

REPORTS FOR THE A.P.C.M ON SUNDAY 22 APRIL 2018

1. Electoral Roll Officer's Report 2018

Total number on Electoral Roll in 2017:	192
Names removed:	6
Names added:	10
Total number on Electoral Roll in 2018:	196

Geoff Batten

2. PCC Secretary's Report

The PCC has continued to meet most months, and two Saturday meetings were held to prayerfully consider St John's vision and priorities.

The Ministry Teams report to the PCC during the year as part of the PCC Meetings.

The Agenda for each PCC Meeting is placed on the Church Noticeboard in advance of each meeting, together with the minutes of each meeting once they have been agreed and signed at the following meeting.

The main highlights of the PCC year are included in the Rector's Report and other reports below.

Jeremy Tagg

3. Rector's Report

I would like to take you back to the beginning of the year, when we opened out the theme of 'Gospel Glasses'.

It was the intention that seeing as Jesus does, through the lens of the gospel, should run through our thinking in 2018. It's important that we keep revisiting this concept, if it's to be more than simply a catchphrase. Embedding this in our DNA is no small task, but it is intrinsic to our church vision of *'aiming to help anyone and everyone 'do life' with Jesus so that individuals, our local community and beyond can flourish.'*

The Landscape

I stress the importance of this focus partly because of the changes which continue apace outside of the church. These changes are numerous and can be seen to invite increasing skepticism towards orthodox Christianity, and even glimpses of hostility.

This is not to be feared.

Nevertheless, that climate can mean we drift towards either of two unhelpful responses:

- i) We hunker down in defensive mode, staying strong to what we believe, but fail to meaningfully engage the world outside; or
- ii) In a bid to remain relevant, we so focus on being a great social welfare provider that there is no spiritual bite to our activity.

The verses from Ephesians we looked at when thinking about 'Gospel Glasses' remind us that the truth of God's life-giving grace is always married to acts of service: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...for we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life." (Ephesians 2: 8-10).

Holding together the proclamation of the gospel with genuine care for our community is not a new call, but it is one which I suspect will become increasingly challenging. It will be interesting to see how some of these cultural shifts unfold, but adjusting to a world which views Christians with mounting suspicion will demand that we encourage and support one another more deeply. I hope I am proved wrong, but it might also mean we have to let go of the assumption that faithfulness to Christ will be marked out by growing numbers.

That's all quite 'big picture' stuff, and could be construed as a rather alarmist. The reality on the ground over the last year has shown a number of positive signs.

Priorities & Developments

You may recall that at our last APCM, we were struggling to find leaders for some of the mid-week groups for our young people. It was encouraging to see these positions filled and the new leaders find their feet quickly. 'Faith on Fire' has emerged as a new group to serve those at the top end of our teenage bracket, and so we continue to offer groups across the age-range.

These groups are valued by the young people who attend them, but the demand it places on our volunteers is high and so my thanks go to all of you who continue to give of your time in this way.

At the time of writing, we have shortlisted for interview for the Young People & Families Enabler post. This is an exciting development, and again my thanks go to the church family for making this a possibility by financially supporting the idea. I am hopeful that over the long term this will mark a significant step forward. Part of my intention with the appointment is to conduct a thorough analysis of the way we disciple our young people and how families are involved in that work - this may well result in a major shift in our approach, but watch this space.

The PCC continue to hold our 3 Priority Areas* before them, and more recently dedicated attention to the desire to serve our 18-35 age group more effectively. The difficulties of this task are yet another example of how the cultural changes alluded to above are raising many questions about the nature of church. In reaching for ways to adapt, discussions can easily become introverted and so we must cling to the missional nature of who we are.

Our Team Leaders have also been charged to direct their energies into our 3 Priority Areas. Maintaining momentum in the Teams is always a challenge, and we are conscious that there is still a way to go in raising the profile of the Teams in the consciousness of the wider church. There is a desire for us to find real ways to uncover and embrace the wide variety of gifts there are in our church family, and discussions are beginning as to how we can best achieve this.

Similar comments about momentum could be made about SJ's. However, there has been a quiet, steady growth of the ways in which SJ's is being used. Some of this may have gone unnoticed, and we are aware that there is an ongoing communication exercise to keep the church not just informed, but inspired by what is happening.

On the evangelistic front, the development of the 'Inquisitive' evenings, and the return of Alpha, were real encouragements. Inquisitive was designed to appeal to those not yet ready to jump on board with an Alpha course, and the indications are that it fulfilled that brief well. Take up of both of these was good. That the planning and running of them was undertaken with St Mary's and St Francis is further sign of growing collaboration and trust there. We will also shortly be running a Church of England scheme called 'Grave Talks' together, and I hope that the future will continue to see us forge stronger ties for the sake of mission.

