

# St Johns Annual Report 2021

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2021 a year of blessings and challenges. The world and St John's continued to be buffeted by the effects of the COVID pandemic. We began the year with services seated at social distances wearing masks. In the summer we could all rejoice and sing together again in church. At Christmas due to the Omicron variant caught by many including myself, we had services of The Word in the church and outside at which Andrew Bignold, the churchwarden, stepped in to lead.

At every opportunity this year our other churchwarden, Beverly Morley-Brown, found ways to make any event into a celebration, so gardening now includes delicious pastries. The opportunity of celebrating the work Tony Wilkinson has done over the years in the garden was complete with champagne. Sue Richardson and the whole outreach team began organising events again, including storytelling and pop-up suppers.

Members of the church have really stepped forward to care for neighbours and to enable the rota and services to run. The organising and encouraging of those teams have been ably led by Penny Jivani. Our children's work this year has been a great success with the Summer Holiday Club and Halloween Orchard Church at dusk being over-subscribed. Vicky Clark, our children's worker, encouraging a whole team of leaders Sunday by Sunday.

Andrew Taylor stepped in as treasurer after Cheong Wong's many years in the role. Our finances in 2021 were not good however, with us once more making a loss. With the opening of the new nursery and the encouragement of members to join the Parish Giving Scheme, we are looking to turn this around in 2022. In 2021 we asked people what they hoped for in the community and from the church, and peoples' love of our church was clear. What also came across was an acknowledgement of the isolation and hardship many were facing. It is in the light of the resurrecting hope of Christ, we acknowledge these struggles and look to God's leading with new initiatives to meet these needs. So we have developed Orchard Church and Be Well Church. We are now much better placed to share what is happening at church with the wonderful new website created by Lorna Ailes and hosted with Andrew Cadman's help. We have been blessed by God and by one another in 2021 and look to God's leading into the future.

***Rev Mandy Beck***

## **CHURCH WARDENS**

Hopefully, the alleged residents of Mount Olympus will not read this or listen in to our AGM. Why? Because we don't want them spoiling our track record in the fight against Covid. Throughout this crisis of '20-'21 our over-riding concern has been the welfare of our congregation, hence our diligent observance of Government and Diocesan guidelines and advice. Irksome at times, a nuisance often but ultimately very necessary. To our knowledge none of our church have succumbed to Covid. Yes, some have contracted it, some suffered very badly with it but none have passed as a result. We know this has been a difficult time, but we are grateful for your assistance with all of this and our team effort has paid off. But, we ask you to please be careful as we emerge into the warm and relaxing 'post-Covid sunshine'.

Life returned to near normal in '21 and so services and our meetings resumed, much to all our relief and pleasure. By nature, we are not hermits and so the return to 'team events' has been much appreciated. Prominent in this return has been Beverly, my fellow warden, who has taken to her

new role like 'a duck to water' and really led the charge with the gardens and walks etc. We are hugely thankful for her energy, enthusiasm and sense of fun.

Well, how is St John's? We are lucky that the fabric is generally good. Nothing seriously untoward has happened to consume our financial resources - we have been really lucky.

And that brings me onto our finances. Yes, I know, 'Here we go again Andy!' This is a subject that must be raised and addressed. We have an idyllic estate of church, hall and Jubilee Garden. Any major repair or restoration project would use all our financial reserves. We were very lucky with the condition of the spire just two years ago. With the rocketing price of raw materials and the scarcity of the same the pressure increases on our reserves so that if anything happened we would finish really near the breadline.

In the light of this precarious position, we are reviewing our fundraising and accounting processes to maximise income (inevitably) and to minimise the time and effort taken to manage this. We hope that the latter will free up more time for other projects especially our house-keeping efforts. We will explain the results of the review in due course.

Our church is a sanctuary from the woes of the world, a constant reassurance to all our parishioners and residents. It's condition and continuance are the result of all our efforts. So, thank you everyone: dusters, choristers, preachers, readers, donors, gardeners, musicians and lastly but by no means least, Mandy. Where would we be without her?

