

St John the Evangelist, Milford

**Annual Report
and
Financial Statements
of the
Parochial Church Council**

For the year ended 31 December 2023

Retiring Incumbent:

**Revd Clive Potter
The Vicarage
Milford Heath Road
Milford
Surrey GU8 5BX**

The Parish of St John the Evangelist, Milford

Parochial Church Council

Members and Advisers

Vicar: Clive Potter (Retired 31 December 2023)
Assistant Priest Peter Hewson (Ordained July 2012)
Assistant Priest Barbara Steele-Perkins

Churchwardens: Judy Downing (Appointed March 2019)
Jackie Hills (Appointed October 2020)
Secretary: Miranda O'Brien (Appointed March 2016)
Treasurer: Nicholas O'Brien (Re-appointed March 2014)

Deanery Synod Representatives: Maddie Murray (Elected – March 2023)
Nicholas O'Brien (Stood down March 2023)
Miranda O'Brien (Stood down March 2023)
Judy Downing (Stood down March 2023)

Members Nathalie Hinds (Re-elected March 2021)
Rob Andrews (Re-elected March 2021)
Nicki Herring (Re-elected March 2023)
Maddie Murray (Re-elected March 2023)
Frances Cousins (Elected March 2021)
Jonathan Hills (Elected March 2022)
Karon Sewell (Elected March 2022)
Lynne Callender (Resigned May 2023)
David Pepe (Elected March 2022)
Pier Farrell (Elected March 2022)
Nicholas O'Brien (Elected March 2023)

Bankers National Westminster Bank PLC
77 High Street, Godalming
Surrey, GU7 1AR

Independent Examiner Alison Sanderson FCA
20 Fernhill Close
Woking
Surrey GU22 0DJ

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and activities

St John's PCC has the responsibility of co-operation with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church and the attached Church Centre at Church Road, Milford, Surrey.

Achievements and performance

Vicar's Report

The need to write this APCM report has given me the opportunity to reflect on my ministry of over 30 years in Guildford Diocese.

From ordination on July 5th 1992 to the final service of December 3rd, with my licence ending on December 31st, 2023 to now retirement from full time ministry, it has been a privilege to serve God and be involved in parish life

We moved to this parish in 2007. The APCM was the start of my time here.

Thank you to all who have supported the work here in a variety of ways. PCC members, pastoral team, ministry team and every member.

The past years have seen us develop and grow, to be challenged by the pandemic, and to recover from the challenges. All within the love and care of our lord, in whose service we live.

Thank you to Janet who over the years of ministry has not only supported my work but also brought her own skills and talents to parish life, as well as care for our family and home.

In all we have celebrated and shared great times, met the challenges and with strength continued in the service of God through his Holy Spirit.

May the next part of your journey at St. John's Church be blessed and guided with love and fellowship.

Clive Potter
Retiring Vicar

Churchwarden's Reports

It has been pleasing to welcome some newcomers to our congregation in recent months, including a couple whose wedding took place in the summer and a family of six who are new to the village. However, in December our Vicar Clive retired and soon afterwards so did Sylvia our organist. We wish them both well. Sadly, we have had to say goodbye to a number of our Church members this year, whose funerals all took place in church.

It has as usual been an active year with a very profitable Jumble Sale in April following a successful Lent Course where we discussed hymns, bible readings or prayers with a particular significance to each of the participants. In Holy Week we held an Agape Supper and Vigil which was poorly attended this year probably due to the dark evenings. Our Easter Day morning services were well attended.

In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III by wearing patriotic colours to the church service, followed by a lovely cake and “bubbles” in the church centre. There were also neighbourhood and street parties in the village. In June, the Village Fete was well supported and we raised much needed funds from the usual Church stalls.

The Church Wardens completed a Safeguarding Course, and were sworn in again at St Andrew’s Church, Farnham.

Many of us enjoyed a lovely afternoon at Borough Farm with Tea and Swimming, once again hosted by John and Nicki Herring and family.

August saw the Church Quinquennial take place which resulted in a 77-page report, but the bottom line is we are generally in good order with only a few urgent repairs needed.

