



# Fleet Parish Annual Report 2023

## VICAR'S REPORT 2023/24

- This has been a year of great blessings – thanks be to God and to all of you!
- AS reopened (In February) and was reconsecrated (in April)
- We are now reaping the fruits of all the work that went into that rebuilding (Thank you to all who over the years played their part in that)
- Our congregations are growing - and getting younger!
- We have completely revised our worship program with the aim of being one parish with two churches and a variety of services.
- We have completely renewed our musical provision so that it serves the whole parish.
- We have drawn lots of people into new roles and ministries.
- We have rejuvenated our Parish Office, with the arrival of Rebecca and Sandy and the use of Church suite, Life events and our remodelled Website and Social Networking.
- Cally has moved to a new ministry, Jane is training to be ordained, Claire is training to be LAM. We hope others may follow them into new forms of accredited ministry for our parish and for the wider church.
- Mary has stepped back a little – thank you to her for many years of faithful ministry.
- Our ministry with children has been relaunched with the return of Godly play and Baby Saints now happening weekly.
- Our coffee bar and Tea and chat have reached many people on the edges of our church community and brought a good few of them in!
- We have enjoyed an even more fruitful relationship with our Church school.
- We ran an Alpha Course in the autumn for 30+ people.
- Thank you to everyone for their flexibility and patience whilst all this has been happening.
- God is doing wonderful things, new things, our task is to be thankful, ride the wave, and embrace the changes.
- I believe God is calling new people to be involved in every area of our life together.
- I believe God is calling new people to share in leadership and 'succession planning' for the future.
- I believe God is calling us to become even more 'outward facing' - taking our mission to the community of Fleet and beyond.
- I believe God is calling us be more deliberately prayerful.
- I believe God is calling us to be even more ambitious for Him and prepared to take risks for him.
- I believe God is calling us to take stock of our organisation, committees, and structures and to streamline them so that we might more faithfully and effectively serve him in these changing times.

Thank you to you all for your ministry, your friendship, your encouragement, and your prayers.

Mark Hayton

## **PCC HIGHLIGHTS**

The PCC has met eight times during the year, with six of these being the regular scheduled meetings in January, March, May, July, September and November. A further meeting was held immediately following last year's APCM (to elect the Treasurer, Secretary and Standing Committee). There was an additional meeting in December to review and approve the 2024 budget.

During the year the PCC has discussed and agreed a number of important matters including the following:

- The PCC approved a Safeguarding Action Plan and its 2023 Safeguarding Statement of Policy, and received regular updates during the year.
- On the financial side the PCC approved a budget for 2024-2026, but has yet to approve the 2023 Accounts.
- With All Saints Church being returned to the parish's responsibility early in the year, the PCC had regular updates on the various teething problems, and progress in resolving these with the building contractor. The final settlement with the insurance company (EIG) is still awaited. Faculty applications were approved for the new Sanctuary furniture and new Organ.
- The condition of the FPCC roof became a pressing issue during the year and the PCC approved interim expenditure to cover urgent remedial work.
- The ECO sub-committee had been particularly active and the PCC received regular updates on their activities.
- Mark engaged the PCC in regular discussion on the diocesan-led Parish Needs programme and the parish Church Development Plan that resulted from that. The PCC also discussed and agreed various changes to the parish Worship programme.

Minutes of all PCC meetings are publicly available for reading, and are kept in folders both in the FPCC Office and the P&J Narthex.

Nick Doran

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

The 2024 revision of the Electoral Roll as follows:

Names on roll 160

Representing 125 Households

## **MINISTRY TEAM REPORT 2023**

- The ministry team consists of clergy and readers from the parish
- Throughout 2024 the team consisted of The Vicar (Mark Hayton), the Curate (Cally Burch) and 2 LLM readers (Mary Goodson and Jane Jones.) During the year we were delighted to welcome Claire Holt (LAM in training) and Dick Fawn (Pastoral Assistant, Occasional Preacher, Funeral Minister) to the team.
- The team meet to pray and to plan every Monday morning in All Saints Church at 9am. (All are welcome to join us for this.)