Well, we would be up a gumtree without Mandy. But we all also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Sue who keeps us all up to speed and focused and 'on target'. Thank you, Sue.

***Andy Bignold***

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

Our Electoral Roll at the present time is 67 members.

## **Music in Church**

We began 2021 in lockdown, unable to worship in song, as had been the case for most of 2020. It felt as if we might never return to normality, but around Easter time, as I recall, restrictions began to be relaxed, though we were still not able to fully celebrate the festival.

As I said in my last report, I have in some ways welcomed this period of quieter reflection and felt privileged to be able to continue supplying music for worship, albeit in a different way and with a different emphasis. By mid-2021, as I recall, we were at last back to 'normality' with congregational singing, though it has been hard to resume a regular choir on Sundays, with folk still wary about getting fully involved. I look forward to this situation improving during the course of this year.

We were greatly relieved and gladdened that the 9 Lessons and Carols service was able to happen in December. It was a very happy and special occasion and the choir, as always, rose to the occasion with aplomb and made a lovely sound, aided on this occasion by Stephanie Bodsworth, to whom we owe our thanks for her support.

As always, I would like to express my gratitude to Joseph, for his faithful support and enthusiasm in singing week by week. I know that he is greatly valued and appreciated for what he does and I enjoy working with him immensely.

I trust that 2022 will see a return to more normal and regular choir activity.

***Alan Worth***

## Parish Safeguarding Officer's Report

Marysia and I are the current PSO's. Our role is to ensure that we, as a church, are looking after children and vulnerable adults, to the best of our ability, complying with the requirements of the Diocese. As Covid restrictions have eased over the past year the church has been able to offer a variety of face to face activities for children and adults. DBS checks are necessary for those involved with children's activities and in some other roles. These are usually straightforward and are done online. Safeguarding training can be provided via the Diocesan website or Zoom. Diocesan training is free and is a requirement for those with certain roles within the church e.g. PCC members. Mandy has been completing some safeguarding training over recent weeks.

Information on safeguarding can be found under "A Safe Church" on the Diocese of Southwark website: [www.southwark.anglican.org](http://www.southwark.anglican.org)

There is also a poster displayed in the back of the church. If you are interested in training, or have any queries or concerns please feel free to speak to me, Marysia or Mandy.

**Ruth Ruocco Brown**

## Monday Afternoon Club

2021 began with virtual contact only for Monday Afternoon Club. We had a regular online meeting for those who were able to "Zoom" and kept in touch through emails and phone calls. Fortunately in early summer, as restrictions eased, we were able to start face to face club sessions for up to six in the Andrews Wing. Initially I invited members who had not accessed the Zoom meetings. However, as the weather improved, we started to meet as a larger group in the church garden. It was good to finally see each other in person again! In September we returned to the church hall for our meetings. Sadly, since Covid some of our members have passed away or are not able to attend regularly for health reasons, but we are delighted to have welcomed some new faces to the club. If you would like to join us or make enquiries on behalf of someone else please do get in touch with me. I would also be very interested in hearing from anyone who would like to give a talk or lead an activity for the club.

We meet at 1.30 for tea/coffee and cake, followed by an activity from 2-3pm. Over the past weeks we have completed a number of quizzes, learned how to fold napkins into waterlilies and had a Christmas party. Once again we can invite entertainers and speakers to our sessions, so we were delighted that Becky Burraway came to sing for us before she goes on maternity leave.

We are greatly appreciative of the grant from The Kingston Vale Trust to the PCC, which will pay for some of our activities through the year and would like to thank the trust for their support.

**Ruth Ruocco Brown**



## PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Covid and finances have really put maintenance work on hold. The

Premises Committee have a list of projects to be addressed in due course and only urgent work has been carried out.