Harvest Festival was celebrated in October with donations going to the local Foodbank. After the service we once again enjoyed a Shared Lunch. In November we held a Quiz Night in aid of Samsons and St John’s. The Church was full for the Remembrance Day Service when we were pleased to welcome the Scouts and Guides.

December began with Clive’s final service and leaving party at the Village Hall, with about 100 people attending to wish him and Janet well.

Also, in December Pam and Judy led a session of Wreath Making. Pam and Peter devised a fun quiz with both being run to raise funds for the Glass Door Project. The annual Toy Service supported Shooting Stars Children’s Hospice. Rodborough School held a service in Church to celebrate Christmas. On 17th December we held our Carol Service after which we enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine, kindly provided by John and Nicki. The Church was packed as always for the Crib Service on Christmas Eve and we also held a midnight service that day, followed by a 10am Holy Communion service on Christmas Day.

We are very grateful to visiting Clergy and indeed to all members of our Church Family for taking on extra duties, particularly Barbara. With a special thank-you to Peter Hewson for leading the majority of the services since Clive retired.

**Jackie Hills
Churchwarden
Judy Downing
Churchwarden**

Church Electoral Roll 2023

At the beginning of the year the total was 140 but there were 5 deaths in March, October and November. 1 member had also moved away but during the year we had 3 new members so at the end of the year the number stood at 137.

**Miranda O’Brien
Electoral Roll Officer**

PCC Secretary’s Report

During 2023 the Parochial Church Council has continued to meet on average once every two months so this year we totalled 6 meetings, all held in the Church Centre. The Standing Committee (The Vicar, the Curate, the Treasurer, the Churchwardens, and the PCC Secretary) meets two weeks before each meeting to discuss parish affairs and prepare the agenda for the full meeting. These meetings are also held in the Church Centre.

Each meeting has an agenda, which gives the opportunity for the Clergy, Churchwardens and Treasurer to report to the committee as well as comments on various aspects of Church life such as Electoral Roll numbers, Deanery Synod, Mission, Schools, Work with Young

People, Buildings and Maintenance, Fund Raising etc. As well as the regular meetings we also held a shorter meeting a few days after the APCM to commission the PCC and also remind members of the various aspects of their work.

We have also had general discussions on subjects such as how the Christmas season went; the APCM; Church finances (a continual source of discussion including the Parish Share increase and how to deal with it); how to celebrate the King's Coronation; the Quinquennial Inspection, both preparing for it and the after effects; the Village Hall Lease renewal; and new chairs for the Church Centre. For the last quarter of 2023 we had regular discussions on the Interregnum and had an extraordinary PCC with Martin Breadmore, the Archdeacon of Dorking, and Chris Bessant, the Area Dean and Rector of Haslemere. The PCC continues to support MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) as our Mission partner, especially supporting Fiona Stevenson in South Sudan. The PCC approved the reinstatement of having 2 Chalice Assistants and for David and Maddie to go on the rota. We have also reviewed our Church Development Plan.

The following policies were reviewed: -

- Data Protection
- Fire Safety
- Health and Safety

Miranda O'Brien
PCC Secretary

Financial Review - Year ended 31st December 2023

Summary

Our Parish Share in 2023 went up by £8,025 to £73,164 as this was year 4 of our 5-year transition to the current Parish Share System. This is more than our total General Fund income of £69,743. So, in this year we did not increase our monthly payments resulting in a debt of £8,025 to the Diocese by the end of the year.

General Fund income was up as almost all income sources exceeded budget projects except for one-off donations and hire of the Church Centre. Expenditure was fairly stable and close to budget except for our energy bills which were down on budget thanks to extra support from the diocese resulted in a final deficit (excluding debts) of £15,312 down from a budgeted £27,380. We have covered this deficit by withdrawing £14,000 from our CBF deposit account which holds our Unrestricted Legacy Fund.

The Fabric Fund this year paid out £690 to cover the cost of investigating a problem with the automatic opening church centre doors. The problem turned out to be some untreated wooden packing in the door sill which would swell in the rain and cause the doors to stick. This packing has been replaced free of charge. The Church boiler appeared to behave itself all year! The Fabric Fund received a legacy of £5,000 which the PCC decided could be put towards a set of new chairs for the Church Centre in memory of the donor.