- The team have led a broad range of worship across the parish this year. They have shared in the preaching and leading of Sunday services and at festivals.
- The team have continued in the ongoing work of reshaping our worship programme this year, including Café Church, Celtic Morning Prayer and other forms of non-Eucharistic Worship.
- The team have all been involved in ministry to the bereaved and the taking of funerals. • The team have held several special services and events including services for baptism families, bereaved families, house group members, and with local schools.
- The team are heavily involved in pastoral care of the whole parish, alongside other members of the Pastoral Team.
- Members of the team were involved in leading an Alpha Course for 30 people.

Revd Mark Hayton

### **PARISH OFFICE AND HALLS**

Rebecca joined the Parish Office as Administrator in June 2023 and it has been a fairly busy few months clearing the backlog and getting on top of the day to day running of the parish office. Our halls have continued to be in high demand and Sandie Pearce has joined the team as Halls Manager and is of immense help to Rebecca with the booking of halls and liaising with ad hoc hirers. The halls now have regular hirers booked in for most days of the week. Thank you all for your patience and support as we juggle the many demands of administering our busy parish – we look forward to serving you in 2024.

Rebecca Ratnasamy

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2024 – CHURCHSUITE ROTAS AND BOOKINGS**

Over 38 rotas are required to run our parish and most of these have now been transferred to ChurchSuite, allowing ease of populating them, identification of clashes, reminders of duties and arrangement of swaps. This goes a long way to easing the workload for service and music leaders, as well as the Overseers of these rotas. But also, it provides a GDPR-compliant way of maintaining the interlocking duties in a two-church parish with a complex monthly service calendar! If we are to operate in the future in a GDPR-compliant way then we need to continue to move to this method of working. However, it is clear that some people will remain offline and every effort will be made to ensure they are kept informed of their rota duties and consulted about availability.

Hall and church bookings are managed by our Parish Administrator, Rebecca Ratnasamy and Hall Bookings Manager, Sandie Pearce with Robert Smith currently managing concert bookings for the churches. ChurchSuite is used to record all these bookings and the resources they use. Work is ongoing to align the ChurchSuite entries with the hire contracts and provisions for performing rights, safeguarding, alcohol consumption and health and safety.

Robert Smith  
Parish Rota Manager

## ALL SAINTS FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Although Phase 1 of the building project was completed in March 2023, Fundraising has continued and Phase 2 is very much on our minds.

Most of the furniture in the church has been sponsored including all the wooden chairs, the altar, the lectern, side tables and bookshelves.

Mens' Shed have made the beautiful cabinet for the Memorial Book and noticeboards at the back of the church. All the work was carried out without charge, we just paid for materials.

Concerts by a range of talented musicians have continued to be a much-appreciated source of fundraising. All the musicians give their time free of charge and the Church on the Heath has provided us with free use of their facilities.

We have been able to claim all the grants pledged and have received a second grant from Fleet Town Council. The new grant was to help towards the Churchyard Garden.

The Christmas Tree Festival was again a wonderful community event and the Fundraising Group used the opportunity to sell cakes, jewellery and other items which went towards the Building Fund.

Several organisations have requested guided tours of the restored church and have donated generously to the Building Fund.

We have been overwhelmed by the response by so many people and organisations who have helped us rebuild this beautiful church. A huge thank you to everyone and we look forward to completing the rebuild under Phase 2.

Jan Cole

## PARISH MAGAZINE FOR APCM

This year it has wonderful to have covered the reconsecration of All Saints in the parish Magazine. We have had many full magazines (which can be seen at [bit.ly/fleetparishmag](http://bit.ly/fleetparishmag)) and we thank all the contributors who have provided Interesting articles for our readership.

