

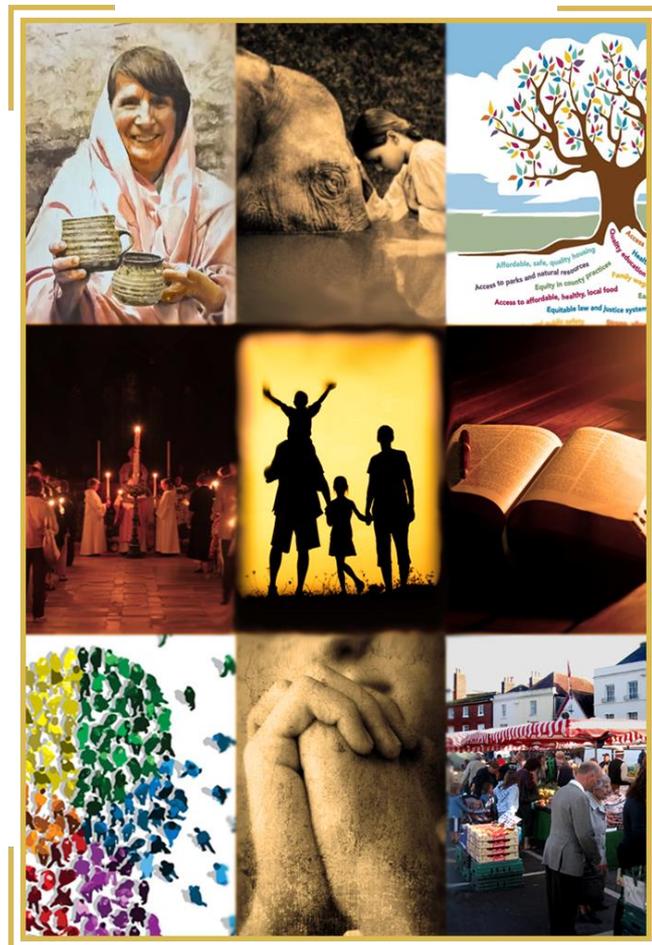


Devizes ST John & ST Mary

Heart and Soul in the Centre of our Town

The Ecclesiastical Parish
of
St John with St Mary, Devizes

Annual Report 2021



Our Vision:

The Lord calls us to do justly, love mercy
and walk humbly with our God: Micah 6:8

Administrative information

St John's Church is situated in Long Street, Devizes. St Mary's Church is situated in New Park Street, Devizes. The parish is part of the Diocese of Salisbury within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: the Parish Office, The Parish Rooms, Long Street, Devizes SN10 1NP.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a registered charity No.1133990 and is made up of:

Incumbent: The Revd Jonathan Poston (from November 2021)

Assistant Curate: The Revd. Gerry Lynch

Churchwardens:

Peter Crofts (from APCM 2021)

Jane Scorer (from APCM 2021) Lay Vice-Chair

Bob Simpson (from APCM 2021)

Mike McClelland (from APCM 2021)

Representatives on the Deanery Synod:

Catherine Brown

Peter Crofts

David Evans

Elected members:

Judy Bridger

Becky Edgington Treasurer

Richard Evans

Alan Martin

Liz Overthrow Secretary

Karen Pugh

Stephanie Williams

Co-opted member:

Chris Cox Licensed Lay Minister

Parish Ministry

Rector: The Revd. Jonathan Poston (from November 2021)

Assistant Curate: The Revd. Gerry Lynch

Clergy with Permission to Officiate:

The Revd. Canon George Royle

The Revd. Robin Stephens

The Revd. Chris Burdon

Licensed Lay Minister with Permission to Officiate:

Chris Cox

Mark Harrison (from September 2021)

Lay Pastoral Assistants:

Claire Arden

Catherine Brown

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank

The Market Place

Devizes

SN10 1JD

Auditors: J S Weeks

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF DEVIZES, ST JOHN & ST MARY

AIM AND PURPOSES

St John & St Mary Parochial Church Council (PCC) has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, the Reverend Jonathan Poston, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical.

The PCC is also specifically responsible for the maintenance of St John's Church, St Mary's Church and St John's Parish Rooms.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community.
- The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish.
- Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.
- When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and the supplementary guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:
 - Worship and prayer; learning about the gospel; and developing their knowledge and trust in God.
 - Provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish.
 - Missionary and outreach work.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of our parish churches and the parish rooms.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to try to maintain a balance on free reserves (net current assets) which equates to at least three months' unrestricted payments.

It is our policy to invest the short-term investment fund balances with the CCLA Church of England Deposit Fund, and the remainder in the CCLA Church of England Investment Fund.

