



# Annual Report for St John the Baptist Kingston Vale 2022

## Vicar

In continuity with the past and our faith we have once more sought to serve Jesus in this place, through prayer and acts of loving service.

Thanks to so many wonderful volunteers, 2022 was full of great community events in which we invited our neighbours to join in all kinds of celebrations. We began the year still wearing masks and ended it with a wonderful church full of laughter and fun with everyone including the donkey crowding into church. Thank you to Sue Richardson and amazing team who put on a Jubilee Party, and a Summer Fair. For the first time Christingles moved outside for a whole light in the dark event and of course the tribute bands were back!

This year has been marked by the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and our dear friend Vera Francis. In the words of the Queen "Grief is the price we pay for love." We as a Christian community give thanks for those who have gone before us into heaven and of whom we are reminded Sunday by Sunday.

In 2022 we had a new Team Rector, Joe Moffatt, and we look to a much more integrated team in the years to come. Our worship during 2022 was blessed by many bilingual services and lunches. We have become a 'be well' church and are seeking to find still more ways to create a loving community. We give thanks for our many blessings as we move into a new year.

***Rev'd Amanda Beck***

## Team Ministry

It has been a great joy to take up the role of Team Rector for the Kingston Team Ministry since September last year. I've been largely based at All Saints where I've been appreciating the centrality of its location, the strength of its musical tradition, the long pedigree of its history and the friendliness of its café. But I've also enjoyed getting to know the parishes of St John the Evangelist in Spring Grove and St the Baptist in Kingston Vale, both of which have distinctive and valuable ministries within their local neighbourhoods. And I've been meeting inspiring people left, right and centre from all the various organisations and community groups in Kingston. I can honestly say, there has yet to be a dull day. Indeed, the Queen died on my first day in the job, and it's been something of a whirlwind ever since. But I'm slowly finding my feet and starting to feel very much at home.

This is mainly due to the wonderful welcome that I've been given. Thank you for the warmth and friendliness that my family and I have received from so many people. It's been greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank my colleagues who have been a great support since I started and who also did a sterling job in carrying the benefice through the interregnum. In particular, I'd like to thank William Allberry, who did a pretty much full-time interim-vicar job at All Saints, and the two churchwardens, John Dewhurst and Roshan Jathanna, who shouldered a huge amount of work and responsibility. I'm very aware that

all three churches depend heavily on small teams of highly dedicated staff and volunteers and I'm hugely grateful for their commitment and talent.

Highlights of my time so far include the big services at All Saints, such as the Thanksgiving for the Queen and the Advent/Christmas/Epiphany Carol Services; the Licensing Service for Lindiwe Maseko as Team Vicar at St John the Evangelist; and the worship at St John the Baptist led by the new Korean families. I also really enjoyed leading confirmation courses, in partnership with Lesley Charlton, my URC colleague, and seeing both young people and adults grow in their faith, their confidence and their sense of belonging.

I've found that keeping our arrangements between the three churches loose and flexible works well as we respond to different contexts, opportunities and challenges. I sense that each church is going through a transition period and needing time and space to work out their own vision and strategy for mission. But as these emerge, I look forward to identifying common themes and opportunities for closer collaboration. So when the time is right, we'll reintroduce our Team Ministry conference, bringing together our three PCC's, to consider an overall Kingston Team Vision. I hope that, in taking our time, we ensure that this is a 'bottom-up' process, rather than 'top-down'.

That is not to say that we shouldn't do as much as possible together in the meantime. I've hugely valued the weekly meetings that I have with my Team Vicar colleagues, Mandy Beck and Lindiwe Maseko, along with Andrea Campanale, our local Lay Pioneer and leader of Sacred Space Kingston. This ensures that we are regularly praying together, keeping up-to-date with news and remaining alive to new opportunities for collaboration and mission. I'm delighted that all three churches have big plans for the Coronation weekend, involving some exciting community events and celebrations. We have also booked a Kingston Team Outing to Salisbury Cathedral on Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup>. Look out for details of how to sign-up. And in the pipeline is a monthly Kingston Team Ministry e-bulletin which will help us to share news, stories and reflections between our three churches.

So I'm full of hope for the future. It feels like an exciting journey that has only just begun. Let us pray for one another, that God may guide us on that journey and deepen our faith and friendship along the way.

***Joe Moffatt***

## [Electoral register 2022](#)

There are currently 74 on the electoral role. In the last year 1 has died, 3 have moved away and 5 have joined.

## [Church Wardens Report](#)

It's been a hoot!

For two reasons this is a difficult report to write. Firstly, I haven't much to say and secondly, this is my last report as one of your Church Wardens. Conversely, the reason for this

dilemma is easy to report and, I hope, it will make my decision to resign more understandable.