Funds

- The General Fund decreased by £9,336 from £21,021 to £11,685
- The Unrestricted Legacy Fund dropped from £15,000 to £1,000
- The Fabric Fund increased by £8,283 from £12,211 to £20,494
- A new "Glass Door" Fund at £3,297 was separated out of the Fabric Fund
- The Discretionary Fund decreased by £139 to £2,250
- The Flower Fund went up by £150 from £701 to £850
- The Restricted Bequest Fund increased by £16,467 from £178,586 to £195,053 as share prices rose over the year.

Income

Significant changes were:

- Giving to the General Fund (both with and without Gift Aid) increased by £573 (2%). Regular giving to the Fabric Fund was the same as last year.
- Other Gift Aid giving to the General Fund, including variable weekly Gift Aid donations, increased by £53 (2%).
- Unrestricted collections were up £2,169 (74%) as cash has not completely disappeared. Collections for outward giving at £3,370 were up £2,299 (215%) giving a total increase of £4,468 (112%)
- One-off donations to the General Fund at £2,373, were £3,219 (-58%) down on last year. A "Glass Door" Fund was separated off from the main Fabric Fund and received £1,510 in donations so overall donations were £2,709 (-41%) down.
- The Discretionary Fund had no income.
- General Fund Gift Aid tax recovery was up £1,034 (10%) while the Fabric Fund was the same as last year. The Gifts for the Glass Door Fund had a tax refund of £378 added so the total refund increased by £1,404 (13%)
- The Fabric Fund received a legacy of £5,000 this year. The Glass Door Project received part of a Service of Thanksgiving collection of £280
- Fund raising events did well this year with £1,343 taken at the Jumble Sale and £901 at the Village Fete. Income from Lent Lunches and the BBQ went towards Outward Giving causes. We had a good Quiz Night at the Village Hall which raised a net £1,052 for St John's and the Samson Centre. Porch Produce and Sunday Coffee did well, raising £622, 124% more than last year. We had only one U3A concert held at St Johns this year so this income source as £302 down. We also only had just the Wreath Making Workshop for Christmas Fund Raising so a decrease of £320. £830 was raised at the Christmas Quiz in January for the Glass Door Project.
- Wedding & Funeral fees this year were up on last year by £651 (+28%) as we had only one wedding but sadly lots of funerals.
- Church Centre income decreased by £227 (-12%) as the number of classes using the centre went down: killed off by the Pandemic.
- Sundry Income included £919 which was our share of accumulated profit as 3 churches Magazine effectively shut down. We also raised £1,535 for leaving presents for Clive which has been put in Sundry. So Sundry was £877 (54%) up on last year.
- Interest payments rose strongly, up by £570 (246%) and dividends were also up by £29 (+1%)

As a result of the above changes our General Fund income at £69,743 was up by £2,403 (4%). The total for all funds increased by £11,853 to £87,697 (+14%).

Expenditure

Fund Raising costs at £543 were £329 (154%) up on last year.

Gifts for Outward Giving causes have been maintained at just under 10% of all income (excluding the incoming grants) at £6,550, up £206 (3%) on last year. Money has been given to 4 of our regular charities (The Chandler School, The Children's Society, The Samson Centre and Mission Aviation Fellowship) plus a number of medical charities benefitted from collections at funerals which helped us meet our 10% target. Sadly, there was no money available this year to support the Warehouse Christian Trust (The Cellar and Skillway)

We moved to year 4 of the phased removal of all subsidies, visible and invisible, from the Parish Share so our share increased by £8,025 (12%) to £73,164. Our full unsubsidised share under the current scheme in 2024 will be £82,839 or 119% of our current income.

The honorarium payments for our organist are counted as Salary and Wages. These increased by £360 to £1,680.

