

ST PETER'S CHURCH HERSHAM



**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
25th May 2025**

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Introduction

2024 was a year of continued growth in St Peter's, both numerically and spiritually, and I would like to thank the ministry team, the church wardens, the standing committee and PCC for their support, wisdom and hard work during the year. Thanks also to our administrator for all her hard work and to all who work 'behind the scenes' to keep our church building and our worshipping life in good order.

It has been a year with many highlights and also a few challenges, but the supportive and welcoming spirit of the congregation has remained constant and we continue to buck the trend of decline and to share the love of God with our growing community.

Early in 2024 the PCC and ministry team began our action plans for the coming years by looking at who we are as a worshipping community and we summarised St Peter's by describing our identity, our purpose and our values in this way:

Identity

We are a church family, at the heart of our community, serving, praying and reflecting the light of Jesus.

Purpose

To love and worship God, deepening our relationship with him and bringing others to know him by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

Values

Inspired by the Holy Spirit and supported by faith-filled prayer, we aspire to act with generosity, grace, and integrity.

Our prayer for the coming year is to continue to grow in number and spiritual depth and to be a blessing to our community in all that we do.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Jackie Richardson
Vicar

AGENDAS

Annual Meeting of Parishioners & Annual Parochial Church Meeting Sunday 25th May 2025; to be held in the church.

Annual meeting of Parishioners

1. Welcome and Prayers
 2. Appointment of Clerk
 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2024
 4. Election of Churchwardens for 2025-2026
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Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2024
2. Reports that must be legally presented
 - I. Electoral Roll.
 - II. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.
 - III. Care Team Report
 - IV. Share Team Report
 - V. Grow Team Report
 - VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church
(Churchwardens' Report)
 - VII. Deanery Synod
 - VIII. Safeguarding Report
 - IX. Financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2024
(see separate report – *Parochial Church Council's Report and Unaudited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024*)
3. Elections and Appointments
 - 3.1. Members of the Parochial Church Council
 - 3.2. Appointment of Independent Examiner
 - 3.3. Deputy Churchwardens
4. Vicar's Report
5. Health and Safety Report
6. AOB

St Peter's Church Hersham
Minutes of Annual Parishioners' & Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 19th May 2024
Held in Church

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Welcome and Prayer

The Chairman, Jackie Richardson, welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Appointment of Clerk.

Karen Richards was proposed as Clerk by Sara Holland, seconded by Suzanne Barrett, and this was agreed unanimously by those present.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record, noting the correct spelling of Lulu's name; Ailsa.

4. Election of Churchwardens for 2024-2025

Jackie thanked the churchwardens, Andrew Strong and Lynne Watson, both of whom are standing for re-election, for a sixth year and fifth year respectively. Andrew was proposed by Margaret Hicks and seconded by Jane Anderson; Lynne Watson was proposed by Suzanne Barrett, seconded by Karen Richards. There being no other candidates, Andrew and Lynne were both re-appointed. Jackie expressed her thanks for their continuing commitment to this vital role, and there was a round of applause.

A resolution was passed to disapply the section headed "Disqualification after six periods of office" in the Supplementary Material of the Churchwardens Measure 2001, as is allowed within the Measure, so that Andrew Strong will be allowed to stand for re-election next year, should he so wish. The resolution was passed unanimously (Andrew Strong did not vote). This resolution may be revoked by a subsequent meeting of the Parishioners.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 12:08

St Peter's Church Hersham
Minutes of Annual Parishioners' & Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 19th May 2024
Held in Church

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of the Meeting Held on Sunday 21st May 2023

The minutes of the Meeting held on 21st May, 2023 were agreed and signed,

2. Reports that must be Legally Presented

I. Electoral Roll

KR presented the figures for the numbers on the electoral roll:

April 2024 - 145, with 84 living within the Parish and 61 out of Parish.

April 2023 - 165, with 104 living in the Parish and 61 out of the Parish.

The reduction in numbers may be attributable to people who have not worshipped regularly (at least one a month for 6 months), being taken off the register. Thanks were extended to Sarah Tourell for all her work on updating and preparing the roll.

II. Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

There were no questions and Karen Richards was thanked for compiling the report.

III. Care Team Report

No questions were raised. Thanks were extended to the whole team for all its work.

IV. Share Team Report

No questions were raised and the team was thanked for all they have achieved this year.

V. Grow Team Report

No questions were raised and members of the team thanks for their contributions.