I haven't much to say because I haven't done much. Last May I was successful in landing my dream job of a clerk to a Livery Company in the City. 1<sup>st</sup> July saw me admitted to the post and I plunged into the frothing, foamy waters with alacrity. Having served as an Assistant Clerk some years ago I knew, or I thought I knew, what was expected of me. However, the demands of the now newish role have proved enormous and all-encompassing. This has left no time for other meetings or engagements. To master my job will take another year. In the interim I have given the minimum support to the Vicar, the PCC and our church, and so I must not 'bed-block' but step down to allow another to carry the torch higher and further. I am sorry for this. Doubly difficult as I have been involved with St John's all my life, having been christened by Canon Bartlam on Easter Sunday in 1957.

I have enjoyed the many diverse challenges in my five years as one of your wardens: climbing the spire; guiding us all through COVID; attempting to secure a more positive management course, and dealing with the finances, to name a few. It has been challenging. Luckily Beverly has been superb and a real dynamo driving projects and diligently attending to the grind of Parish administration.

Overall, we are in good shape – just. The recent visit of Robert, our Area Dean, went well and he was again impressed with our situation. By the time you read this we will have had the regular Quinquennial Inspection which will give us another opportunity to draft a strategy for our fabric maintenance and future.

But the old chestnut remains – finances. These are shaky and although we are treading water now, if a major project unexpectedly occurred – boiler failure or major roof repairs – our reserves would be wiped out.

I will close by thanking everyone for all their hard work in whatever form in maintaining our beautiful church, hall and grounds and thus spreading the word. By everyone I include all those who perform 'front of house' and all those in the 'backroom crew' who toil away unseen and unknown but whose efforts are essential to our continuing success. You are doing brilliantly – thank you.

***Andrew Bignold***

2022 was a very good year for our lovely, old traditional Church of St John in the Vale. It is such a vital part of our lives and our community and only kept going by the effort and hard work and cooperation of us all.

We have a wonderful leader who continually inspires us. Whose patient understanding combined with endless wisdom and humour keep us going in the right direction. We are so fortunate to have you Mandy and thank you for it all. You inspire us!

After the terrible shock of Covid our worship has returned to the Church building in a more and more vibrant and inclusive manner. Our attendances have increased by 50 %. Mandy and Joseph and Moon and Lindiwee have worked together to innovate and make our prayers and singing and worship even more interesting and vital. Thank you all for the



careful thought and hours of preparation and prayers that you give on our behalf. It is such a joy to feel and see the results.

Our community activities too have been most rewarding and almost all completely sold out. Our very mixed community of All Faiths and None has welcomed and joined in events that our very hard-working teams have put on. Thank you Sue for not only running the office but leading and organising most of the events. I am so grateful for all your help. Also Lorna for all IT help.

We are so fortunate to have the Jubilee Garden and my thanks to all who come for an hour of hard work and then a coffee and relax on the last Saturday of the month at 11am. We just about keep it fit for purpose and would welcome as many as possible to join us.

There are so many people involved in keeping our services, music, buildings, finances, brasses, flowers etc in order, so thank you all very much. We are all volunteers and all vital for St John's to continue. It is such fun working and praying and partying together. On that note I look forward to one more year as Church Warden and to encouraging others to follow me. Please think about it.

Finally thank you Andy for your 6 years of service as Church Warden, especially in organising the hiring of a new Nursery and taking all those thousands of pounds of cash to the Post Office to bank on our behalf. I certainly couldn't have done either!

***Beverly Morley-Brown***

## Property Committee

The Property committee continue to meet on a regular basis, trying to move forward many of the tasks that need to be undertaken in our Church, Hall and Grounds which are numerous.

From Car Park lines to repairing the Loop system in church, re hanging of doors in the church hall to Car Park holes being filled. Manholes being cleared of tree roots to replanting of hedges and new signage. All have been completed during 2022.

One of our major expenses last year was the felling of two trees, a sycamore in the garden and the Yew in the front of the church, we are waiting to hear what specimens we should replace them with.

We are grateful to the Holy Dusters who have taken on the responsibility of the brass cleaning and extra dusting and cleaning in the church.

The garden team have worked extremely hard during 2022 to bring some order to the garden, a drinks shed was donated and has already been put into use. Some work is required on several benches and the stage area has been made safe.

We appreciate the help of Mandi from Sanctuary Gardens who goes beyond her regular maintenance, by offering extra help and advice. Mandi has also been very vigilant in

keeping our grounds and car parks safe by making the local police aware of unwanted intruders.