Unbelievably, Peter is now half way through his curacy. It has been a real privilege to witness him grow in confidence and hit his stride. Under his care, new things are blossoming and we look forward to seeing the fruit of the second half of his time with us.

Strengthening Support

Over the past year, we have continued to suffer from our fair share of health challenges both in the church family, and beyond to those we love and care for. We work hard to provide good pastoral care, but I think it is fair to say that some people experience that more effectively than others.

Communication is no small part of that provision, and I encourage us all to work hard to convey to each other our needs.

Participation in smaller groups will remain critical to feeling that relationships are moving beyond the superficial. Home groups are there, but we are still wrestling with how to best provide newcomers a way in to well established and tight knit groups.

The PCC are currently planning a Church Weekend Away for early 2019. Details will follow shortly, but we have found a venue which we hope will appeal. A weekend together can be very effective in deepening relationships and I would like as much of the church as possible to commit to it. The intention is to approach it in such a way that cost does not preclude anyone from being able to go.

In light of the things I have mentioned in this report, it's hugely important that prayer continues to underpin everything we do. I recognise that prayer takes place in many ways and places across our church. However, our corporate expressions of prayer can sometimes be thin, and our Prayer Ministry is yet to gain a solid foothold. This is a vital element of our support of one another, but more so, of God sustaining us.

Thank You

I always explain that this report can only skim the surface. I have highlighted only a few things, largely overlooking much of the 'bread and butter' details of our church life, which are supported by such a huge number of you. I cannot thank you enough for all the hard work, seen and unseen, that you undertake. It's a pleasure to be your vicar...on the whole!!

I must single out one person for special thanks, and that's Richard for his service as Warden for the past 5 years. The number of pies his fingers have been in has grown over that period and I am sure he will be glad of a reprieve. More personally, I would like to say what a great help it has been to me

to use him as a sounding board for some of the ideas knocking around my skull. In that time, he has always remember to ask 'how are *you* doing?', which has been much appreciated.

With every blessing and anticipation for the next 12 months, Jon.

*In case they have slipped your mind:

- Equipping people to engage where they are;
- Develop a culture of hospitality
- Serve the 18-35 Age Group more effectively

Jon Ward

4. Churchwardens' Report

This report covers areas of church life which are a particular responsibility of the churchwardens. The main aspects of the role are -

- ensuring "good order" in the church building and churchyard (e.g. welcoming, heating);
- ensuring the church building and its contents are cared for and fit for purpose; and
- supporting the Vicar in the leadership of the Parish.

This has been Richard's fifth and final year and Bill's first as churchwardens here.

As far as "good order" is concerned, our prayer is that the St John's building continues to be a pleasant and welcoming place which we can make full use of in living out our mission as a church. We want to thank all the teams and individuals who support us and serve in the practical functions of St John's through a busy year, including -

- the team of Welcomers who welcome us at each service and who count the offering;
- the audio-visual teams, without whom our services would grind to a halt;
- the many people who dust, clean, and arrange flowers, and whose work make the building a lovely place to be;
- the many people involved in repairs and maintenance, both inside and outside, both regularly and at our DIY days;
- the faithful few who prepare for and put away after Communion;
- those who help us with keeping inventories and records up to date, and supplies bought in;
- the teams who make thousands of hot drinks every year;
- Margaret, our Parish Administrator, for her wide range of great work.

We have continued with work to improve the look and use of the church building -

- completing work on our new information-point in the baptistry improving the look and feel of the porch
- carrying out a wide range of maintenance and repair work, including through two well-supported DIY days
- commissioning our five-yearly "Quinquennial" inspection of the building: we are grateful that this has confirmed that, overall, the building is in a good state of repair and that no major works are needed, but are now planning to carry out the smaller recommendations, as well as some more specialist repairs needed to the external fabric;
- commissioning our five-yearly lighting and electrical systems review and carrying out remedial work needed for us to receive our "clean bill of health";
- drawing on this review, we have started some planning for a major programme of rewiring

and re-lighting which we believe will be needed over the next five years, and the repainting of the church interior which it would be sensible to carry out at the same time. The first of these, in particular, will be a major project which will take careful planning and financing. We have started to discuss this with the PCC and will want to share plans with the church family in due course.

We have continued to meet regularly with Jon Ward, our Vicar, to talk through live issues and support him in his leadership of the parish.

We thank everyone for their prayers, encouragement and support.