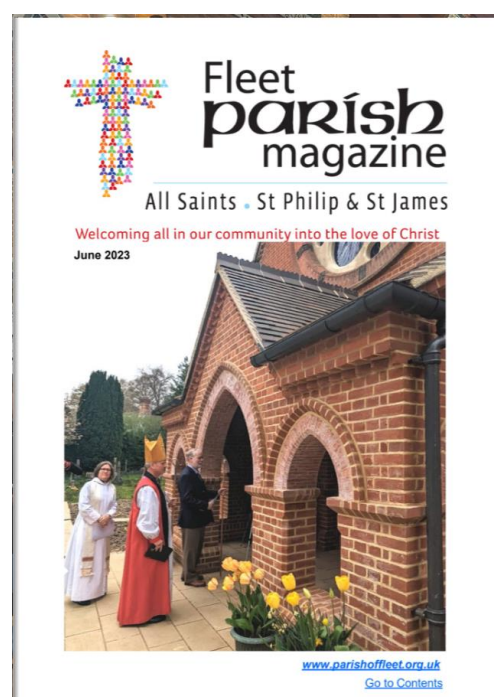
The Circulation has continued with a print run of 350 with a further 75 reads of the online magazine. Thank you to our Printers Imprint and Heather Turner and the teams of distributors who deliver the magazines around the parish.

We have lost some advertisers, as many businesses have cut costs. Thanks to Rebecca for managing the advertising as well as all the Parish registers, readings and services.

Finally thank you to all our readers. We hope that you enjoy reading the magazine. Do let us know what you think about the magazine – good or bad.

As we have both been editing the magazine for many years, we are looking for people to join the editorial team. If you're interested, or want to find out more, do speak to either of us.

**Nic Evans & Carolyn Ford**



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2024 – WEBSITE**

The website had an overhaul in the latter part of 2023, with the help of several volunteers to advise on its accuracy and relevance, ease of access and how intuitive the structure is. The plan is to make it (a) more informative, warm and friendly to people beyond the church who want to find out about the parish and (b) more useful to church members for finding useful, relevant and up-to-date information.

The structure has been changed to a more intuitive hierarchical menu-based system. An Events page has been added and the Families page has been supplemented with individual pages on the different offerings, plus a feed of family-related events from ChurchSuite. The historical pages for the churches have been rationalised, especially for a post-fire All Saints church. The parish diary (from ChurchSuite) has been supplemented with a page on the (ChurchSuite) Rotas and another with the resources allocated through the ChurchSuite hall and church booking system. A completely new section on the parish music has been created with descriptions of the choirs and instrumental groups, the music rota, the music list (editable by the service and music leaders) and pages for each choir (password-protected) so that music can be distributed for private practice. More photos of people with roles in the church have been added for the Contact Us page and the PCC page in the new Governance area. This also contains a new page showing our licences so people can work out what we are allowed to do in terms of copying and performing music, lyrics and text.

The PCC has agreed to assign PCC members to their specialist areas of the website for checking accuracy and providing feedback, suggestions for timely updates, etc.

Robert Smith  
Parish Website Manager

## **SAFE GUARDING**

1. The Diocesan & Parish Safeguarding Policies were approved by the PCC at their meeting of 15 May 2023 following the APCM.
2. At the same meeting Liz Whiting was approved as the new Parish Safeguarding Officer, taking over from Sheila Buller, and Dick Fawn took on the role of PCC Designated Safeguarding Lead from Jean Carr.
3. A meeting was held with the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead Jackie Broadfoot, attended by the ministry team, churchwarden, PSO on 4th September 2023 to take stock of various safeguarding procedures in the parish and diocese.
5. DBS initial checks and renewals have been ongoing as required throughout the year.
6. Please be aware that any safeguarding concerns should be reported to the clergy or to me without delay.

Liz Whiting

## **ALL SAINTS CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 2023**

2023 was a year of evolution at All Saints.

In February 2023 we finally took the church back under our own control. Thereafter the clergy team experimented with new ways of worship and choirs tried out different places to

sing from. The F&M committee was very busy replacing lost articles as the need became apparent, and returning the church and surroundings to a recognisable and useful state. In April the church was opened to the public twice a week with volunteer church sitters to act as guardians and guides. Unexpectedly they found themselves listening and learning. We were visited by so many people who were married here, whose Children were baptised, or whose Parents embarked on their final journeys from All Saints, and all wanted to talk about their memories of the occasion and of the old church.