## Parish Safeguarding Officer's Report

I am delighted to report that Vicki has agreed to be a PSO. 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. Over the past year Vicki and I have been completing safeguarding courses including leadership training. All our current PCC members have also achieved certificates for completing safeguarding training. Diocesan training is free and is a requirement for those conducting certain roles within the church. With the easing of Covid restrictions some training is now available face to face as well as via Zoom. The shorter courses are accessed online through the diocesan website.

Another important part of the PSO's role is to ensure that DBS checks are done when needed. The church offers a wide range of activities for all ages and DBS checks are necessary for those involved with children's activities and in some other positions. These are usually straightforward, and the form is completed online.

Information on safeguarding can be found under on the Diocese of Southwark website: <https://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, Vicki or Mandy.

***Ruth Ruocco Brown***

## Be Well Hubs

Be Well Hubs is an initiative born out of the pandemic to support mental health and wellbeing. The project is coordinated by South London Listens, a collaboration between Citizens UK, local authorities, and the NHS Integrated Care Systems across southeast and southwest London. Faith groups, schools and community organisations can become Be Well Hubs.

A core group: Mandy, Bev, Vicki and myself decided that we would like to form a Be Well Hub here at St John's. Last year we all completed mental health champions training and attended a launch event at Kingston library, where we met other organisations who are also creating hubs.

We also had a series of talk easy meetings with members of the local community to seek their views and decide what to focus on as we plan events. Key issues discussed were isolation and the cost-of-living crisis. The past few years have affected us all and have been especially difficult for some, so forming a hub is a great opportunity to offer support and bring people together.

We have promoted our existing activities e.g., Monday Afternoon Club and Wednesday Coffee Morning and introduced new ideas. These have ranged from walks in Richmond Park to an eight-week Wellbeing Journey course, from sing together sessions to retreat days.

Outreach has been a vital part of the work of our church over the years. The Be Well Hub is a natural extension of this which we hope will benefit many.

***Ruth Ruocco Brown***

## Outreach

We've had busy year of Outreach events and here are some of the things which took place:

The first event of the year was a Quiz Night, which is always a fun event.

Lent lunches were enjoyed by many each Monday during Lent and included homemade soup made by our kind volunteers, bread and cheese.

In June we had a party in the garden to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. There was picnic food, a BBQ and we were entertained by a magician. A wonderful day of celebration before the sadness of the Queen's passing not long afterwards in September.

The Summer Fair was held in July and was well attended by our regulars and by many people from the local community. The professional musician was excellent as were the donkeys. The history exhibition was very interesting. The summer fair is a lovely event which brings our local community together. A huge thank you goes to all helpers and stall holders who helped to make this fair such an enjoyable day.

We were entertained in October by a fantastic Abba tribute band. There were many *Dancing Queen's* on the dance floor!

The firework display in November was another excellent event, so appreciated and valued by many in the community and it was another fantastic display.

In December we held a Light in the Dark event which included a show by a fire eater, and you could also visit Santa. The Jubilee Garden looked spectacular and it was a great event despite the cold weather.

The Christmas Afternoon Tea with the Frank Sinatra tribute entertainer was well attended and there was a great atmosphere at this community event which brought in a few different people.

The Crib service this year included a Christmas play, specially written for St John's. It was excellent and the same playwright is writing another play for us for Easter 2023.

Orchard Church, the outdoor forest church for children from age 3 years, held all year round, is held each Sunday, 10.30am to 11.30am in the Jubilee Garden behind the church and is enjoyed by all attending.

Coffee morning, Monday Club and Toddle Along are all being enjoyed by those attending.

Thank you to all who have supported us during 2022 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 most welcome.

Look out for our future events and sign up via the link at the bottom of the front page of our website ([www.inthevale.org.uk](http://www.inthevale.org.uk)) to receive emails about these events.

***Lorna Ailes***

## Music

At the start of the year, we were blessed by Joseph's singing on a regular basis. However, when Joseph left for a time, we decided to form a choir again led by Alan our Director of Music. It was agreed that we would sing once a month provided a minimum of three choristers were available. There are now about half a dozen of us in the choir, but we would happily welcome new members. We usually sing on the third Sunday in the month and practice from 9.30am before the service.

After over 16 years as Director of music at St John's Alan decided to move on. His final service was the traditional Christmas Nine lessons and carols, always a highlight of the church year. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Alan for sharing his musical gifts. For playing the organ and piano so beautifully on Sundays and at other events, and for guiding the choir.

Andy Stephens has continued to be our regular organist. We appreciate his playing once a month and would also like to thank him for his dedication and talent.

An exciting new venture was to hold a joint service with the Korean Yollin Church on the last Sunday on every month with music provided by the Korean congregation. Instead of the traditional hymns and organ we sing more modern songs accompanied by guitar, keyboard, and drums. This style has encouraged some newcomers to our church and is much enjoyed by the children. The Yollin Church has now relocated to Worcester Park, but we are delighted that Joseph, Moon and their families have remained with us and continue to lead our worship in music every month. We thank them for their contribution and for breathing new life into our church.

