental survey done and financed by Oxford diocese.

There has been consideration of the options available for repairing and resurfacing the exterior of the buildings but there are as yet no firm recommendations, nor funding estimates.

Revd Rita Ball

Community use of the hall and church

There has been increasing use of the rooms across the church site during the past year, with 10 local groups hiring on a weekly basis, including some of the local Guiding groups, Bridge groups, dance and exercise classes and Park House School. This was all in addition to our two main hirers, Wings & Wellies Pre School and Busy Kids before/after School Group. The large majority of users benefit from a reduced hire rate for charitable organisations.

We also had many bookings for one-off events such as birthday parties, meetings and local elections.

All provide valuable funds to help cover the running costs of both the hall and the church building.

Alex Brown and Revd Rita Ball



Donations at Harvest Festival supported by the whole community in support of West Berks Foodbank.

Community Payback 2023

The Community Payback team attended the site on nine Saturdays in the year and attended to the grass cutting and hedging in the church grounds. They also swept up all the kerb lines and weeded the paths.

In the Memorial Garden, the railings were cleaned up and a fresh coat of black paint was applied to keep the area up to scratch.

On the north side of the church, the paved areas were jet washed and the algae removed to prevent people slipping.

To the rear of the hall the fencing, gates and sheds were treated with preservative to prolong the life of the woodwork.

We are very grateful to the teams who attend as the work carried out is vital to keeping the grounds in good order, and it should be noted that their efforts also provide significant cost savings to the church.

Chris Gwynne



Communications Working Group

The Communications team consists of: Ronnie Herd, Alex Brown, Gemma Previt , Linda Ling and Revd Becky. The team supports the Church's internal and external communications, including flyers, The Wash Commoner and the church website. We also cover the Audio Visual system. We continue to livestream the 09.30am service every second Sunday, alternating with St John's. This facility has proved very popular with those who are not able to attend church in person.

As reported last year, the Wash Commoner's joint editors have retired and although we have a small number of people who have volunteered to help out, we have not yet been able to recruit a new editor for this important church outreach communication.

The benefice website is being continuously improved and we make good use of Facebook to publicise what is happening at St George's.

Looking to the future, if we cannot find a new editor for The Wash Commoner the Group will need to review our Communications strategy and evaluate the best media for St George's to use in communicating both internally and with the wider community. We are a small team and we would always welcome new members, particularly anyone who has an interest in communications using social media. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact me or Revd Becky.

Ronnie Herd

Finally ...



Please make a special effort to come along to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting in church on Tuesday 30th April as we celebrate our life together at St George's and rededicate ourselves to the service and work of the church here in Wash Common. We begin with drinks from 7pm ahead of the meeting at 7.30pm.

A Prayer for our Benefice

We give thanks for this benefice
and for all the promise the future holds here;
we know that however small the seeds we sow for the Kingdom
you will give growth through the warmth and the strength
of the Holy Spirit working in our midst –
empower us to be open in welcome,
loving in nurture,
bold in pruning,
and generous with the bounty you provide,
that others may find with us food for their spiritual hunger
and safe rest from their fears and troubles.
Amen

Revd Rita Ball

'All things come from you, O Lord, and of your own do we give you.'



South Newbury - St George, St John, St Michael

www.stg-stj.org.uk