Structure, governance and management

The Parochial Church Council is a corporate body established by the Church of England.

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. The PCC is a Registered Charity.

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules.

At St John & St Mary the membership of the PCC consists of the incumbent (our rector), the associate priest and the assistant curate, churchwardens, and members elected by those members of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the church. All those who attend our services / members of the congregation are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC members are responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent. New members receive initial training into the workings of the PCC.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Covid 19 affected all our lives during this year and a total of eight meetings were held, half of which were on zoom.

We are very grateful to the Revd. Gerry Lynch for his technological expertise in IT both for our meetings and our worship during the lockdowns.

We spent time discussing how we could re-open the churches for worship safely after the lifting of restrictions and Risk Assessments were conducted to enable this to happen safely. We are again grateful to Alan Martin for all his work as Health and Safety Officer.

Some members attended a deanery meeting to address the problem of falling income because of Covid restrictions. The diocese encouraged parishes to undertake stewardship campaigns.

During the lockdowns PCC members kept in regular contact with members of the congregation by phone to ascertain pastoral needs.

In November we welcomed Jonathan, our new Rector, who encouraged us to look forward with hope and vision. Plans were discussed for the re-ordering of St John's and the replacement of the electronic organ.

The Living Churchyard project was encouraged and events in St John's churchyard supported.

Regular updates were received on the progress of the plans to redevelop St Mary's church and the long-awaited faculty for the project was received in November.

Liz Overthrow

THE ELECTORAL ROLL

As ever, we have lost some friends throughout the year and gained some more. At 31 December 2021 there were 137 names on the Electoral Roll. As always, I would urge members of the congregation to ask if those sitting next to them each Sunday are on the Electoral Roll. If they are not on the roll, encourage them to see me and complete an application form. Forms will also be available in church.

Catherine Brown - Electoral Roll Officer

SAFEGUARDING

Early in the year we had a burst of activity when new procedures required Data and Barring Service (DBS) checks and additional declarations for all PCC members rather than just for some. Thereafter things settled down, with the already straightforward online checking process being further simplified by the option to carry out document checks via Zoom when appropriate. Similarly, many training activities can be completed on-line.

At the end of the year, we heard that DBS checks will be on a three-year cycle rather than the current five-year cycle. This will bring the Church in line with other agencies who work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The transition will come in incrementally by 2024, and we should be notified when our turns come around. The higher frequency will reinforce the benefit of individuals registering for the DBS Update Service whereby a recheck can take minutes rather requiring the whole ID checking process.

As usual in these reports, it is worth mentioning that these sometimes-complex procedures help to create an environment that is safer for us all. Importantly they ensure that the PCC has complied with its duty to have “due regard” to the House of Bishops’ guidance in relation to safeguarding. If you have a question about any aspect, by all means contact me.

Jerry King - Parish Safeguarding Officer

REPORT FROM BUILDING & GROUNDS SUB-COMMITTEE

As with all other church activity, our ability to progress anything during 2021/2 has been severely hampered by the pandemic and associated lockdowns.

St John's

- Finally, we have started to receive a modest income from our solar panels (Feed-in tariff). This will be in the region of £500 p.a. This is in addition to the electricity that is generated for our own use. As yet it is difficult to assess the impact of this on our annual electricity bills.
- Parish Rooms – the long standing 'letting' to Open Doors has now ended as they have moved into their own new premises at the Southbroom Centre. We are in the process of seeking new hirers to improve our income.
- Quinquennial inspection – scheduled for later this year
- Now that we are through the pandemic and have a new Rector in post, the intention is to move forwards with plans to replace our ageing electronic organ with a proper pipe organ and thereafter to move forwards with more general re-ordering to make St John's a building fit for purpose in the 21st century through the installation of catering and toilet facilities. We also intend to utilise new technology to our general advantage as best possible – broadband, CCTV to enable better opening hours and contactless giving arrangements.
- Health & Safety risk assessments have been kept under constant review by Alan Martin during the pandemic and continue to be so.

St Mary's

- Our architects, Chedburn Codd, have now completed the Quinquennial Report and drawings and specifications are currently being prepared with a view to commencing remedial work later this year – largely work to the roof
- At last, we have both planning permission and permission from the Diocese to move forwards with the planned re-ordering project to create a creative arts centre within the church

Churchyards (Both)

One notable success over the past twelve months has been the establishment of active volunteer groups both at St Mary's and St John's who provide much needed tender care in both churchyards. Evidence of this is already apparent at St John's – re-planted hawthorn trees along the south path and new beds along either side of the north path. In addition, we have a bug hotel and bird boxes and all of this is aimed at developing 'living churchyards' for the benefit not only of our local community but also as a means of increasing and diversifying resident fauna and flora. A special vote of thanks to the volunteers generally and in particular to the 'management group' for these projects especially Shirley Urwin, Felicity Cole, Kate Walling and Philippa Morgan. Not only are the churchyards themselves benefitting from this love and attention but also activities have been planned and undertaken aimed at raising funds for the churchyards and encouraging greater use of the churchyards, notably by children.