Richard Cienciala and Bill Derham

5. Safeguarding Report

The PCC takes very seriously the requirement to safeguard children, young persons and potentially vulnerable adults who attend any activity organised by the church. Accordingly it continues to actively monitor the application of the Dioceses Safe Church policies and procedures. Part of this monitoring process involves a Diocesan self audit and the formation of an annual action plan to ensure that the policies and procedures are being implemented.

All persons who have direct contact with the above groups are required to obtain a clear Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) report and these checks are renewed every 5 years. Detailed records are kept and confidential documents are filed in a locked facility. Church Officers continue to attend training provided by the diocese when appropriate training courses become available. The PSOs have recently undertaken safeguarding training for all those who hold a DBS initiated by St John's. This has covered the relevant sections of "A Safe Church", including whistleblowing procedures. A copy of this Diocesan manual is held in the church as well as at SJ's. There is also a link on the church website. PCC members have also been encouraged to attend.

The congregation as a whole will be aware of the enormous damage allegations of abuse can inflict on any organisation and they are encouraged to bring forward any concerns they may have. Any such issues would be resolved with confidentiality and would be fully recorded. The Safeguarding Officers are continuing to seek job descriptions from the various church organisations which deal with children and vulnerable adults.

The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 (duty to have due regard to House of Bishop's guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults).

Sarah Fletcher and Michele Fox, Parish Safeguarding Officers

6. Croydon Addington Deanery Synod Report

The Deanery Synod is made up of clergy and elected lay representatives from ten churches in West Wickham, Shirley, Addington and Selsdon. St John's representatives for this year have been Jon Ward, Peter Churcher, Val Hollamby and Jeff Seabrook. It provides a forum for information and discussion between the local churches and a link between the PCC's and the Diocesan Synod.

During the year, the Synod met three times. Each meeting starts with a short time of worship followed by reports of news from local churches and the Diocesan Synod. In addition we received

presentations on various subjects including:

- A talk, entitled “Speak Lord, your servant is listening”, on the importance of listening to God and to each other, illustrated by a dramatised demonstration of how we sometimes fail to achieve this.
- A talk from Ven. Chris Skilton, on how he fulfils his role as Archdeacon of Croydon supporting over fifty churches in their ministry including pastoral care of clergy and advice on legal and administrative matters. (He contrasted it with the historical role caricatured by John Galsworthy in “The Barchester Chronicles”)

Along with opportunities to meet with members of other churches these meetings proved to be remarkably interesting and enjoyable. At each meeting we are reminded that any member of the churches represented would be welcome to attend so...

Val Hollamby and Jeff Seabrook

7. Churches Together in West Wickham (CTWW)

At a recent joint church service someone from another church commented on how much she and her husband appreciated the fact that our local churches worked together so much and so well. She said that it was a great contrast to where they lived before. That set me wondering about whether we appreciate and support it enough? It needs keeping under review to keep the relationships and activities fresh and relevant but it is an honest attempt to follow Jesus in being a united witness in West Wickham. One area of growth that would be very good would be more younger input.

Churches Together and the junior branch, Children’s Link, followed a now familiar pattern of activities last year:

January: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with services at various churches

February: Family lunch and activities at St John’s. This year we learnt about “Father Abraham” through the action song, the story in action and puppets and many great things to make. This was enjoyed by about 25 children plus parents, and helpers from several churches.

March: Women’s World Day of Prayer at St Mary’s

April: United Walk of Witness and services, plus children’s activities, on Good Friday

May: Christian Aid week, house to house collecting and other events raising £7,921.96. Well done!

August: family games afternoon on Sparrows Den

December: “The Big Sing” at St Francis which involves at least 3 church choirs, plus others, and contributes to the Christian Aid collection.

Throughout the Year:

3 Community Lunches to meet, network, and hear from representatives from various organisations in the community and churches. Different churches take responsibility for this on a rota which means doing it about once every two years. Thank you to Ann Brant (from St Mark’s church) for organising this and all who make the excellent lunches!

Joint evening services once a month at different churches in West Wickham

Occasional pulpit exchanges: Jon Ward and Jon Hills (West Wickham and Shirley Baptist) recently did an exchange.

Penny Seabrook and Ann Gardner

8. SJ's Report

SJ's management team continue to meet regularly working together to make the running of SJ's as smooth as possible.

Activities continue to develop. In the last year CHCU has met regularly and the Alpha course has run this year off the back of Inquisitive, which was very successful.

We had a very enjoyable few film evenings over the Christmas period and the new ladies group now hold several varied sessions at SJ's.