In addition to expressing my thanks to our church sitters, our gardeners and coffee makers, and the small but devoted band of church cleaners I would particularly like to commend Sarah, Tina, Kate and Bill, James, Lynda and Pete and their family members who nightly watered into existence the newly planted churchyard grass throughout a hot dry June and July.

Throughout the year we experienced teething troubles with the new lighting, heating, and alarm systems in the church which necessitated the frequent return of technicians and engineers to rectify. As the only one of us technically capable of speaking their language, Graham Hix has been invaluable in pointing out their errors. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

In the autumn we embarked on repairs to the roof of the FPCC, which will be ongoing in 2024.

Jenny Thorne

### **ST PHILIP & ST JAMES CHURCHWARDEN REPORT**

I would like to begin by thanking all those who have contributed so much to the smooth running of P&J during the past year. We are lucky to have an amazing group of volunteers from our gardeners who do so much to make the outside of the church look welcoming, to our cleaners who do so much to keep it spic and span on the inside.

Of course, our gratitude doesn't stop there as we are fortunate in having AV operators and technical experts on whom we rely so much during our services and volunteers to serve tea, coffee and biscuits to us afterwards. While behind the scenes, our Sacristan quietly fulfils many duties.

We are blessed in having teachers for Godly Play who help our children to grow in their faith and a baptism team to welcome parents and their children.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the huge amount of work done by the many volunteers who organised and ran our Christmas Tree Festival, including all those who staffed various stalls and provided hospitality from the kitchen.

Thanks also must go to those involved in setting up the illuminated Nativity Stable outside the front of the church as a beacon to all for Christmas.

Our F&M committee has met several times during the past year to look after our church and hall, by:

- Providing additional lighting for the church driveway.
- Clearing out the garage.
- Replacing faulty electrical sockets in the hall and kitchen.

- Conducting PAT electrical testing in both church and hall.
- Fixing plumbing issues in welfare facilities and in 38 Oast House Drive.
- Improvements to our AV system plus new stands for our projectors.
- Passing our annual fire extinguisher inspection.
- Creating a risk assessment for our Christmas Tree Festival.
- Servicing our dishwasher in the hall and replacing its water softener.
- Raising the thurible holder in the vestry
- Providing warning notices at the entrance to the vestries and new light switches.

We are now going through one of those changes that inevitably occur in the life of a church as we have said goodbye to Cally after ministering to us so well while she was with us. We wish her and her family every happiness at St Mary's Church, Bridport.

Finally, on behalf of P&J's congregation we give our thanks to Mark and to the whole ministry team who have been so busy creating many different and innovative ways in which to strengthen the life of our church.

Paul Allen  
Deputy Warden

### **STANDING COMMITTEE**

The Standing committee of the PCC exists to make decisions on behalf of the PCC on urgent matters that occur in between PCC meetings Your standing committee consists of the Vicar, Curate, Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary, and Chair of Finance.

All decisions are reported back to a full meeting of the PCC for their information and approval. In 2023 the standing committee were called upon to meet very few times, but the matters they did deal with included..

- Hire of a portable organ for All Saints Church (which led eventually to the purchase of such an item).
- Purchase of a replacement font for P&J
- Allocation of proceeds from the Christmas Tree festival.

Mark Hayton

### **FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE Contribution to Annual Report 2023**

- Over recent years, the PCC accounts have become particularly difficult to prepare, interpret and examine given the large increase in the number of transactions, the number of different sources of income and expenditure and their allocation. The complexity and workload for the Treasurer continue to increase.  
Consequently we are now looking for ways to simplify our procedures, possibly by appointing a bookkeeper and also by breaking down the tasks into smaller manageable units which hopefully will attract more volunteers. We will still be seeking a new Treasurer to oversee the tasks but the workload should be far lighter.
- The loss of Tim Kite was a tragic event. Tim was the Independent Examiner of our Accounts and gave his time and expertise generously and freely. Although progress has been made



in finding another Independent Examiner it is possible that unexamined Accounts will be presented to the APCM which may necessitate an extraordinary APCM in due course to approve the Accounts.