VI. Report on Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

Lynne Watson confirmed that the Quinquennial inspection has been undertaken and the written report is awaited.

VII. Deanery Synod

Thanks were extended to Lulu for compiling the report. Both she and Lynne

Watson were thanked for the three years representing St Peter's Church, Hersham, on the Deanery Synod.

VIII. Safeguarding Report

Lynne was thanked for the continuing good work she does on Safeguarding for St Peter's.

IX. Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

- Treasurer Malcolm Reid reported that the 2023 accounts had a deficit of expenditure over income of £53,424 (excluding asset revaluations) in 2023.
- A surplus was last recorded in 2021, from the receipt of legacies totaling £70,000.
- Inflation has increased costs and hence expenditure. Our cash funds are reducing (down from £176,000 in 2021 to £120,000 in 2023). The 2024 budget shows a deficit of £34,842, which does not include costs arising for repairs identified in the Quinquennial report, or priority projects identified by the PCC.
- Costs will need to be cut to prevent a continuing decline in cash funds. Our biggest cost is the Parish Share, but this cannot be reduced. We could reduce our commitment to Mission support or not extend funding for the Children and Families' Co-ordinator (currently funded from Charles Sparks), but neither option is desirable or in line with our mission.
- We need to increase our income from giving. The Stewardship campaign in November resulted in those who give increasing their giving, but there are still around 100 people on the roll who do not give. If these people gave £10 a month (approximately the price of 3 coffees), the increased income would cover the day to day running of the church; current giving only just covers our Parish Share.
- We need to fundraise, which requires volunteers.
- If funds are exhausted, the church would have to close.

These issues were discussed by the PCC at the April meeting, and this will continue into 2024. Projects will be prioritised and include provision of an accessible toilet in the church and a new kitchen, replacing the AV equipment, a new heating system (the radiators are expected to fail in the foreseeable future), and extending the contract of the Children and Families' Co-ordinator to continue carrying out our mission plan and increase numbers.

Suggestions from those in attendance were opening up the church more, and publicising the availability of Vauxmead and increasing its usage, for fetes and barn dances for example. It was acknowledged that Jen Dady is doing a good job in her role of managing the hire of the halls and Vauxmead, and that the Vauxmead team are working hard to bring the deeds up to date. However, Vauxmead does not have the facilities required by many hirers and its development will cost a substantial amount of money. The Vauxmead Trustees

worked with the Charity Commission 2 years ago to gain powers which will enable development of the site, in accordance with the will. The issue of parking was also raised but it was pointed out that parking is allowed on Vauxmead for one off events.

Malcolm was thanked for all his work on producing the Financial Statements and Report.

3. Elections and Appointments

3.1. Members of the Parochial Church Council

Re-appointed for a further 3-year term:

- Tony Skrzypecki reappointed for a further 3-year term; proposed by Malcolm Reid and seconded by Clare Warne
- Pat Shore elected to the PCC for 3-year term; proposed by Margaret Hicks and seconded by Sara Holland

3.2. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Malcolm Reid proposed that Frances Wilde (of Warner Wilde Ltd) be reappointed as the Independent Examiner, provided that the Standing Committee agree to changes in the procedure for producing the report; agreed unanimously.

3.3. Deputy Churchwarden

Tony Skrzypecki was re-appointed as Deputy Church Warden, proposed by Jackie Richardson and seconded by Karen Richards, and thanked for all the work he does "behind the scenes".

4. Vicar's Report

Jackie Richardson began by thanking the whole PCC for all their work and support.

She reported the good news that, compared to the national figures for church attendance, we are doing very well. The effects of Covid were felt nationally between 2019 and 2023, with figures from five dioceses, collected over the same 4-week period in November, showing a 21% decline in adult attendance and 29% decline in children attending. The figures for St Peter's showed the opposite trend, with increases from 378 to 489 adults from 2019 to 2023, and from 69 to 102 children for the same period.

The Women's Institute Hall provided extra hiring opportunities both for church and external users. Thanks were extended to all those involved in its acquisition, and in

particular, Tony Skrzypecki.

The first Sunday of the month services have been more intergenerational and included people sharing their personal stories of faith.

Home groups were launched using the Swedish Bible Study resources.

The monthly prayer group continued to meet as did a couple of the "prayer warriors", in the Lady Chapel, after the 10:30 service on Sundays to pray over the prayer requests on the Prayer Tree and for anyone in need.