The clergy travelling expenses were down by £135 (-13%) but other items were down causing the total of clergy expenses to increase by £94 from £2,714 to £2,808 (+3%)

Our insurance costs went up by 6% (£2,956 vs £2,783)

Sacristy costs went down by £70 (-17%) to £332

The Organ needed a couple of visits this year so an increase here by £208 (86%) to £450.

IT and Web services were down by £155 (-20%) to £636

Printing costs were down £30 (-16%) to £181 (fewer ink cartridges bought).

General Maintenance was £1,163 up at £1,281. Items of note included replacing some failed LED lights in the nave and lopping off a big overhanging tree branch near the Centre. The very old black& white printer in the vestry was given a service but it is on its last legs.

We cut down on printed copies of the reports for the APCM to save Governance costs.

Utilities costs (gas, electricity, and water) were £6,419 but some subsidies have been deducted bringing them down to £3,667 which was £629 (21%) up on last year's £3037. We have dumped Total Energies and the Parish Buying Energy Basket at the end of the year because we could not afford the huge standing charge which meant we were paying over £600 per quarter even when we were using no gas.

The Church Centre running costs were stable at £797.

Total Church Running Expenses were up by £1,912 (+22%) from £8,574 to £10,486 as a result.

Sundry Expenses, as shown in the details page, covered the cost of the Coronation Kneelers (actually covered by donations) but mainly the costs of Clive's leaving party and presents (also covered by donations).

Overall, because of the Parish Share increase, our General Fund expenditure went up by 11% (£9,552) from £83,527 to £93,080.

Assets

Under the current Charities Act we must show Restricted Fund share investments at their true value, but we are normally only able to spend the income arising and not the capital value of the shares. This money has come from a couple of restricted bequests, so the Fund is now referred to as the (Restricted) Bequest Fund. This year the value went up by £16,467 to £195,053 as the stock market had a good year.

Forecast

The Parish Share for 2024 has been set at £82,839 and does not change just because we no longer have a vicar to support. We have effectively no more liquid reserves so we can only afford a Parish Share of £51,600 with a resulting budgeted deficit of £5,427 and a debt to the Diocese at the end of the year of £39,264. We have just started an interregnum but apart from saving on some clergy travelling costs our ministry costs will actually go up as we have to maintain the vicarage in this period. The only way we can pay off this deficit is to break the restrictions on the Restricted Bequest Fund and sell off some of the investments making up this fund.

In 2023 we had our Quinquennial Inspection but the report did not arrive until after the end of the year. There appears to be no major issues apart from a damp problem around the West Window area. Unfortunately, there appears to be a host of minor roof, stonework and redecoration issues which will add up to something expensive. Excluding the recent Legacy, the Fabric Fund has £26,737 available to pay for these repairs although some needs to be kept back as a Fabric reserve.

Nicholas O'Brien
Hon. Treasurer

Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 6th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Jackie Hills (Chairman and Churchwarden)

J. M. Hills

6.3.24

Associated Reports

Life as the Honorary Curate of St John's

The last year has not been the easiest. We have still been recovering from the Pandemic and we have been preparing for Clive's retirement and the Vacancy which follows. It has also been difficult for me personally with my recovery from four operations and a period in hospital.

I hope now that we are managing the Vacancy and looking forward to a new and perhaps different ministry at St Johns. I have to say that I have been most encouraged and grateful for all of the efforts being put in to help us all on our journey of Faith. Please keep it up as we do not know how long it will take for our vacancy to be filled.

May God be with us all.

Peter Hewson

Occasional Preaching

There are currently two occasional preachers:

Alison Turner
David Pepe

Generally, each preaches once per quarter at the Sunday 10:00 service and tries to bring a different viewpoint from that of the (visiting or incumbent) clergy.

Alison was 'off rota' for 2023 and the 2024 occasional preaching rota is currently in a state of flux due to the vacancy and visiting clergy.

David Pepe

Pastoral Team

There are 11 members on the Pastoral Team, who are led by Peter Hewson during the vacancy.

We were all very busy just before Christmas.

The Pastoral Team are a very needed addition to the church especially during this Vacancy.

Madeline Murray

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod met twice in 2023.