The list includes: -

Church

South Wall windows bowing, Intermittent rainwater ingress in the SW corner, Woodwork by the Lady Chapel

Church Hall

Floor rippling – hallway and main hall, Redecoration, Rear Fire doors

Fences/Hedges

Holly dying, Beech hedge – annual maintenance, 'Dead' Yew Tree has revived!

Various other minor 'ailments' as and when we can address them.

The urgent work has been the clearing of and maintenance to the roof gutter of the hall (when flood water entered the building during the storms), and checking of associated electrical fixings.

Rest assured all our Statutory Policy Documents are valid and current. These include: - Insurance Policies for Church and Hall, Electric Report, PAT Report, Gas Safety, Fire Extinguishers and Lightning Conductor checks. Our next Quinquennial Review is due in April 2023.

Tony has finally retired from grounds maintenance which he performed for many years to a very high standard. We are truly grateful for all his work from the inception, layout and maintenance of the Jubilee Garden to maintenance of the grounds till last year.

Mandi continues to assist with lawn mowing and hedge trimming so we look presentable. Again, our thanks for all she does for us. In the absence of Tony, Beverly jumped in to organise team work on the grounds and this progresses well. To all who assist Beverly, well done and thank you.

***Andy Bignold***

## **Church Gardens**

My lovely team of volunteers:- Lorna, Ruth and Raymo, Myra, Mandy, Bill, Joseph, Jane and Cheong and a team of our Korean friends have managed to keep the Orchard and gardens of the Church in acceptable order. I have to admit not perfect but all have worked hard twice a month from March to November on a mid month Thursday at 4pm and the last Saturday of the month at 11am. We work without disruption for an hour and then stop and enjoy one another's company over tea, coffee, croissants, cake etc.

Most notably for the opening of services at Easter the Korean team helped clip, prune, weed, mow and it all looked cared for and loved as a result. Another notable session was the cleaning and sanding and oiling of the garden seats, also the pruning of the Andrew's wing garden with, very grateful, help from Steve.

Matteo asked to mow the Orchard for us as part of his D. Of E. 12 hours of community work. This has meant gardener Mandy can keep the holly hedges and Church lawns under control within her hours. Matteo will finish at the end of February so we will need a young person to continue, please offer or keep looking for a youngster to help, for pocket money.

Our last gardener Tony has been very helpful with the care of the seats, the line parking in the car park and with all his experience of our beautiful grounds. We also thank Sue for organising the new shed and Lorna and Mandy for demolishing the old one themselves to save paying.

The highlight of the garden year for me was to see it beautifully setup for Vicky's wedding after she had worked so hard to make Orchard Church such a success each Sunday. Also to welcome Sivi and expert team from the University and Historic Orchards to teach and help with pruning our precious old trees.

There will be a list of dates at the back of the Church near the garden plan so please come and help us keep our Grounds, for the whole community, to use and enjoy.

***Beverly Moore-Brown***

## **Outreach Committee Annual Report**

### **Events from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021**

It has been another busy year with the Outreach team, working within the Government COVID guidelines and restrictions, putting on events when possible for all in the Community to enjoy.

Here are some of the things which took place:

A prayer labyrinth was set up in the Jubilee Garden during Lent for people to walk and pray.

Bev led garden visits to the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park and the gardens of Kingston Hill Place.

Orchard Church started - it is an outdoor forest church for children aged 3-11 years old held all year round. It is held each Sunday, 10.30am to 11.30am in the Jubilee Garden behind the church.

We enjoyed a BBQ on a beautifully sunny day in the Jubilee Garden to thank Tony for all his hard work in providing us with such a wonderful outdoor space. His hard work over the years is very much appreciated.

In early September, we gathered together in the Jubilee Garden to hear the local storyteller Charlotte Mooney tell the tale of Jerry Abershaw - once the most infamous highwayman in England and the man responsible for giving Robin Hood its name. Her story was accompanied by atmospheric music from the marvellous Ed Hicks on banjo.

A small group from this committee reached out to local people on the electoral roll with telephone calls or a note in the post to wish them well and invite them to visit the harvest display and join in the bring and share lunch.