Music to Calm the Soul was relaunched and is well attended, by a good mix of non-church goers from the local community and members of the congregation.

Sara Holland began Training as a Lay Minister.

Sarah Dunn, our Children and Families' co-ordinator has brought a fresh approach and new life to the church for younger children and their carers.

Pre-school Praise was launched.

The First Holy communion course ran again in 2024.

The Churchyard project continues to maintain and enhance the grounds. Progress has been made by The Friends of St Peter's to restore the mural.

Jackie thanked:

- The Church Wardens, Andrew Strong and Lynne Watson, who do a fantastic job
- Tony Skrzypecki for the vast amount of work he does in various capacities
- Lynne Watson for all the essential and valuable work she does as Safeguarding Officer
- The treasurer, Malcom Reid, for the huge amount of work he does on all the financial aspects for the PCC
- The PCC secretary, Karen Richards, for her invaluable work
- The whole PCC
- The Ministry team; Deborah Locke, Sarah Dunn, Sarah Tourell and Katrina Jenkins
- The occasional preachers
- The music team, Rob Stafford and Lynn Skrzypecka for all they do to enhance our services and worship through music
- Pastoral Assistants
- All the behind-the-scenes volunteers: Mark Hover for Health and Safety, the cleaners, coffee makers, flower arrangers, bellringers, Vauxmead team, readers, servers, chalice assistants and Jen Dady for hall hire.

Jackie also expressed emotional thanks to Katrina Jenkins, our Curate, who has been a true blessing to us over the last 3 years.

Priorities going forward are centred around our new values and mission; to grow our church both spiritually and numerically. There will be two "Vision Sundays" held in September, where our hopes and future plans will be presented to the congregation, and how these integrate with stewardship. The Stewardship campaign will focus on those who currently do not give.

Jackie concluded her talk by thanking all again and saying what a privilege it is to be the Vicar of St Peter's Church in Hersham.

5. Health and Safety Report

There were no comments from those present and Mark Hover was thanked for all he does.

6. AOB

Thanks were extended to Jackie for such a successful year of growth at St Peter's Church and in the community.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 12:31

Agenda Item 2

Reports, which must legally be presented

- I. Electoral Roll.
- II. Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council.
- III. Care Team Report
- IV. Share Team Report
- V. Grow Team Report
- VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church
(Churchwardens' Report)
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I. Report on the Electoral Roll

Our Electoral Roll is completely renewed every six years.
2025 is the year for the renewal.

The number on the new electoral roll in May 2025 is 137

Resident within the parish accounted for 82

Out of parish = 55

The number on the old electoral roll in April 2024 was 145

Resident within the parish accounted for 84

Out of parish = 61

Sarah Tourell
Electoral Roll Officer
May 2025

II. Summary of the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council

Overview

The PCC held seven scheduled meetings in 2024, including the short meeting following the APCM, which was held on 19th May.

One member came to the end of their term in 2024, was proposed for re-election and was duly re-elected. As of November 2024, the total number of members was 14, comprising: 7 lay members (one currently on sabbatical as of February 2024), 2 co-opted members and 5 ex-officio members (down from 6 at the beginning of the year due to Katrina Jenkin's departure in June 2024).

Safeguarding continues to be given a high priority and is on the agenda at every meeting. Lynne Watson gave an insightful talk in church for Safeguarding Sunday. The Safeguarding Dashboard is a constantly evolving platform requiring monitoring and regular updating; this has again been overseen by the Safeguarding Officer diligently and in a timely manner. The PCC is kept informed of any changes or developments and discusses and approves any additions or updates as required

The PCC continued to review, revise and prioritise the Project List, in conjunction with the Church Development Plan, to ensure prudent use of diminishing funds, and to maintain financial vigilance of the accounts. Initial plans were drafted in the second half of the year to initiate the project identified as having the highest priority: the Community Café and provision of improved and accessible facilities.

Many volunteers give their time and talents to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the church daily, as well as organizing and running a multitude of activities and events. Their commitment and dedication are greatly appreciated, and we give thanks to God for their continuing support as we endeavour to carry out our Mission Action Plan.

Karen Richards
PCC Secretary

III. Care Team Report

The St. Peter's CARE team oversees the day-to-day ministry of the church and the wider deanery, in worship, prayer and pastoral care. Thank you to all who ensure that St. Peter's is a church family, at the heart of our community, serving, praying and reflecting the light of Jesus.