We have also received considerable assistance from Community Payback (part of the Probation Service) over the past year and so thanks are due to them also.

Mike McClelland

HEALTH & SAFETY

This time last year we were 'on a roadmap' out of our third lockdown while at same the time we were all queuing up for our second coronavirus vaccination! By July 19th restrictions on our movements were lifted although this had been delayed allowing time for some to receive their first vaccine dose.

At St John's we continued to have risk assessments (RA) in place to July 2021 but with the lifting of restrictions on July 19th 2021, a new RA was drawn up for Sunday worship, to ensure that we maintained certain disciplines, but at the same time allowed our congregation to choose how they individually felt about the lifting of restrictions. For example, did they wish to wear a mask and sing or not to sing and wear a mask? Did they wish receive communion at the nave altar or not? However, we did continue to ventilate the church with both north and south doors remaining open during services. For many, as winter and colder days drew closer, this remained a contentious issue, but on the whole the reason was respected and understood.

Your Church Wardens asked for the July 2021 RA to be flexible in its application. The wardens decided how we could further lift restrictions as members of our congregation became more confident in worshipping in church. Despite the Omicron COVID variant, which arrived here in the UK in December 2021, confidence in those who had received the three vaccinations remained high, and now in April 2022, we could say we are almost back to normal! In all we have done over the past two years, we have taken the lead from the Church of England and from the Royal School of Church Music.

We had one minor accident during the year, when in January this year a lady slipped and fell on the north pathway to the church. She was anxious to draw our attention to the incident, as not only should it be recorded but some action taken to avoid others slipping on the pathway.

As a result, signage has been placed along the pathway, drawing attention to its possible condition, when wet. I would urge all who have a trip, or worse a fall, to report the incident to a Church Warden or to me, for it to be followed up.

Many will remember the sad assassination of a priest in Rouen in 2016. The Church of England together with other agencies, were quick to provide advice as to how we should go about protecting ourselves against any similar act of aggression or terrorism. Following the consideration of a number of issues we settled upon a simple but, we thought, an appropriate response. However, the necessary disciplines we have been obliged to take over the past two years because of COVID, have allowed our memory of the former routines to become somewhat faded! However, it can't be denied that our, church sitters, flower arrangers and others who are 'loan workers' in our church, have continued to do a fantastic job. Likewise our stewards provide a great service to us and to our church and we should not forget those who volunteered to act as stewards when we chose to re-open for worship during a very uncertain period in the fight against COVID.

I have since revisited the notes made in 2017 for stewards and all loan workers and, as a result was able to hold a very positive meeting with all concerned in late February. As importantly, I was able to share with the group the Government's intention to introduce legislation - called 'Protect Duty'. This came about following the death of Martyn Murray and 21 others in the 2017 Manchester Arena attack. Its purpose is to impose a legal obligation on organisations - with a capacity of 100 or more - to consider the safety and security of their staff (paid & unpaid) and the public who use their facilities. The latest information from the web pages is: *'The Government is proposing to introduce a new Protect Duty from early 2022. This legislation, and the changes it brings, will enhance the protection of the United Kingdom's publicly accessible*

places from terrorist attacks and ensure that businesses and organisations are prepared to deal with incidents. I will watch this closely and determine if we need to enhance our disciplines that are already in place.

Finally, with no major changes to the St John's and St Mary's Health & Safety policies, nor to the St Mary's Fire Risk Assessments your PCC reviewed and agreed them in January; the PCC also agreed to the new Fire Risk Assessment for St John's (Any necessary changes required during the year were contained in specific Risk Assessments)

Alan Martin

PARISH ROOMS

The Parish Rooms group (Catherine Brown, Simon Fisher, Charles Slater and Judy Bridger) was not able to meet in the early part of the year because of the pandemic, during which time only Opendoors was using the premises on a very limited basis. In the summer a few regular groups returned.

At the beginning of October, Opendoors moved to sole use premises in the old St James Church Hall, a working party in October gave the kitchen a thorough clean and sort out of equipment and we are expecting Community Payback to decorate it in due course. The meeting room has been cleared and can now be used for meetings. The Churchyard Group have taken over responsibility for the borders and rose pruning, etc, and Devizes Town Council continue to cut the grass when they do the lawn behind the War Memorial.