The brownies and scouts have enjoyed meeting there also, and, what is becoming a yearly event, the "Let's talk about sex...maybe" was a great evening with a large group of mums, dads and grandparents from church, two different schools and the community.

The coffee mornings and police surgeries continue to grow slowly. More advertising is needed.

The teams, particularly prayer and the MOP have also held several meetings and evening events at SJ's bringing people together.

We have been supporting one particular regular quite a lot over the winter, contacting public services for them etc. We continue to support them and anyone else that comes into SJ's with a particular need.

Looking ahead:

- We would like to encourage more people to use SJ's to support the community. If you have anything particular/people that God has put on your heart, please come and speak to us.
- Publicity is key to the community and the church knowing what's happening, and when they can drop in, book an appointment etc. We need to do more work on this.

We would like to thank all those that volunteer, support through prayer and those who pop in on a regular or not so regular basis. We are very grateful. If you would like to provide support as a volunteer please come and speak to us.

Heather Showell and Milly Johnson

9. Ministry Teams

a) Prayer

Prayer ministry is always available in the church after the morning service. There are always 2 people

available and others on standby. Members of the ministry team are also available to pray at other times.

The email prayer list is widely used – if you would like to be added to the list please speak to Barry, Richard or Tony Holloway.

There is an advertised monthly prayer focus for St. John's and a prayer meeting every first Sunday evening at the church. There is also a regular weekly prayer meeting at SJs most Monday evenings from 8pm, and the ministry team meet monthly to pray for the church.

Over the last year there have been a number of open prayer mornings at St John's and there are further initiatives planned leading up to Pentecost in support of 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

The prayer team are always happy to support any church work or organisations in prayer as we have with the SJ's team.

If you have any ideas about ways the prayer life of St. John's could be enhanced we would be pleased to hear from you.

Barry Clements and Richard Greenhalgh

b) Worship

The worship team has continued to focus on leading worship on Sundays. It has been good to see Tom starting to lead worship and our thanks go to all the worship leaders, musicians and the people who operate the sound and visuals week by week. We are fortunate to have a number of people committed to serving the congregation in this way. In September three of us attended a whole life worship day at Balham Baptist Church, which encouraged us to think about everything we do as an act of worship. It was a very positive time with people attending from churches across South London.

Later in the year once again it was a joy to be able to have a group of people singing in the choir for the Carol Service. We decided to rehearse on Sunday afternoons, which worked well again. These were enjoyable times to get together, practice and worship. We had several new people join us, which was very encouraging. On the Sundays when we were not able to practice in St Johns (for example when Friends and Heroes was being held), we were again pleased to be able to use the main worship area at Coney Hill Baptist Church. Our thanks go to them for helping us in this way and to Paul for leading us. The number of visitors at the service was very encouraging and we are mindful of the fact that this might be the only time during the year when some of them come to church.

We have continued to think about our vision for worship in the church and to seek to know more about what God wants from us. Time continues to be a pressure for everyone and in the light of this, Jonny has decided to focus on leading worship while Barbara focuses on leading the team. Thanks to Nicky for her work on the monthly rotas and to everyone for their prayers and support.

Jonny Feint and Barbara Bassot

c) Children & Youth

Our children's and youth activities at St John's continue to serve ages 0-18 as part of the main Sunday service and during the week. We met with the leaders from each of our regular groups and

Jon Ward and Peter Churcher at the end of last year (2017) to share progress, challenges and changes which was immensely helpful. The main points from this meeting were;

- Clarifying the age range for each mid week group and identifying the need to better bridge between them.
- The addition of a young people's group called Faith On Fire led by Peter for the older youth into young adults that was going very well.
- The need to gain new volunteers in some areas as other leaders' circumstances were changing, as well as how to support and nurture the existing volunteers.

The regular mid week groups we have are;

SHINE – for under 5's and their carers, meets monthly (1st Thursday of the month) at SJ's or the church. Mainly St John's members with their children but a couple of regular friends too.

GALAXY BUCK – formerly 'Friends and Heroes', for primary age children, meets monthly (1st Sunday of month) at the church. Has had a drop in numbers recently but great work has been put in to promote it. Angela Walters heads this up with a team.

CRUZ – for ages 7-11 (school years 3-6), meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at the Assembly Rooms. Currently all St John's family children, this group has often fluctuated in number and is currently small but beautifully formed!

CLUB 2000 – for ages 11-14 (school years 7-9), meets weekly on Tuesday evenings at Coney Hall Baptist Church. Lots of regular attendees and going well!