Worship

Highlights of the worship services this year include:

The Tenebrae service in March – a moving and atmospheric presentation of Christ's Passion in words and music. The format is now established and works well with our musical resources.

Approximately 130 people took part in the Walk of Witness on Good Friday morning following an intergenerational short service in which we were joined by Hersham Baptist Church. Katrina Jenkins led an excellent meditation centred on the hymn *The Servant King* during the "Hour at the Cross" on Good Friday afternoon. Although the number of people who attended the afternoon service was very low, we will monitor numbers in 2025 before deciding what services to offer on Good Friday.

Easter Day services were well attended including the Sunrise Service with 30 or more people coming to a moving service in the churchyard.

The sermon series *Everybody Welcome* ran throughout July in preparation for the two Vision Sundays in September. The aim was to establish an on-going aspiration to be a welcoming church that accommodates new members of the congregation.

The summer music workshop focused on three musical settings of psalms with the theme of wildlife and creation. The summer workshop and the carol service continue to offer opportunities for outreach and allow people from outside the St. Peter's congregation to participate in the musical life of the church. This year saw the largest choir for the carol service that we have had for a number of years and included new members from within St Peter's and from the wider community.

St. Peter's hosted the Remembrance Day service combining with Hersham Baptist Church and Hersham Rainbows, Guides and Brownies. There was a marked increase in attendance for the short service on the Green.

In December 2024 a small, enthusiastic children's choir joined our service of Nine Lessons and Carols. The children led the first verse of *Once in Royal David's City* and joined with the adult choir for two carols.

Many thanks to all who contributed to our worship in any way throughout the year.

Prayers

Faith-filled prayer underpins our ministry and we thank all who prepare, lead, or coordinate our prayer teams and those who pray for our ministry.

Intercessions - We are blessed by the variety of styles of those who lead our weekly intercessions. Many thanks to Clare Jones who coordinated the intercessions rota for many years. Clare stood down in 2024 and we thank Sue Gray who has taken on this important ministry.

Prayers after the 10.30 am Sunday service – A small group of people meets in the lady chapel after our 10.30 am service to pray for our church and the concerns of those who leave prayer requests on our prayer tree. Thank you to Jane Anderson who took on the responsibility for coordinating this ministry after our curate Katrina left to take up her new post in Derbyshire.

Circle of Prayer - A small group of people met for the Circle of Prayer in the Women's Institute Hall on the last Monday of each month, except for December. Typically, they reflected on the stimulus material, discussed its meaning and relevance for today and spent some time in silent prayer. This year's stimuli were poems by Ann Lewin; a clock; a reflection for Monday in Holy Week; contemplative prayer; Rublev's icon of the Trinity; cultivating a spirit of gratitude; laughter; *Be at Peace*, the prayer of Francis de Sales; an All Saints' Day meditation based on the *Beatitudes*; and a discussion of prayer itself. It is a very prayerful, peaceful afternoon of fellowship, finishing with refreshments and a chat. They would welcome others to join them.

Weddings and Funerals

The number of weddings at St Peter's continues to fall (this is a national trend) and this year Jackie conducted five wedding services and two renewal of wedding vows services. We conducted 13 funerals (including at St Mark's), one memorial service and eight interment of ashes services. Many thanks to Deborah, who is now taking some of the interment of ashes services and developing a new pastoral ministry.

Flowers.

A huge thank you to the small group of flower arrangers who kept floral decorations part of the special Sundays during the church year. Flowers and other decorations filled the church at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and on our Patronal Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. New talent is always welcome

Bells

Ringling remains at a low ebb at Hersham and we still cannot run a normal practice because we do not have enough ringers. Sunday service ringling has been sporadic with only three or four of the eight bells being used. However, we have three learners who started just before Christmas and are doing well. A fourth has just started. We are being

assisted with the training by Ann, captain at Esher, who has the appropriate Association of Ringing Teachers qualification. More are of course always welcome.

Pastoral care

The pastoral team continues to provide pastoral care for those members of our community who have been bereaved or are suffering from illness or have any particular needs. Our team also provides home communion to those who can no longer attend church. During the year we held the annual memorial service for those who had lost loved ones during the year, and this was very well received and attended. We also held two afternoon teas at the Vicarage for those who found it difficult to get out and meet others. During the summer holidays, Jackie led a training course for four new pastoral visitors, and we were very pleased to have our Archdeacon, Martin Breadmore, present Pastoral Visitor certificates to Julie Mills, Susan Chauncy, Sue Burke and Margaret Hicks during a 10.30.am service in September. These four join our existing pastoral visitors, Lorelie Staines and Sarah Tourell. Thank you also to Sara Holland who stood down from this ministry in the spring.