The firework display was an excellent event, with a fantastic display again this year. This is a much appreciated, well attended and family friendly event for all the community to enjoy.

We enjoyed a 3 course meal together at the Pop Up Supper Club in November.

The Festive Pop Up Tearoom had a lovely atmosphere with a good community feel but coincided with the arrival of the Omicron variant so wasn't as well attended as we had hoped. There were a few stalls where you could pick up a gift or two or you could just sit and relax and enjoy a pot of tea.

Coffee morning, Monday Club and Toddle Along all started up again during the year.

More frequent newsletters were produced in 2021 in order to keep in touch with people during the pandemic.

Thank you to all who have supported us during this year by organising, helping at or attending our events.

The Outreach Committee is a small group of people who plan these events and we are always looking for new events that can be enjoyed by the community and raise funds for the Church, so if you have any ideas or would like to get involved, you would be very welcome. email: [stjohns@inthevale.org.uk](mailto:stjohns@inthevale.org.uk)

A new church website has been launched. [www.inthevale.org.uk](http://www.inthevale.org.uk) Do visit it for information on services, events and happenings and there is a calendar so you can always look up a meeting date or any event there. To receive emails about events, sign up via the link at the bottom of the front page of our website.

### **Lorna Ailes**



## **Church Coffee Mornings.**

### **Wednesdays. 11am - 1200**

During "lock down " the Coffee Mornings were on ZOOM from January to July.

One advantage of that was that we could see on screen , and chat to some friends who no longer live in the Vale. In August we resumed meeting in person in the Andrews Room.

There are usually eight "regulars" , and occasionally someone else joins us.

Penny provides the Coffee ( or tea !), and also yummy cake, and after a general chat and update of any news, we then do a big crossword together, which Penny also brings along.

Many thanks to Penny for running the Coffee Morning every week. ☺

### **Hazel Webb.**

## Book Club

Last year Beverly started the Book Club group which began on Zoom during the afternoon. We now meet in person during the evening once a month. So far some of the chosen books have been both novels and biographical, being set in England, Scotland, Algeria, America, Spain, Jordan and Germany. We are a small group, so if anybody who is keen on reading and would like to share and discuss in pleasant company some of their favourite books and those chosen by others, then why not come and join us? You would be most welcome.

*Jo & Martin Hirst*

## Flowers in Church

This is not an easy report for me to write as after so many years of a lovely team of ladies who willingly gave of their time – and money – to supply beautiful flowers for the Church, we are now down to two, Hazel Webb and myself. However, on the good side Sue Richardson has a great team who now do the flowers for the main festivals, Christmas, Easter and Harvest – not just flowers but beautiful decorations as well. We have all seen and admired the work they have put into the displays.

Also, the Korean Church has agreed to be part of the rota and they have supplied lovely arrangements for the past month. So hopefully looking to the future the Church will still look as beautiful as it deserves to.

*Marysia Hewson*

## Orchard Church Annual report

Orchard church is an our door church group for children at St john's which is now been going for 1 year it has a strong ethos of being closer to nature and in turn being closer to God.

Orchard church meets every Sunday for 1 hour from 10.30 till 11.30 am in the St john's jubilee gardens/orchard amongst our beautiful veteran apple trees we also make fantastic use of the log cabin as a central meeting point and when the weather is not so friendly.

The children are between the ages of 3 and 12 years and we have some children that attend weekly and others that attend when available we have approx 15 children that attend at different times some weeks we have 4 in attendance others upwards of 8 children.

We have a wonderful group of 4 volunteers all fully DBS checked that take turns in supporting myself to run Orchard church.

Once a month we have also started running an early evening group from 5- 6 pm called Orchard church at dusk for 8 to 12 year olds where we can be a little more adventurous with the older children and have stories around the fire with activities more suited to older children. Themes we have explored so far are Halloween, Christmas, Astronomy all with a strong Christian connection. Orchard at Dusk is still in its early days, and we have had between 16 and 3 children attending

*Vicky Capanna*



## Children's Holiday workshop

During August summer 2020 we ran a 5 day jungle Holiday club which was a Bible based holiday club outdoors.