- The draft Accounts show a net income deficit under Unrestricted Funds of about £91K. However about £65K is for rebuild-contents expenditure and will be deducted from the Designated Fund which together with the deduction of Depreciation (about £7K) will reduce the £91K to an Unrestricted Funds cash deficit of about £19K which is not unreasonable in the circumstances. The draft Accounts also show a net income deficit of about £101K under Restricted Funds which is mainly related to the building project. This will be deducted from the All Saints Building Fund leaving about £232K in the Building Fund at the end 2023.
- There was a modest but welcome increase in planned giving of about £3.5K. Most of our planned giving is now done through the Parish Giving direct debit scheme which offers many benefits, from almost instant tax reclaims (with no admin work for us) to the opportunity to 'index link' our giving with optional automatic annual increases following the national CPI inflation index. It is also the scheme which incurs the least costs to us. If you are still on the standing order system you might like to consider switching over. If you donate by any other method you also might like to switch over. There was also a small decrease in the Parish Share of about £2K.
- Our disposable cash for general purposes now stands at about £156K and our Investment Account at about £122K.
- The All Saints Building Fund income grew by about £221K in 2023 mainly due to excellent fund raising, grants and generous donations. Expenditure from the fund increased to over £323K as the PCC continued to pay Buxton (contractor) and others directly. The final amount in the Fund to support Phase 2 of the building project still remains difficult to predict in view of remaining payments and the ongoing negotiations for a further increase in the insurance budget.
- Mike Ford our Treasurer is standing down. Mike has done an outstanding job and he will be badly missed.
- I should like to thank Juliet Worthington for managing the PCC's payroll obligations and to Jean Carr and David Worthington for managing the planned giving arrangements and to other members of the committee Jenny Thorne, Antony Jones, Nick Doran, Dick Fawn, Cally and Mark.
- We were fortunate to have recruited an excellent Administrator -Rebecca Ratnasamy- to replace Chantelle- who is very well supported by Sam Lord.

R.F. Buller (April 2024)

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

Our first social event following last year's APCM was an evening of Call my Bluff. For the evening, we co-opted Ben Holt and Tim Kite. We had a panel of four who presented us with words and a choice of four answers. As the evening wore on our panel became more and more expansive trying to convince us of the true meaning of the word. We had a very strong winning team.

This was followed by our annual Parish Afternoon Tea, finally back at All Saints.

As mentioned last year, the Social Committee had begun to support other Parish events. All through October, with the help of the Social Committee Sub Group we provided an early supper of

soup plus tea and coffee before the evening Alpha Group began. A large selection of soup was provided over the six weeks, no recipe repeated!! The Social Committee Sub Group also provided the refreshments for our October Family Activity Afternoon.

Our final event of 2023 was the Parish Christmas Tree Festival. The Social Committee provided the soup and a roll over the Saturday lunch time. This is always a very busy 2 hours and it is all hands on deck in two shifts.

Thank you to everyone who supported the above events, they really could not happen without you.

Karen Kite

### **DISCIPLESHIP 2023**

- Planning and enabling our Alpha course to happen was a great achievement for autumn 2023 and further sessions took place in the new year. Around 30 participants met from October for 5 weeks, starting with a bowl of soup together in FPCC and moving into AS church for our Alpha session and discussion. This was a fruitful time and much was gained from sharing together in small groups and growing as a church and community.
- House groups in our parish continue to thrive and an annual house group service and tea was held in P and J in January.
- Our Cathedral outings re-started with a visit to Coventry Cathedral in March. Watch this space for 2025!
- We planned a quiet day at Ladywell Convent in Godalming for March 2024.
- We had a service of healing at All Saints church in July which was very moving and well attended.

Jane Jones

### **ALL SAINTS SCHOOL LINK 2023**

Over two days at the end of June, all the children from AS school walked down to visit AS church in their year groups. A team of church volunteers welcomed them and showed them round. In the school's words:

These were the days when we were, once again, able to visit our wonderful Parish Church. Some of our children were not even born when the fire took place in 2015 and very few have visited since the church re-opened. It was a milestone in our history as a school. All of the children were struck by the beauty of the church and also how they can now call it `their` church.