Deanery report; see section VII

Jackie Richardson

IV. Share Team Report

The groups within the Share Team develop relationships with communities beyond St Peter's. We meet people where they are and share God's love through our care, commitment, and prayer.

Women's Breakfast

The Women's Breakfast attracts women not just from St Peter's but also the wider community. There were breakfasts in May and August and a Christmas themed event in December, which proved very popular. Attendances averaged 34 plus. Donations were very generous and totalled over £200. Thanks should go to Susan Mahon for taking over the organisation of the breakfasts; Sarah Tourell for printing posters and flyers, which were distributed locally and at church events; and volunteers from the church who helped set-up, serve and clear afterwards.

Mission Partners

The Mission Support Team stayed with its four long-standing partners, strengthening its relationship with them through participation in their management. Casa Reom's building project depends on our continued help. Mission Aviation Fellowship delivered a presentation to us on its activities, and another is booked for March 2025. We also know that our contributions to the Hersham Youth Trust and the Peace and Hope Trust are put to good use. This year we were delighted by the Christmas collections, some £1987 which the church congregations raised for Shooting Star children's hospice.

Hersham Churches Together

As Hersham Churches Together has not been meeting, it was agreed that it should fold as an organisation. The bank account has been closed, with the balance being divided between the contributing churches, namely Hersham Baptist Church (HBC) and St Peter's. St Peter's, HBC and All Saints will continue to join together for the Good Friday Walk of Witness. HBC and St Peter's will participate together in the annual service of Remembrance and All Saints and St Peter's will organise the World Day of Prayer.

The World Day of Prayer service took place in St Peter's Church. It was organised by the women of Palestine and all found it to be very moving. The three churches joined together for the Good Friday Walk of Witness, finishing with hot cross buns provided by All Saints. On Remembrance Sunday, members of HBC and Guides, Brownies and Rainbows joined the congregation at St Peter's for a short service before walking to the Memorial Garden for the Remembrance Service.

Publicity

Sarah Tourell updates the Facebook and Instagram pages and produces all publicity material for the congregation and the wider community. She has continued to update and maintain the Churchsuite database to ensure the ministry team has accurate data. Sue

Burke updates the website regularly. Anyone who has changes to be made, such as changes in groups, should contact Sue. As ever, they would welcome a Publicity Officer to head up the team!

St Peter's Fellowship

The Fellowship is going from strength to strength, drawing people in not just from St Peter's but also the wider community, men and women, young and old. Average attendance is between 22 and 30. The afternoon entertainment is varied and wide-ranging. Pianist Peter Toth has become a regular guest and Charlie Menagh entertained the group with his guitar and songs from the 50s, 60s and 70s. The first speaker was ex-policeman, Neil Mach, who spoke twice, once on *Detectives – the real story* and again on *Rocking Surrey* about local musicians and singers, including Sham 69 and their song *Hersham Boys*. Amy Swainston of Elmbridge Museum gave two excellent talks, *The Diggers of Elmbridge* from the mid-1600s and *Suffrage to Sisterhood: the 1928 Act that gave all women the vote*. Other speakers included Jonathan Jones who portrayed and dramatized CS Lewis; Deborah Lock on *Poetry and Psalms*; and Sarah Delves on *Handbags and their History*. On other afternoons, members read their favourite poems or from their favourite books or enjoyed a quiz. The second hour of fellowship was filled with a good chat over tea or coffee and biscuits. The year finished with a buffet Christmas meal in the WI hall. Thanks should go to Susan Mahon for opening up the hall and other members for setting up and clearing up afterwards. Also, to Sarah Tourell, the Parish Secretary, for her help, especially advertising the Fellowship on social media.

The Fellowship is held in the WI Hall in Burhill Road on Thursdays at 2pm starting in February, with a break from the last Thursday of July to the end of August. The year finishes with the Christmas function on the first Thursday of December.

Schools and Uniformed Groups

During 2024 the church continued to have strong links with Bell Farm Primary School and Burhill Primary School, providing fortnightly face-to-face assemblies at Burhill and weekly face-to-face or online assemblies at Bell Farm. The Ministry Team also helped with RE lessons when asked to, covering subjects like 'atonement and reconciliation' with year 5 and 'why do Christians go to church?' with year 1. Both schools also visited the church to look at Christian symbols and what they mean, and attended school services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, as well as end of year services. This provided an opportunity to connect with the parents as well as the children.