We urgently need new bookings to prevent the premises becoming a drain on our finances but it seems as though people are still being cautious about starting group activities again.

We are very grateful to Catherine Brown, our Parish Rooms Manager, and Kevin Cox, our cleaner, for all their work.

Judy Bridger

ST MARY'S FUTURE GROUP

Salisbury Diocesan Registrar granted a Faculty for the regeneration of St Mary's on the 10th Dec 2021.

"The proceedings were unopposed and did not give rise to a question of law or of doctrine, ritual or ceremonial or relate to proposals that affect the legal rights of any person or body.

This Court now grants a faculty authorising you to carry out the new single storey extension, re-ordering, and trial pits for ground works archaeological investigation or other works or other proposals described in the Schedule in accordance with the designs, plans or other documents accompanying the petition and subject to any conditions set out in the Schedule.

The works must be completed within 60 months from the date below or such further period as this Court may allow and the certificate of practical completion is to be sent to the Registry within the period allowed."

There are a number of conditions, the comments by the StMFG are in italics:

1. The works shall be executed under the direction of the Inspecting Architect. *ChedburnCodd continue to be engaged on the project*
2. No works shall be commenced until the Petitioners have filed at the registry written confirmation that:
 - a. 80% of the funding for the works is promised or in place.
Understood
 - b. a detailed specification for the works (including the storage provision beneath the organ) has been agreed with the DAC. In the event that agreement with the DAC cannot be reached, the matter shall be referred to the Chancellor for determination.
Understood

3. The groundworks shall be subject to archaeological oversight in terms agreed with the DAC prior to commencement of the works. *Would do anyway using Context One.*
4. The pulpit shall be retained within the building (albeit in moveable form). *As was proposed*
5. The pews shall not be removed from the building until the nature of the replacement seating (including storage provision) has been approved by the Chancellor. *A case will be made for upholstered seating, probably based on an accepted church chair style.*
6. The organ shall be returned to the church within the 5 years for completion of the works, or within such further period as may be permitted. *This is the intention and subject to a separate project.*

St Mary's Future Group Structure. The following project areas are being supported by volunteers:

Governance and Funding (and lease)	Promotion of St Mary's as a top-class venue
Churchyard improvement and Zero Carbon	Heritage and Events
Interior furniture & fitments, IT investigation	Archaeological
Sweetland Organ Conservation	Spirituality

We would be delighted to accept volunteers for any of these topic groups. You can also get general updates circulated through the StMaryDevizesTrust.org web site, just sign up for the mailing list.

Quinquennial Works These have started under the auspice of the PCC and will ensure the building is in great shape to present to funders. As ChedburCodd is both Church Architect and project architect they will ensure all work is well co-ordinated.

Project Structure

A proposal for the future legal structure to support this new stage of the project will be put to the PCC and St Mary Devizes Trust in March 2022. Note that the scope of the project is outside the usual remit of a PCC Trustee and this aspect needs to be fully investigated. The recommendation is that a Clerk of Works will be appointed to oversee the building project on behalf of the freeholder (the incumbent!) and the PCC.

Funding. The costs of the project development phase so far have been covered by The St Mary Church and Poor Lands Charity – Church Branch, for which we thank them. The estimated overall cost of the project could be £5m and research is being carried out on the best way of reclaiming the VAT incurred. Fund raising can start once the Governance Structure has been agreed. Donations will be sought from groups ranging from large corporate donors, educational trusts to “Name a Seat” type initiatives.

Tony Scorer, Project Manager, St Mary’s Future Group

SPIRITUALITY TEAM

The spirituality team aims to oversee and enhance occasions for spiritual engagement and expression within the parish, including:

- The pattern of services and seasonal worship
- The development and progression of the parish as a ‘Contemplative Community’
- Opportunities for prayer, worship, and spiritual practice
- Opportunities for spiritual engagement during Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter
- The ‘Reflection’, Bible Study and Lectio Divina groups

- Quiet days, retreats, and pilgrimages
- The musical and choral tradition within the parish.

Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions the Spirituality Team has recommenced its regular meetings.

Face-to-face meetings of the 'Reflection' group (3rd Tuesday of the month) and the Lectio Divina group (4th Friday of the month) have resumed. A leaflet explaining these groups has been produced and distributed and further copies are available in St John's. The Bible Study group has also recommenced its weekly meetings (Wednesdays).