We had about 12 children and charged a small amount of £2 and places were booked by eventbrite.

The children did some fun activities every day around the Theme Jesus is our guide.

We have a wonderful group of volunteers all fully DBS checked that took turns in supporting us

Jungle Adventure takes us on a journey of discovering Jesus through the eyes of his disciples, who were called by and experienced first-hand Jesus' care, provision, and deep friendship. As children explore the disciples' adventures and explore the Bible for themselves, our prayer is that they will discover Jesus as their own guide and friend.



**Vicky Capanna**



## Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod meets 3 times a year. We usually meet at different churches, but because of the pandemic we have been meeting on zoom. Unfortunately, due to technical issues I'm unable hear what the others are saying.

On Tuesday 19 October 2021, Nicola Thomas, described her wide remit as Head of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. She gave a slide presentation and showed a video from the Diocesan Youth Forum, emphasizing the need for environmental justice as part of our Christian responsibility.

The next Deanery Synod is in July

**Penny Jivani**

## Kingston Vale Trust

Due to the COVID restrictions, the Trustees agreed that grants allocated for 2019 and 2020 could be spent on COVID related items and that any balances could be carried over when COVID restrictions were reduced and more Face to Face events were allowed to happen.

Subsequently we were able to buy in COVID supplies which included hand gel, face masks, anti bac sprays and gloves, having these supplies enabled members of the community to access the building and grounds when able to do so safely. Several events before lockdown in 2019 were able to happen due to grant money being available. These included several in the Jubilee Garden, Music concerts, Story Telling and the Christmas Celebration with the donkeys.

The Trustee's grant also enabled cards, gifts, telephone contact, extra newsletters for keeping in contact with the community and were able to be distributed to the community, St Johns were also allowed to purchase upto date technical equipment for zooming to the community.

The Trustees were also able to offer Putney Vale Residents Association £10,000 towards a newly furnished playground.

The Trustees welcome the opportunity to offer grants to the Communities' non-profit organisations within the Parish Boundaries, which would benefit all who live in the St Johns Parish.

### *Trustees*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

2021 has been a most difficult year, for all involved, in managing the finances of our lovely old church and halls and grounds.

I must start by saying how much we have to thank Mandy, our very patient, kind Vicar and Andrew Taylor who have been tireless in presenting the accounts to the satisfaction of the Independent Examiner which she has finally accepted. In this Covid time it has been very difficult. Andrew continued to do this after standing down as our treasurer and we are so grateful, thank you.

Our receipts for 2021 were £60,801

Our payments were £73,187

Our deficit for 2021 £12,386

This deficit will be reduced once the tax relief has been agreed by the revenue and paid to our account. We must thank Gary Conn for the hours and hours he has spent sorting the envelopes and submitting this.

Andrew has pointed out that we do have much optimism for the future as the Hall is now let to a new nursery and a regular let of the Andrews Wing with a new whiteboard in place. Also, most importantly, we have joined the Contactless Giving Scheme and the Parish Giving Scheme. Contactless for all one off giving and the PGS for almost all regular giving. This will mean very little cash to be dealt with by volunteers. The PGS scheme sends a total of giving to our bank account each month, including reclaimed tax, for our treasurer to enter in the system.

In the past a volunteer has had to count, record, and take large amounts of cash to the Post Office on a Saturday morning. We must thank Andrew Bignold for doing this in the little time left after a working week. Thank you so much all volunteers who have had to look after our cash this year.

Lastly, thank you to all volunteers who have given so much time and thought to our future and if we all contribute what we can we should have a much better 2022 with Claudio Scotto our treasurer and a new system of accounting and a new Independent Examiner.

A full copy of the Financial Statement is available from the church office.

Beverly Morley-Brown