On Remembrance Sunday, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows participated in the service at St Peter's before walking to the Memorial Garden for the Remembrance Service.

Friends of St Peter's

It has been a busy year during which several projects have been tackled. Some have been completed, whilst others are still works in progress. The first step towards the restoration of the mural was taken and quotes for surveying the mural were sought. Three quotes

were received and the most suitable selected. The survey was successfully completed during the year and a detailed report on the necessary restoration and repair was received together with a detailed quote as to likely costs for each phase of the project. It will now be possible to get a Faculty from The Diocese for the proposed work and tenders for the actual restoration will be sought.

The Churchyard clearance project has been completed thanks to a very generous donation which allowed professional help to be obtained. The result is a transformed Churchyard. The wildflower project has progressed to a point that will allow for the sowing of seeds in the Spring. This too was financed by another anonymous donor. In conjunction with Surrey Council's Tree Planting initiative, it has been possible for the volunteers to plant 270 hedge saplings to demarcate the wild meadow. Three further ornamental cherry trees were also planted. The regular core of Churchyard volunteers has grown and their diligence and commitment to maintaining both the Churchyard and the Remembrance Garden has enabled essential ongoing maintenance to continue throughout the year.

Gospel Touch Choir Concert

In September ten talented members of the Gospel Touch Choir gave a joyous concert in the church. They have performed at St James' Palace for King Charles and Queen Camilla, at the Olympics Closing Ceremony, at the BAFTAs with Paloma Faith, on *Songs of Praise* at the BBC and in the Cadogan Hall. 260 people from all areas of the community enjoyed themselves. There was dancing in the aisles, a raffle, drinks and the children made prayer keyrings to sell. £5389 was raised for the Children and Families team. It was so successful that Gospel Touch are returning in November 2025.

Music to Calm the Soul

Sarah Tourell hosted five evenings of this popular event which attracted many people from the wider community as well as members of St Peter's. 315 people attended in total and £1,200.75 raised.

Katherine Ind

V. Grow Team Report

2024 was a year of opportunities and growth alongside some significant losses for the Grow Team. Our curate, Katrina, who had led the team, left in June to begin her ministry at St. Giles in Matlock. We thank her for the infectious leadership she brought to all that she did. Suzanne Barrett took over on her departure. Sarah Dunn, our Children and Families' Coordinator, continued to bring her enthusiastic direction to our children's ministry, as she encouraged opportunities for our young people to meet God for themselves and get actively involved in services. We were sad to say goodbye to Sarah in December

God and Friends (GAF), our term time group for primary aged children, continued to flourish and outgrew the WI Hall, often splitting into two groups. Prayer became an integral part of the sessions, exploring creative ways to talk to God, so much so that some children were confident to lead the opening prayers. Highlighting Bible passages as they are read has helped the children to think about what the passage is saying to them and led to some great discussions. The children enjoyed making prayer keyrings for themselves to remind them to pray and another to give to someone to let them know they were being prayed for. Following on from their success, GAF made more prayer key rings to sell at the Gospel Touch Fundraising concert.

Breakfast Praise continued to be a joyful service, enjoyed by our younger children and their parents and grandparents (and all the leaders and helpers). At the beginning of the year, the mid-morning congregation generously agreed to move the time of their service to 10.30am, giving leaders more time to spend with the Breakfast Praise families. This allowed time for colouring and crafts with the children after the service, and parents and grandparents had time for refreshments and fellowship. This had a positive impact on the relationships with these families and some of the older children came to the 10.30.am intergenerational service on the first Sunday of the month.

Pre-School Praise continued to provide a space for those with pre-school children, from newborn to 4-year-olds. The morning followed a pattern of singing and signing worship songs, hearing a Bible story (often read by a member of the congregation), and praying and dancing with streamers and musical instruments. The sessions closed with an opportunity to play together and enjoy a bubble disco, and very welcome refreshments provided by a team of volunteers. The year ended with a celebration of Christmas Jumper day, raising money for Save the Children. Sadly, this was the last session following Sarah Dunn's resignation. It is hoped that the group will restart in some form in the future, as families said how much they valued this time together, praising God.