Cally formed a close bond with the worship crew children, a small team who contribute to school worship. With their involvement, Cally led a service at AS church at the end of the summer term to thank the children for taking on this role.

Cally sourced a credence table that was no longer needed from another parish and this was delivered to school for use as an altar in the Breaking Bread services that Mark leads.

Y5 children visited in the autumn with Mr Douglas to paint a wonderful Tree of Life mural on the back wall of the old Lady Chapel at AS church.

Children from school took part in our annual Harvest service and all classes and some parents came to AS church for a Christmas celebration. A choir from AS school opened this year's Christmas tree festival and were as always, much welcomed.

Jane Jones

### **MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 2023**

- Godly play runs monthly at All Saints (first Sunday) and P and J (fourth Sunday) under the leadership of Stephanie Archer and Kim Holifield. A small group of children continue to enjoy learning and growing their faith through these interactive stories. Many thanks too to gatekeepers Ruth and Rosemary.
- Baby Saints is now running every Wednesday in term time at FPCC under the leadership of Claire Holt and is proving very popular. Pre-schoolers and parents share refreshments, hear a simple bible story and have time for play and a craft activity. It is a much-appreciated activity and a lovely way to welcome young families to our church community.
- Family worship continued monthly at 11.30 at P and J with a time for informal worship, stories, craft and lego.
- Dribbles and Giggles welcomes mums, carers and pre-school children to FPCC on Friday mornings in term time with refreshments, craft and lots of play. Thank you to Cheryl and all who support this group and enable it to happen.
- Family activity afternoons were held twice this year. In February we celebrated Spring Hope at FPCC/AS church and we had a Noah's Ark theme at P and J in October, on both occasions welcoming many families.
- Open the book continues to take place at Fleet Infants school on a fortnightly basis. Jane stepped down from leading this group in July 2023 and it is now led by a member of the FACCTS team.
- Crib services are very popular and it is always the largest service over Christmas at P and J. The Good Friday Journey to the Cross service was also well attended and is a truly inter-generational service where many voices take part.
- We continue to welcome Year 6 children from Velmead School to P and J for the celebration of Easter and Christmas, led by the FACCTS team but with many volunteers helping with craft tables from our church community.

Jane Jones

### **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT – 2023 – 2024**

The Deanery Synod met on two occasions during the past year.

**The first Meeting was held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October at All Saints.**

A summary of the main Agenda items is as follows:

**Rev. George Newton, the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Aldershot:** has taken over as Interim Area Dean, Jane Jones stood down as the Lay Chair, due to her training commitments for her future ordination. The Synod also requires a Secretary and a Treasurer.

**Rev. Mark Hayton:** updated Synod on the rebuilding and re-opening of All Saints and advised that numbers attending worship in the Parish have increased. He drew attention to the forthcoming Alpha Course and the renewed worship programme and the three choirs and one band that now participate in Services and that children's and families work has been rejuvenated. Jane Jones is training for ordination and Claire Holt is on the LAM Course.

**Treasurer's Report:** the balance in credit in the Account is £567.11

**News from the Deanery:** the Deanery Confirmation was scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Revd. Thea Edwards had been installed as the vicar of The Good Shepherd, Farnborough. Revd. Phil Roche is acting as the part-time Priest in Charge at St. Mark's, Farnborough.

**Revd. Alwyn Pereira:** the vicar of St. Michael's Aldershot gave a presentation on God at work in his local community. He presented research into the demographics of the Deanery and drew particular attention to the high levels of deprivation in parts of Aldershot and Farnborough.

He highlighted concern for the young people in the deprived area with some eighty teenagers connected to St. Michael's.

Revd. Thea Edwards said she was prepared to work with Alwyn to explore the way forward.

The Deanery synod was invited to come up with a plan to ask strategically for resources to support this need and the presentation was followed by discussion in cluster groups.

It was acknowledged that some parts of the Deanery are more wealthy than other areas and that funding is important, but that volunteers and leaders are also needed.