A series of reflections on the gospel of Luke were held during Advent, and a Lent course on the Church of England's 'Living in Love and Faith' initiative has been held.

We have planned a quiet day for the 7th May to be held in St Mary's. This will be led by Janet Robbins (a Benedictine Oblate and member of the World Community for Christian Meditation) and the theme will be 'Finding the Stillness Within'.

A successful intercessions workshop has taken place from which potential new intercessors were identified.

Our monthly contemplative Compline service has been suspended for the winter months but will hopefully recommence to coincide with the lighter evenings and warmer weather.

In view of the pandemic and the arrival of our new Rector, the decision has been taken to discontinue the formal review of our pattern of services as initiated under our previous incumbent.

We continue to discuss the possibility of introducing a 'Breathing Space' type opportunity, i.e., an opportunity for people to come into the church to find respite and quiet. This would be held on a Thursday and would extend the time when the church is open to the public.

The Bible Study Group

Covid rules prevented our meeting for much of the year, but from September we were able to resume our long-interrupted study of St Matthew's Gospel.

As before the pandemic, Becky Edgington kindly offered her drawing room as our comfortable meeting place on Wednesday evenings. Our former participants welcomed the opportunity to start up again and we were delighted to be joined by Mike Holtham and, on occasion, by Jessica Brown. For a few meetings Jean also came, but we were saddened by her death during a stay in France. We were sorry too to learn of the death of Gwendoline Ardley, who had been a regular member of our group until she became too frail to come.

David Evans

Omnes Ad Unum - St. John's does...

At the start of the year, after a non-existent Christmas Church Festival and the development of the 2 Advent trails, we were able to support the Devizes Foodbank with a cheque for £250. We started off the New Year with hopes of being able to hold some events but the vagaries of Covid put paid to that. Once the vaccination programme had freed us up we were able to plan a Christmas Tree Festival together with the 2 Trails. We were pleasantly surprised by the eagerness of Businesses and individuals to participate. The Tree Festival was restricted in the numbers of trees in the Church as we decided it was not the right time to circulate the Care Homes and Schools to decorate the trees. This year we were fortunate in finding a third main sponsor, which was a great financial help. Our collaboration with The Community Payback scheme was very successful with them making troughs to hold the Memorial Trees outside. Our thanks to Jewsons for donating the materials. We ran a Christmas Draw but it was difficult to sell tickets in the places where we had previously depended on the bulk of our sales, and so the results were disappointing. Nevertheless the sum of the Christmas activities was a success and we are presenting cheques for

the selected Charities this year, which are The Devizes Foodbank, The Opportunity Centre and Dorothy's House for £725 each. St John's is receiving the same amount plus £400 as we have offered to reduce our £500 float to £100 to help with finances. In total we shall be able to pay out £3,300. This will happen at an evening's entertainment for all at the Church on 18th February.

St John's Omnes Account						
Year ending 31-Dec-21			CREDITS	DEBITS		BALANCE
BALANCE BANK ACCOUNT						£3,651.43
PETTY CASH			£93.82			£3,745.25
BALANCE REQUIRED IN ACCOUNT				£100.00		£3,645.25
OUTSTANDING CREDITS						
	SUB TOTAL		£120.00			£3,765.25
OUTSTANDING DEBITS						
	SUB TOTAL			£385.00		£3,380.25

We have an ambitious programme of events planned for this Platinum Jubilee Year.

June 3rd Celebration Dinner for 96 people at the Town Hall.

June 11th Summer Fair at Hillworth Park.

August 27th Pimms Party at the Old Rectory and Silent Auction.

October 29th Autumn Fayre at the Corn Exchange.

November 28th Start Christmas Tree Festival.

As ever any offers of help with these events will be greatly appreciated.

Let us pray that our hopes for this year will not be restricted by Covid rearing its ugly head again.

Tim Lacy Hulbert – Hon Treasurer Omnes ad Unum

ST JOHN'S ANNUAL REPORT: CHOIR AND MUSIC

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, has had a devastating effect on arts, culture and especially music. The effects on church music have been particularly damaging. The church as an institution itself, and choirs generally have been largely ignored by those who have made the COVID regulations and guidelines. On a national scale, many choirs have even now not returned to their previous level of activity, and some not at all. Here at St John's the ravages of the pandemic meant a slow and hesitant come back, gradually re-introducing the opportunities to sing various parts of the service. Even now, writing this after the year has ended, hardly a week goes by without one of other member of the choir having to isolate or take time out as they or a family member has contracted COVID.