Madeline Murray represented St John's for the meeting in November. The Area Dean thanked Rev. Clive Potter for his time on the Synod.

The current Area Dean is Rev. Chris Bessant

Madeline Murray

Building and Maintenance

The automatic door to the Church Centre continued to have problems with intermittent working. It was eventually identified that wood used in the installation had swollen and this was rectified by the installers. The large oak tree on Jubilee Field was overhanging the Church Centre roof. Permission was obtained and the tree trimmed back to prevent damage. Gutters and gullies were kept clear throughout the year. The Quinquennial inspection took place in August and identified items to be dealt with but the final report was not received until January 2024.

Jonathan Hills

Monthly House Group

Monthly House Group

Our Bible reading and discussion group only managed to meet on 3 occasions this year, due to various occurrences. With only 3 members we are a dwindling group and will probably take a break.

Jackie Hills

Tuesdays at Hawthorn Cottage

Our small group did manage to re-start this year and we picked up on studying some of the Prophets starting with Elijah and Elisha. We then moved on to look at Hosea, Amos and Obadiah. We have now covered almost all the main Old Testament books and all of the New Testament so we have returned to the New Testament and revisited the Gospel of John

Nicholas O'Brien

Chandler School

The Chandler is getting back to normal after the enforced changes of 2020. Teaching is back to normal and a full curriculum is being taught. Classrooms are nearly back to normal and the staff are doing an excellent job in getting the pupils to the level they should be at. The Year 6 Sats, the public exams taken at the end of year 6 before the pupils leave for Senior School, were good and better than the National average. Thanks are due to the extra effort put in by all staff especially the teaching staff.

The Pandemic has left behind a more worried and anxious group of children and this can be seen by some of the behaviour patterns being exhibited. To help to limit the impact this can sometimes have, The School has set up a "hub" for the use of the more worried students from all year groups in the School. In the "hub" pupils follow a wider range of learning experiences in which some basic guidance is given in coping with modern living and socialising. The teaching in this special room which is set aside for these pupils, can often be one-to-one.

This provision, alongside a slightly smaller in-take for the year, has meant that the School Budget is stretched even tighter which has resulted in some restructuring. Central Government funding is never enough for all the activities that the School would like to undertake.

As Governors we started to meet face-to-face again in September. Likewise, school visits and assemblies have got back to normal. I have to say that I am pleased to be in front of the children rather than being alone in Church in front of the camera!

Let us hope that in 2024 we may be able to invite the children into Church once more.

Peter Hewson

Safeguarding

2023 has been another quiet year from a safeguarding perspective. There were no Safeguarding issues that I am aware of. We have been trying the on-line Safeguarding courses available from The Church of England and, as of now, most of the PCC Members have completed the modules that are required of them.

As last year, I have deliberately delayed seeking new DBS checks for those that might need them as we are not undertaking any activities that might require them. I hope and imagine that this will change in the coming months.

I have undertaken Risk Assessments for some of our services and functions as the need arises.

Peter Hewson

Gardens Report

We have had several working parties through the year to keep the gardens tidy. A huge thank you to all the willing volunteers for their help in trimming, weeding, planting, chopping and clearing the gardens. A special thank you to Andy Papworth for his expert and regular use of the mower to keep the grass under control.

We will be arranging a working party as soon as the weather improves, for our annual Spring clear up. So, get your gardening gloves ready!

Pam Hewson

The Children's Society

This year the Mothers' Union took over the collection of boxes held by members of the congregation for counting as it had become a very onerous task for one or two people. All box holders were asked if they wished to continue having a box or would prefer to make a donation during a set time in October each year. Many people find they do not have much cash these days. As a result, the number of box holders is much reduced so the congregation will be encouraged to support The Children's Society which is one of St. John's outward giving charities with donations over 2 Sundays.

This year the amount raised, including the Christingle collection, was £1,343.17 up on 637.01 last year. This was partly because some generous giver took advantage of the new system to send in a large cheque made out to the PCC to pass on. Doing it this way helps our church community to meet our target of 10% of income to mission and outward giving.