**The second meeting of the Deanery Synod was held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Farnborough.**

A summary of the main Agenda items is as follows:

**Revd. Thea Edwards** gave a brief account of the activities at The Church of the Good Shepherd, since her recent appointment as Vicar of the Parish. She highlighted that the Parish contains two low-income Wards within Farnborough, and that increased efforts are in hand to build on outreach to the local community.

**Revd. Dean Pusey** spoke to the Diocesan Racial Covenant, which all Parish Leadership Teams should review and recommit too ever two years, including PCC's making their commitment to support. He stressed this is particularly important in our Deanery, due to the wide range of ethnic diversity, particularly in parts of the Rushmoor Local Authority area.

**Matt Grove**, the Leader of the Foundation in Ministry Training at the Diocese, gave a presentation on the Lay Associate Minister (LAMs) training course, which is designed to equip lay leaders to explore what leadership might be like and to grow in confidence through sound theological training and developing practical skills.

This is two-year course with no upper age barrier or assessments and is the pathway Claire Holt a member of our Ministry Team is pursuing.

A brief time was spent in discussion following this presentation.

Dick Fawn - Deanery Synod Representative April 2024

### **BAPTISM TEAM**

- It is wonderful that we now have All Saints for baptisms as well as P&J. We have had a steady number of baptisms held at both churches over the last year.
- Baptism Preparation mornings are very successful, we usually have two or three families attending and they are a great way to get to know our baptism families and for them to familiarise themselves with both churches and to meet the baptism team. It is a great privilege on the day of the baptism to meet the extended family and friends of the child to be baptized.

- My grateful thanks to Sam Lord and Karen Kite for their unfailing support in visiting and contacting the baptism families and maintaining any follow up with them. We have recently welcomed to the baptism team Jane Eastham.

Claire Holt

### **THE TUESDAY MORNING PRAYER GROUP**

Prayer Group continues to meet every Tuesday morning at 11.00 except during the month of August. We have moved our meeting place to the Prayer Room in the Fleet Parish Community Centre. Those of us who feel able, take it in turns to lead the group and our different styles and choices of reading leads to a diversity of sessions. Our meetings usually last about half an hour. We often talk after the meeting about issues and thoughts raised during the session. The sessions are based loosely on Contemplative Meditation and our prayers are for anyone who needs our prayers - known to us or in the wider community - and situations in the world. Sadly, our numbers have declined in recent months and we would dearly welcome new faces. There is no pressure to attend every week so please feel free to join us and see what we do. We will be delighted to see you. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Anne Richardson for her commitment and hard work over the years.

Aline Anscombe.

### **ANNUAL REPORT – COFFEE BAR**

The Coffee Bar is now into its 14th year and continues to play an important role in our Parish's outward mission. So many of our regulars can find, not only a place with a friendly face to chat to, but also very reasonably priced coffee/tea and, of course, our renowned homemade cakes, scones and biscuits. It's a place so many feel 'safe' coming to and since we have reopened the church during the week, including Saturdays, more people, having viewed the beautifully restored church, are realising they can fit in a coffee.

Thanks to Sue Benham for organising the Saturday rota and also a huge thank you to Ruth Waller who makes sure all the slots are filled during Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday – we still hope to extend to our pre Covid opening of 6 days per week but that requires more volunteers to come forward to help with this. Please, if you feel you can offer even just one morning a month, we would very much welcome you into our happy band of existing volunteers - Thank you to our cake/scone/biscuit makers who produce the delicious and tempting things to eat.

We hope to welcome lots of new visitors in 2024 and would like to encourage more of our expanding congregation to come and support this wonderful and important outreach for this Parish.

It just remains for us to thank all our wonderful volunteers – without this our coffee bar could not open.

Elizabeth, Lynda

### **WORSHIP AND MUSIC**

The year 2023 was a very significant one in the history of our parish, and particularly for our worship and music.

The reopening of All Saints church in February led to the return of regular services there for the first time in 8 years.

Throughout the year we continued with our strategy of bringing together our church family in worship whilst enabling both churches and all our congregations to flourish. To this end we combined our musical resources into three choirs (The Parish Choir, the Worship Choir and the Evensong Choir) and a number of ensembles (Orchestra, Celtic Band, various accompanists) serving across our parish and in a variety of worship settings.