Once a month during term time, **Teenagers and God (TAG)** met in the church for youth-led evening prayer and then moved across to the church hall for fun, food and fellowship. During the Autumn term, they started watching episodes from the TV series *Chosen*, which focuses on the transformed lives of Jesus' disciples and followers. There was also time for playing indoor games, chatting, supporting one another and sharing news. There continued to be a steady core of young people contributing to the life of the church by serving at morning services, bellringing, doing their DofE volunteering service in the

churchyard and helping at GAF. Many of the young people were also involved in the Nativity service on 24th December, leading and performing with energy and enthusiasm.

During *Baby Loss Awareness Week* in October, the church was open to give families the space to remember babies who had died. On Sunday 3rd November, two more children received their first communion. In preparation, they and a parent attended a four-session course, which covered aspects of belonging, believing, remembering and celebrating linked to the structure of the Communion service. There were 16 baptisms from 14 different families in 2024, an increase of four from the previous year. It is a joy to see this growth in the St Peter's family.

Christian Development and Discipleship

Following on from a pilot group in 2023, in January a Home Group was established adopting the Swedish Method of Bible study. The sessions began with a shared meal and fellowship, with everyone taking a turn to bring a dish. The group then explored a Bible reading from the previous Sunday and together reflected on a series of questions. Beginning and ending with prayer, the simple template enabled everyone to bring their life experiences to the discussion, helping all to get the most out of God's word and how to apply it in our lives today. In April, the group split into two enabling more people to join in the evenings and a third intergenerational group with ages from 7months to 87 began. By the end of the year, we were able to celebrate over thirty people exploring the Bible together.

Together with other churches, St Peter's continued to take part in the Leading Evangelism Learning Hub run by the diocese and CPAS (Church Pastoral Aid Society). This gave space and time to connect with God, connect with God's vocation for the Church and connect with where people are at and how to share faith today. At the end of the 15 months, in March, the group shared with Bishop Andrew how the hub meetings had encouraged and enthused them to put sharing our faith at the front of their minds and to make it a priority in all that we do as a church. They celebrated that we had incorporated space to talk about faith sharing during services and how members of the congregation had shared personal faith stories. Rather than a word to be feared, we are establishing a culture where evangelism is all about our conversation with others and how we can share our faith with them. In November, the group invited members of the congregation to join a St Peter's Evangelism hub, which continues to meet termly and has been very well received. It enables modelling a faith-sharing culture, encouraging others and equipping them with the tools that they need and the courage to share their faith with others.

Intergenerational (established congregation)

Our plan to continue being intentionally intergenerational continued throughout 2024. The 1st Sunday of the month services have been engaging and inspiring for all. "Open the Box" became an integral part of the service, when one of the children put a surprise item in the box for the member of the ministry team to open and relate to the week's sermon. A challenge for the team, but a great way for everyone to consider how the everyday can

provide an opportunity for a faith conversation. Using Makaton, our young people led the congregation in signing the Lord's Prayer and worship songs. They also enjoyed distributing the streamers for all to wave during the last hymn. All generations celebrated our Patronal Festival in June and enjoyed a celebration in the vicarage garden complete with a bouncy castle. On the afternoon of Thursday 31st October, an intergenerational Light Party Service was celebrated in church, and congregational members of all ages joined the worship and activities. The party began and ended with worship and, in the middle, attendees of all ages circulated around three activities based on the theme of Jesus as our light – giving us life, helping us to understand God better, and as someone to trust and keep us safe. Activities included planting bulbs, walking through a dark to light tunnel and identifying animal toys just by touch. Pumpkin Patch prayer corner also enabled time for reflection. After the service, there were hot dogs and fireworks in the vicarage garden. Huge thanks to all those who helped to make this event possible and safe.

Summing Up

The past year has provided the St Peter's Grow Team with much to celebrate: our children's and youth work has flourished and grown; we have begun a journey of faith sharing; and home groups are well established. Thanks must go to all who continued to share their time and expertise to make all the above happen. We look forward together to a 2025, which will present us with challenges, but know that with prayer and the support of many we can continue to help the St Peter's family grow and share its faith in Christ.

Suzanne Barrett

VI. Report on the Fabric, Goods and Ornaments of the Church

1. General

- a. Mark Hover did great work not only as the Fabric Officer but also as the Health and Safety Officer. He organised various inspections and servicing visits for a variety of services across all the buildings. We are very grateful to him for his hard work.
- b. The Health and Safety policy is available to read both at the Parish Office and on the website.