I cannot make much comment on the early part of 2021, partly because there was little activity in the choir, due to COVID, and also because I took up the post of Director of Music only in September. All choirs who maintain a "front row" of school age singers suffer from the waves of recruitment that move between a large and strong body of singers, and years when recruitment has been difficult. The summer of 2021 saw a large exodus of senior choristers, mostly off to university. In addition to this, post-COVID recovery in September revealed that a further three or four choristers had not returned, as parents were concerned that their children needed to catch up on lost learning as a priority. Hence, some 20 children were reduced to nine. In addition, there has not been the possibility to recruit during COVID, and further, attempts to approach schools during the autumn have been met with a no or negative reply, as they also concentrate on the recovery process. I am keen to maintain the work of my predecessor, Chris Totney, over the past ten years, and indeed, ten years of Jon Riding before that, building up the choir.

The decreasing number of churches able to maintain the choral tradition as at St John's mostly have some form of endowment scheme providing a music foundation to "future proof" this decline. The gulf between the level and nature of music in such churches and what happens in school has widened hugely in recent years. The prospect of learning a whole different way of doing things, of singing, of repertoire, of language, etc, is very daunting for a young chorister these days, and requires a great deal of time, patience and steady learning from both the children, and those who teach and guide them. My past experience leading choirs, working with the RSCM, and pre-COVID three years leading the UK team in an Erasmus+ choral training scheme, working also with colleagues and choirs in France, Italy and Poland has taught me ways to achieve this, which I am very keen to do. St John's choir would have been ideally placed to benefit from this, but sadly, BREXIT has meant that the UK can no longer take part in this scheme. In another year or so there will be another wave of departures of senior choristers, leaving three or four younger ones to carry on. They have been disadvantaged, again by COVID, missing out on two years of "learning the ropes", gaining valuable experience and knowledge to pass on to new recruits.

On a positive note, early on it was my pleasure and privilege to present RSCM Bronze certificates and medals to four choristers who achieved their Bronze awards in the summer. These were Grace (Highly Commended), Louise (Commended), Maud and Sophie (Pass). Congratulations to them! Alongside this, my own past experience has also led to me being made the RSCM Area Team Leader for Wessex (covering Wiltshire and Dorset). The RSCM itself is currently undergoing a radical (for them!) change of direction and working methods, amongst which is a new Education programme (yet to be revealed) and the revision of the Awards system. For example, what were variously Bishop's and Dean's awards, plus the "Light Blue", "Dark Blue" and "Red" ribbon levels have now been redesignated at three levels:

Bronze, Silver and Gold. I am hoping St John's will be able to play a flagship role in our task to reinvigorate liturgical music in our region.

The challenges of bringing the choir back to full action started immediately in September as we prepared for a Choral Evensong at Winchester Cathedral, and the Installation of our new rector, Jonathan Poston, plus a memorial service for John Stott, all in the space of a week at the end of October/early November. These were all accomplished successfully, the singing at Winchester was unanimously confirmed as "very fine indeed" by all the clergy present, and this has provided a boost for the morale of the choir, and immediately led to a return invitation to go and sing there again.

Inevitably with a new regime, and following not just COVID but a long interregnum, with a new Rector, there have been some adjustments to the pattern and content of services. These have been introduced in stages over the weeks, with some acceleration up to Christmas, closely followed by Epiphany, Candlemas, and a date to sing at Tewkesbury Abbey in January. All these have put pressure on the choir as it finds its old form, but I am pleased that everyone has remained committed, shown resilience. I have to congratulate them all on their loyalty throughout. In particular (and one of my keen interests, and long time cited as one of the tests of a good choir) has been the reinstatement of singing the psalms every week. The choir has responded magnificently, and drawn many compliments – this was also noted on the visit to Winchester, comments included "It is so good to hear a choir who know and understand what they are doing with the psalms".

In other matters, it has become apparent that the organ needs attention. The engineers have had to be called out twice recently for major faults, and it has developed some other occasional quirks. The warning has come that the present Makin electric organ, acquired (secondhand) some fifteen years ago, as a "temporary measure", runs on software that is now obsolete, and it will become increasingly

difficult to obtain spare parts when required. The report by Paul Hale, produced in 2018, suggesting solutions to the requirement by the Diocese (as I understand it) to replace it with a pipe organ, commensurate with the standing of St John's both as a civic church, and in line with its musical tradition, is now urgent. Steps are being taken to address this. However, with attendant needs, such as re-ordering, the whole St Mary's project, and potentially the heating system, all requiring immediate attention, this is a daunting prospect. It comes at a time when all things seem challenging, but I am certain we will face this with the fortitude, resourcefulness and positivity required.