***Ruth Ruocco Brown***



## Monday Afternoon Club

There are currently about fifteen regular members, however we always look forward to welcoming new faces. 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 1.30pm for tea/coffee and cake, followed by an activity from 2-3pm. Over the past weeks we have completed several quizzes and played games. We have also ventured out to try the tea and cake at other venues including Putney Pantry, the Richmond Park Golf Course Clubhouse and the Windmill Café on Wimbledon Common. In December, the Outreach Committee organised a Christmas afternoon tea with entertainment from Frank Sinatra tribute So Sinatra. This was well attended by the local community and much enjoyed by members.

Forthcoming events include a visit from Our Amazing Animal World. We look forward to meeting them again now that covid restrictions have eased.

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***

## Coffee Morning

Coffee morning is held every Wednesday, from 11.00am until 12 midday. This is preceded by prayers from 10.30am until 11.00am.

The coffee morning is held in the Andrews Wing. We offer coffee, tea or water and there is a choice of cakes. After a general chat, we look at a crossword puzzle.

There is a donation of £1

All are welcome

***Penny Jivani***

## Deanery Synod

Deaneries are groups in a geographical area, churches within a Deanery working together, supporting each other.

Deanery Synods are formal meetings of a Deanery which focus on mission and ministry, providing a channel to share information. The Deanery Synod comprises of both clergy and lay members who are elected from their parishes.

Andrew Cadman a PCC member who recently volunteered to be a Deanery Synod member submitted a very interesting report from his first meeting: extract below:

Open Doors:

A very interesting presentation by Ron Cross on the persecution of Christians around the world. Some astonishing statistics.

- 1 in 7 Christians globally risk persecution
- 15 Christians are killed per day for their faith
- 2,110 Churches attacked last year

Ron Cross then went through the ten worst countries for persecuting Christians. (North Korea was the worst, the death penalty for even meeting in public). However, in most countries it was Islamism that was the cause of persecution. Evangelicals were often specifically targeted because they are seen as proselytising.

Ron's website is [opendoorsuk.org](http://opendoorsuk.org) and he is happy to give talks at churches within the Kingston area if any church would like to invite him.

Living in Love and Faith: the chair felt that an in-depth discussion on this item, which at the time of the meeting was due to be heard at general Synod next day, unnecessary given the subject had been debated previously and given the controversy around it. However, the Rev. Stanier did us in prayers for unity and concord within the Church.

A quick explanation was given that many options including the status quo, Same Sex Marriage, blessings or allowing conservative churches to opt out of SSM were considered but it was plain a serious schism in the church may occur so blessings were put forward as the most palatable option for all wings of the Church.

Hope in Depression: Another interesting presentation by Denise Morris of Christchurch, Kingston who lost a brother to suicide. Great response to their initiative, over 1,000 participants and many lives have started to be turned around. They liaise with health professionals including GPs, psychiatrists and nutritionists. You can find more information on a section of the Christchurch website.

## Orchard Church

Orchard church is an outdoor church group for children at St John the Baptist which has now been going for just over 2 years. 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 until 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 and at times, and on occasions, when weather is severe, in the Andrews wing .

We do crafts and activities every week that we try to keep everything as environmentally friendly and natural as possible,

The children are 3years upwards and we have a small group that attend regularly and a few others that attend when they can.

We have a wonderful group of 3 regular volunteers all fully DBS checked that take turns in supporting myself to run Orchard church and we hope that there are a few others who will join us shortly.

We recently created our new Orchard church Logo with the help of Lorna, and the children created a new Banner for Orchard church. We hope this will give Orchard church more of a presence and support, promoting Orchard Church.

***Vicky Capannna***

## **Treasurer's report for 2022 financial year**

I wish to thank Andrew Taylor and Claudio Scott who were our volunteer treasurers in 2022, Andrew has continued to step in throughout the year. At the end of the year the PCC decided to pay a book keeper Mel Brandy who together with Nigel Waine have put these accounts together. Vicky Clark has taken on the role of treasurer going forward, with Mel Brandy as a paid book keeper. Thank you to many others this year who have helped, in supporting us to go over to digital payment systems and continued to bank cash we receive. Thank you to Sue Richardson, and many others who have stepped in and drawn attention to discrepancies. A note should also be made here to acknowledge our many creditor, some of whom waited a considerable time for payments to be made. The final account for 2022 is positive, but it should be noted that as the full accounts show at least £4,969 of 2022 payments were not paid until 2023. A number of copies of the full accounts are available to pick up.