We also broadened our worship programme to include a weekly Parish Eucharist alternating between both churches supplemented with non eucharistic alternatives including Café Church, Morning Prayer, Simple Eucharist, Celtic Morning Prayer and Family Worship.

BCP Communion continued at 8am on two Sundays of the Month

Choral Evensong was held monthly, alternating across both Churches.

Godly Play was reintroduced as a feature of Sunday worship.

Baby Saints, our Wednesday morning service for preschool children is now held weekly and is flourishing and growing.

Wednesday morning communion at P&J continues, and we do monthly services at Cadogan Court and Fleet Hall (Formerly Sunrise)

Most of our principal congregations are growing, and it has been a joy to welcome new people of all ages to our worship. God has richly blessed us in our worship and music, and thank you to those many who are involved in leading and sharing in these areas of our common life.

Mark Hayton

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2024 – PARISH MUSIC**

Throughout 2023 we ran a new concept in parish music with three choirs, two instrumental groups and a rota for organists and pianists, with the joint aims of inclusiveness and musical quality. This coincided with the opening of All Saints church and a desire to run a wide variety of services at both churches; the resulting music schedule was complex and bewildering to many! However, we finally settled to an understandable sequence of services and music-group duties.

We were blessed in finding Andrew Gray to direct the Parish (SATB) Choir and Dorina Latawska to direct the Worship (unison) Choir, with Mike Ford continuing to conduct the Parish Orchestra and Evensong Choir. At least 10 new singers and instrumentalists joined our groups in the first six months, some of whom had not been to church regularly for a long time. We also experimented with mass settings, finally focusing on Dorina Latawska's 'Mass for the Year of Mercy' for the Worship Choir and Philip Stopford's 'Mass of St Luke the Evangelist' for the Parish Choir, both of which have singable congregation parts. We plan to experiment with a new mass setting in 2024. Highlights of the year were definitely: singing at the reconsecration of All Saints in the presence of Bishop Andrew (and on TV!), singing and playing at the Parish Carol Service, and singing before Midnight Mass; and every Choral Evensong has been a wonderful experience to be part of.

We are grateful to all our musicians, both singers and instrumentalists, and especially our enthusiastic organists and pianists: Andrew Gray, Dorina Latawska, Samuel Kannemeyer, John Nicholls, Graham Hix, Liril Dexter and Jean Hawkins. Finally, we hope that our congregations in both churches have appreciated and been uplifted by the music in the parish. We are hoping to build on this strong start in 2024.

Robert and Anne Smith

Parish Music Coordinator and Music Personnel Manager

## **CHRISTIAN AID 2023**

Covid drew a line through all our lives, forcing charities to suspend fundraising. 3 years on the Christian Aid group of Fleet and Church Crookham have settled into their new fundraising formulae.

The Plant and Cake Sale, held in St Philip and St James car park, is now our main focus for Christian Aid Week, together with our church collections.. We were blessed with fine warm weather for this year's Plant and Cake sale which made £863.84. Fleet and Church Crookham together raised £2662.26 during Christian Aid week.

Our Christmas fundraiser was our concert, 'Words and Music for Christmas'.

In 2023 we were able to move it back into All Saints Church and to exchange a weekday evening for a Sunday afternoon. This worked well, both for the older members of the group, and for the audience. We were very fortunate in having Graham Hix to play both piano and organ for us and Emma Mabin to sing. Afterwards we offered tea in the FPCC. The resulting donations amounted to £1235.30, a satisfying total, and one which vindicated the changes.

There were also emergency collections at All Saints and St Philip & St James for the Turkey/Syria Earthquake appeal in February and The Libya Floods in September.

In the course of 2023 several members of the group bowed out for various reasons and, very sadly, our representative from Church Crookham Baptist Church, Margaret Smith, died in the summer. On a happier note, at the end of the year, we welcomed in Anne Biffin our new representative for St Philip and St James.

In 2023 the total amount our local group sent to Christian Aid was £7,586.36. Faced with increasing human need we pray that we can match or exceed this sum in 2024.

Jenny Thorne