Penny Clark

Mothers' Union

This has been a difficult year for all of us as we have had to mourn three members Audrey Collyer, Clare Sandy and Sally Braid. All of them were very supportive members who were generous with their time for MU and brought different skills and talents to the group.

The new year opened with the AGM when we were updated with reports and the finances. Penny was thanked and given flowers. On Ash Wednesday Barbara Steele- Perkins guided us into Lent. In March a few members went to the Cathedral for the Pilgrimage of Prayer in

the Lady Chapel hosted by the Godalming Deanery. Penny was able to show the service at the next meeting to those who were unable to come. We also attended the Lady Day service when our banner was carried by Geraldine. The following month Maddie Murray kept us entertained with a talk about her many career changes – lastly with the post office.

May saw a large attendance for our local independent councillor, Maxine Gale who ended her talk with a question-and-answer session. Our 'garden' tea in June was hastily re-arranged for the Church Centre when Frances suffered a fall at home. In July Shirley Martin spoke of her work as an MU trustee and encouraged members to think about this position on her forthcoming retirement. Our August afternoon saw a light-hearted Beetle Drive with plenty of time for tea and chat. Wendy kept us enthralled in September with her extracts from the true story 'Safer than the known way' by Ian MacHorton. Shooting Star Chase were unable to provide a speaker for October or November and Penny gave the presentation herself. Janet organised a sales table to help boost our donation.

Some of us attended Members Meetings in May and November when we were kept up to date with all that is going on in MU. A generous collection of food and toiletries were taken for the refuges. A big thank you to Suzy for hosting our Christmas tea with hot punch on arrival and she told us of customs in many parts of the world but in particular Poland, Germany and Holland with dolls to illustrate her talk.

We had our usual Toy Tombola at the Village fete and did well in spite of not having quite as many toys as normal. Carol, Geraldine, Suzy and Penny went to the Summer Party to help with craft activities. It was a hugely successful event with over 50 families present. They were mainly from 3 local refuges. We made contact with a young mum and her toddler and have sent gifts for Eliza's birthday and some Christmas presents via Shirley.

Penny Clark

Flower Rota

First of all, a very big thank you to all the Flower Team for their help and support this year. They have all been very generous with their time and their flowers. Their efforts ensure that every week we have flowers for everyone to enjoy in the church.

With economy in mind, we have invested in some lovely silk flowers to use during the winter months when fresh flowers are expensive. Fresh flowers will continue to be used in the summer and autumn months and our silk flowers will continue to be used in the winter months. Also, we will continue to decorate the church at Easter with our Easter Lily donation scheme.

Pam Hewson

The Eagles Group

The Eagles Group remained suspended throughout 2023.

Monday Club (Formerly Toddler Service)

Monday Club remained suspended throughout 2023.

Bells Report

As always, we are grateful to our regular team of bell ringers, Christine Bridson, Tricia Boynton, Miranda O'Brien, Penny Clark and Marina. Sadly, three of our previous regulars resigned during the year, Doris Luxford, Frances Cousins and Evie Chapman. However, we were pleased to welcome Penny Clark and Marina to the team. It is always good to hear the bells calling us to worship as we approach the church on a Sunday and we also ring the bells at weddings when requested. Additionally, this year, as there had been a request for churches to ring their bells on the day of the coronation of King Charles in May some of us went to the Church immediately following the Coronation Service and rang the bells for a short time

Although we have 5 bell ringers on the list, they are all people who do other jobs as well which sometimes means their duties clash. Also, there can be health issues which prevent a bell ringer from carrying out their rota duty. To avoid this situation, it would be really great to have more church members join the team, men or ladies are equally welcome. It is not difficult; you just have to be able to count to eight and it is really good exercise for the backs of the arms. Please speak to me if you are interested in giving it a try.

Tricia Boynton

Church Centre

The Church Centre is available for hire and it is used primarily by U3A for educational meetings but sadly there are not as many as in previous years. The Samaritans, Mothers' Union, Milford Hospital League of Friends also held meetings in the Centre and latterly a children's party has taken place.

Many thanks to Debbie for cleaning the Centre, the Post Office for keeping the key, and the Churchwardens for general maintenance notably the big white doors.