14+ - for ages 14-18 (school years 10-13), meets weekly on Thursday nights at Guy and Rachel Harris' home in Windemere Road. Regular small group, mainly from St John's family but also a couple who have moved up from Club 2000 from elsewhere.

Other:

With the Churches Together in West Wickham we hosted a February ½ term lunch and activity event for local families which went well. We looked at the story of Abraham and how though there are many of us God can see and love each one of us. The next event as a collective will be on Good Friday at St Francis.

Other upcoming events:

In previous years Urban Saints, whose teaching resources some of our groups use, ran a faith based activity weekend called 'Spree' which we had taken large groups to with lots of positive feedback. These ended in 2016 so last year Julie spearheaded the decision to run our own weekend camp 'Sprung'. This is happening again this year on the 29th June-1st July so we're in the process of checking who's coming and other arrangements. The speakers from last year and the venue are secured.

The church is also joining forces with Cornerstone Christian Centre in Bromley to take young people to Soul Survivor B this Summer.

Julie Lancaster and Anna Seabrook.

d) Care and Befriending Team Report

Since the memorial service for those who have been bereaved was introduced three years ago it has become a firm fixture in the Church calendar and the one held in November 2017 was very well attended with many positive comments. Another is planned for this year.

Together with St Mary's and St Francis we are planning a series of Grave Talk using materials produced by the Church of England. It is aimed at helping people both in Church and in the wider community, to think about death and dying and hopefully make them better equipped. Watch out for the church notices or visit gravetalkwww.com for more details. Please signpost the Website to anyone you know of who may be interested in attending.

Also in the planning is another Welcome tea and other events for those with younger families who are new to the church. One of the three priorities St John's has set itself this year is serving the 18-35 age group more effectively and we want to start by getting to know those who fall into that category, who have recently started coming to our church.

There has been a lot of illness and people in the church family experiencing challenging times. These have all been supported in many different ways by members of our church family as well as by the team. As team leaders we would like to express our thanks for all everyone does to ensure care and befriending is active and ongoing in our church and community.

Sue Watson and Maureen Lang

f) Faith Sharing

Our Team Brief is to find a way of letting faith sharing into the spiritual DNA of the Church folk at St John's.

To recap, you will remember that we prepared a Questionnaire to discover what people at St John's thought about sharing their faith. The response showed that many of us were uncertain how to go about this in the present-day culture we live in. There is a concern, fear even, that friendships may be spoiled, family unity will be jeopardised, and that accusations of political incorrectness in the work place may result.

In the ensuing months, Faith Sharing was encouraged mainly in sermons and in homegroup discussions.

The Team investigated several strategies and schemes for Faith Sharing. (We also looked for a replacement for the Alpha Course, which was considered too long for people to commit to in these days. However, an updated, more flexible Alpha was launched in 2017, which St John's used, starting in January. This seems to have been well received by both facilitators and participants). None of the schemes and strategies looked at seemed appropriate for St John's.

However, we seem no closer to our brief (see top of report). So that when opportunities for sharing our faith arise, many of us fail to recognise or utilise them. We lack boldness needed. When the first disciples were imprisoned or beaten for preaching the Gospel, they did not pray for the persecution to stop – they prayed for more boldness to be able to spread the Good News.

Maybe the answer for those of us who feel fearful is to pray, like those disciples, for boldness and a deeper desire to share our faith. I am sure leaders of the various Church prayer meetings could find

room on their agenda for prayers for boldness.

We all want God to move in our Parish, and beyond. We want to see Revival. Maybe God wants revival to start inside St John's. Maybe we need to start praying specifically and in humility for this to happen (without preconceived ideas of what this will look like, or fearful spirits because of past bad experiences).

Team: Mike & Joy Slatter, and David Biddle

g) Mission Outside the Parish

Our aim:

- to support through prayer, encouragement and financial support a group of missionaries linked with St. John's;
- to raise awareness of mission activities throughout the world;
- to organise different events to increase our understanding of what 'our' missionaries do; and
- to equip others at St. John's to be missionaries in the place where God has placed them or wants to send them.

In the past year we met regularly but not too frequently for a chat, decision making and prayer time. We kept in touch with the missionaries we support in person or via social media.

We passed on information to our PCC so they were able to make some financial decisions in supporting the missionaries.

We made information readily available to you all by displaying it on the screens (including a video from South Africa, Mali and Japan) or speaking from the front.

We helped to organise prayer and 'meet the missionary' meetings. We had one Skype contact with our contacts in Japan.

If you are passionate about mission and/or would like to learn more about what the group does - we would love to hear from you.

Milly Johnson and Elzbieta Cienciala