*Graham Coatman
Director of Music*

FAIR TRADE

Our monthly Fair Trade stall was not able to run last year because of the pandemic but we hope to restart it again on the first Sunday in May 2022 if all continues well.

Judy Bridger and Trudy Fisher

THE FLOWER GUILD

There are twelve flower arrangers with Julie Gilmore helping at Harvest time.

Due to Covid restrictions Flower arrangements were not reintroduced until August.

There was one wedding in September, which we supplied flowers for. I would like to thank the flower arrangers for their help and I would be pleased to accept any donations to help cover the cost of the flower arrangements.

Heather Blyth

THE BELLS AND BELLRINGERS

It has been great to finally return to practising and ringing together. Although we still take precautions, using hand sanitiser, keeping the Ringing Chamber well ventilated and wearing masks, it has been lovely to meet up with friends again. Some of us were worried that we may have forgotten how to ring some of the methods after a break of more than eighteen months. However, with practice it has been rewarding to find that we haven't lost our skills. We have increased the numbers in our band to twelve, with three more experienced male ringers joining us and one learner, which has enabled us to regularly ring all eight bells on Sunday mornings. Thanks to the D.I.Y. skills of ringer Richard Heath, we have acquired a rope warmer so that, in the colder months, we no longer have to try and control ropes that are cold, damp, stiff and uncomfortable to grasp.

We have enjoyed celebrating the return of weddings and proclaiming these happy occasions to everyone. Monthly meetings with other towers, quizzes and delicious teas have thankfully resumed. Visitors from further afield have come and amongst those we have welcomed groups from Southampton and Cumbria.

The training of several learners is taking place and thanks are due to Richard for co-ordinating this. He is also mentoring one of our new ringers in how to become a qualified ringing teacher, following a set training programme. Richard has done a sterling job in looking after the tower and ringers when I haven't been able to be there and we are very grateful to him.

We remain a friendly, welcoming group and are always pleased to see visitors at our practices and on other occasions. Do come and see us in action as we continue the age old tradition of bellringing.

Liz Merritt, Tower Captain

Deanery Synod.

The first meeting of the year had to be held by Zoom, but thereafter it was felt safe enough to meet in person at St James Church. There were occasional discussions prompted by reports from the diocesan synod and the link with the church in South Sudan, but business was overwhelmingly dominated by attempts to grapple with the difficult financial situation in which most churches found themselves in the wake of the pandemic, when church services and fund-raising events had been suspended. Keith Brindle of St James Devizes was anxious to explore ways in which churches might help each other and it was agreed to establish mechanisms which might facilitate such co-operation. By the end of the year, many parishes were in arrears with their parish share or else paying it out of reserves and it was still unclear how far action by the Deanery would be able to help them

David Evans

Mothers Union

During the lockdowns at the start of the year we were not able to meet or even get together in Church, but we kept in touch on the phone.

In August we met outside for a Tea Party at the Parish Rooms, conversation was lively as we had missed meeting for fellowship.

In September we met inside and talked about gardens, we shared RHS leaflets from a visit I made to Wisley with the U3A.

We had a raffle for a 6 pack of pansies won by Kathy.

In October Jill Chadwick gave us a very interesting slideshow and talk about a family holiday in Eastern Europe, very soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, they made many friends and have revisited them since.

We shared our Angel Tree patterns to raise money for Erlestoke prison.

I attended the Autumn AGM and Council for Salisbury Diocese via Zoom, we learned of Rosie Stiven's retirement as President and were told about MU Projects.

In November we had our AGM, the Rev Gerry Lynch attended.

Jeannie Gye had offered a talk but this was postponed as she was unwell.

Marianne Jones stepped down from the Committee, she was presented with a plant for her long service, the rest of the Committee agreed to remain and were voted in.

We all signed a get well card for Mary Dainty.

On 3rd November I attended the installation of the new Rector Rev Jonathan Poston and said a few words to welcome him, we had presented him with a hamper from our members.

On 1st December we hosted the Deanery Advent Service it was well attended by our own members and 30 from other Branches in the Deanery. The Service was provided by Carole Jones from Urchfont and led by Rev Gerry Lynch, Rosie Stiven gave us a very interesting talk during the Service. It was a joyful occasion and the retiring collection of £80.50 was given to the Salisbury Womens Refuge.

We had a Christmas table top sale and raffle won by Rosie Stiven.

At the end of the Year we gave £10 each to Christmas Appeal, Virtual Baby, Holiday Caravan, Sudan Fund for Medical Help and £20 for Erlestoke Prison Angel Tree Project.

Parish Room donation for 6 months was £40.

Juliet Bazeley Branch Leader

What Will You Do?