**Liz Burrows
Booking Secretary**

Mission at St. John's

Our Parish continues to provide financial support to 4 key Mission and Outward Giving causes including the Chandler School Governor's Fund, The Children's Society, The Samson Centre for MS and Mission Aviation Fellowship where we have a Mission Link with Fiona Stevenson. Lack of a Mission Co-Ordinator reduces our direct involvement and follow-up

Nick O'Brien

The Choir

Traditionally, the choir met and sang at the 10:00 service on the first Sunday of each month. Mrs Sylvia Foster played the organ and conducted a choir practice for 30 minutes prior to the service.

The choir sang the hymns (sometimes in harmony), the St Thomas Mass, plus an anthem and hymn during Communion. The choir also sang at the annual Carol Service, and occasionally at special feast days and other events such as weddings and funerals when requested.

At the end of 2023, Mrs Sylvia Foster resigned due to poor health and in her absence when no other accompanist is available, music is provided by a special library of CDs of all the

hymns in the hymn book. The CDs are played through a portable CD player with a connecting lead to the sound system.

We are organising a collection and card for Sylvia to express our thanks for her dedicated service over many years.

Peter Hewson has invited Carol Mitchell to play at the 10:00 service when available and this has proved very successful.

With Sylvia's resignation, the choir is currently in a state of flux and the shape of its duties in the future is under review.

Madeline Murray coordinates the choir activities, and we have a St John's Choir WhatsApp group which has proved very useful. Currently, the members of the choir are:

- Madeline Murray
- Judy Downing
- Carol Thomas
- Geraldine Tigg
- Pauline Garlick
- Luisa Denton (newest member)
- David Pepe

The organ is in need of some maintenance and repair - at the time of writing, the diagnosis and prognosis and therefore cost were unclear.

David Pepe
Madeline Murray

Village Hall

The Village Hall had a bad start to the year when the heating system finally gave up the ghost. Hopefully it will be up and running smoothly after Easter after some issues with the company.

There are 13 regular hirers each week and Saturdays and Sundays are usually booked for children's parties.

Madeline Murray has stepped down after 18 years and a new lady called Sue Allen is taking over. Madeline has her details until the new website is set up.

Madeline Murray

Wedding Co-Ordinator

We only had one wedding this year, which was that of Luisa and Chris Denton on 5th August. It was a typical English summer's day with showers, but the sun just made an appearance as Luisa arrived at the Church. Perfect timing for a perfect bride! We welcome them both into our Church family.

Pam Hewson

Website and Facebook

The church website www.stjohnsmilford.org.uk continues to be hosted by Church Edit. The main activity this year was a change to the skin used on the homepage of the website, which makes it better able to adapt for viewing on phones as well as PCs. Numbers of users seem generally lower, apart from a peak of interest around Christmas, although that probably follows both a reduced number of events and me minimising website maintenance while

looking after Neil. We do still receive a number of emails from web site users making contact with the church this way. We continue to also promote our regular services, and special ones at Christmas, through the C of E's "A Church Near You" www.achurchnearyou.com and have an @StJohnsMilford Facebook Page, which is been used to promote the events such as Clive's leaving party and the Jumble Sale.

Alison Turner

Three Churches Magazine

The Three Churches Magazine was not published in 2023 and a decision was taken to return surplus fund in the bank account, split between the three churches, leaving just enough to keep the account going as opening a new account is tiresome process.

Editor post unfilled

The Friends Co-ordinator.

There are currently 29 people on the Friends of St Johns list and of those seven people give regular donations (monthly, quarterly or annually) whilst the remainder made one off donations initially.

Two newsletters have been sent to the friends this year by email or post: before Easter and in September. Clive wrote a personal message to everyone announcing his proposed retirement and then news of building works, repairs and projects were included. Photos were also put in to make it more interesting. Information about services and special events were also in the newsletter with a message of thanks and a promise of a warm welcome should any friends decide to join us in person.

Penny Clark

Data Protection

Dr David Latimer has resigned as our Data Protection Officer so there is nothing to report.

Data Protection Officer vacant