What will you do, the poet said, with this
One wild and precious life you have today
Within the womb the Baptist leaps for bliss
Upon the cross He gives his life away

What will we do indeed, for heaven's sake
We motley crew of children, priests, and fools
We offer fairy cakes and prayers, and break
Communal bread according to the rules

What did he do? He died, and rose again
Was unconventional, and wild, and brave
He gave his precious life that other men
Might rise in easy conscience from the grave

And you, sat there all cosy in your pew
What will you do with what he gave for you?

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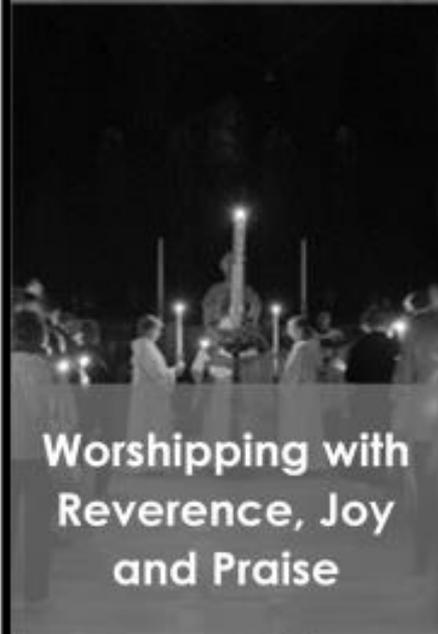
Being Welcoming and Hospitable



Showing Care and Respect for the Natural World



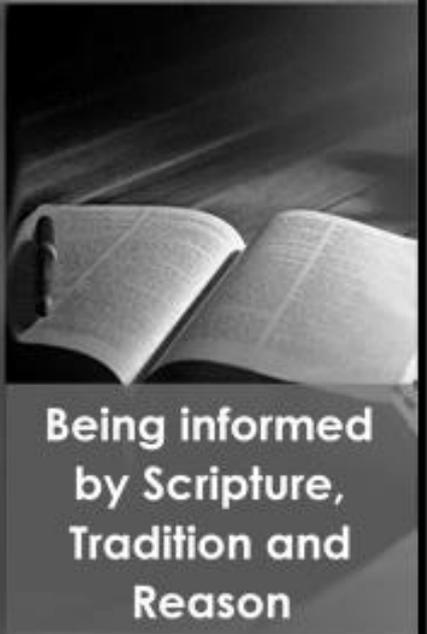
Being Concerned about Social Justice



Worshipping with Reverence, Joy and Praise



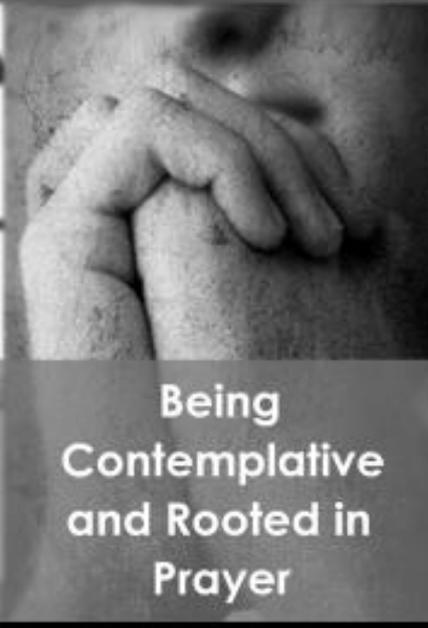
Living our Wild and Precious lives by...



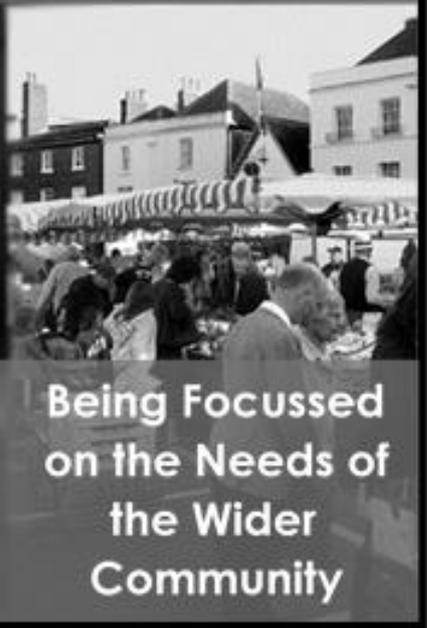
Being informed by Scripture, Tradition and Reason



Being Inclusive



Being Contemplative and Rooted in Prayer



Being Focussed on the Needs of the Wider Community