2. The Church

a. Inventory

In February 25 the wardens checked the inventory and found, with some minor exceptions, that the property was present and in good order.

b. Hymn books-

We were fortunate that a sixth former from a local school (and his dad) gave up several Saturday mornings to repair and restore many of our hymn books. They should now last a few more years.

c. Heating

The boiler continued to work well during the year, with one minor problem, but there were no radiator leaks. However, the long-term future of the current system is in doubt. Alternative systems are being explored.

d. Church roof

The last quinquennial report highlighted several issues with the roof and spire. These were addressed by A E Hughes Limited, who completed the work in May, and many people saw the steeplejack hanging from ropes from the top of the spire. Grants helped fund this project.

3. The Churchyard

See the section headed "Friends of St Peter's" in the Share Team Report for details of the churchyard clearance project.

4. The Church Hall

a. Projects

The hall floor was cleaned and marked out for badminton and pickleball which has proved popular with hirers.

b. Repairs and maintenance

- i. Gutters were cleaned and repairs commissioned.
- ii. A hole in the roof above the front door was repaired
- iii. Taps were replaced and other plumbing issues resolved.
- iv. The cupboard for children's toys was found to be very damp. This has now been cured by redirecting a rainwater drain, improving the damp proof course, and stripping away rotten plaster and replastering it. Special thanks to Stephen Ind for his skill in plastering.
- v. A rotten door frame was replaced.
- vi. Modern LED light strips were installed in the main hall.

c. The oak tree at the front of the hall was treated for Oak Processional Moth (OPM)

5. St Peter's Lodge

The Lodge was fully tenanted during the year with all due rent payments received. Some issues were experienced with water leakage in the upstairs bathroom which resulted in repairs required to the kitchen ceiling below. These have now been completed and redecoration carried out.

6. Vauxmead

- a. The church is very grateful to the members of the Vauxmead committee who work hard to maintain this beautiful green space. They continue to maintain the site, including its mature oak and other protected trees. The open space is used for sports, games and community events as well for activities associated with the Church. The buildings are let to the Burwood Preschool and the Foodbank, and the Guides also rent the land for their building.
- b. During the year, the terms for the renewal of the Preschool lease for another 5 years were completed and the lease was approved and signed by the PCC and has been lodged with the Diocese for sealing.
- c. The garage storage building continues to be used by the Foodbank to store their donated produce.
- d. The Guides' lease expired in November 2024 and possible renewal terms are currently under discussion.
- e. The maintenance of the field is a major area of focus and finding new uses for the field remains a priority. This is, however, proving challenging due to the limited facilities on site – a matter for which the Vauxmead committee continues to seek solutions.

7. WI Hall

2024 was the first full year with the Hersham Women's Institute Hall under the management of the PCC. As a result of this change, greater use of the building is being made both by short-term renters as well as by the PCC for its own use for small meetings. The changed arrangements are under continual review and seem currently to be working effectively for all parties.

8. Goods and Ornaments

On 17th February 2025 Lynne Watson and Andrew Strong checked the Church Property Log Book and NADFAS book which constitutes our inventory.

Generally the property was found and in good order.

There were a number of items which we were unable to locate, and we suspect that has been the case for some time, namely:

NADFAS number 131 – a circular candle holder for the top of the pulpit

NADFAS number 133 – A lamp set in the wall outside the West entrance

NADFAS number 312 – A screen

In addition it was noted that the contactless machine bought in 2020 was no longer in the church but it had been replaced with another “Cashless Collection” similar to the one acquired in 2023.

The log book was noted accordingly.

Lynne Watson and Andrew Strong – Churchwardens
Tony Skrzypecki - Deputy Churchwarden

VII. Deanery Synod Report

Deanery Synod is part of the system of governance for the Church of England. It meets to consider, discuss and make decisions about the life of the Church, representing parishes in the deanery. Members include all parish incumbents, clergy who hold a licence and elected parish representatives. Suzanne Barrett and Margaret Hicks are our parish representatives. Synod met three times in 2024.

The first of the 2024 Deanery Synod meetings took place in March, but due to prior church commitments no one from St Peters was able to attend this meeting. Matt Grove spoke about the Diocesan *Foundations in Ministry* programme, a two-year programme for lay assistant ministers. The course gives a grounding in theology in the first year before looking at particular areas of ministry in the second year. Those who complete the course become Local Assistant Ministers or LAMs, who can then serve in that area of ministry in their local church. Alastair Etheridge, the diocesan lead for youth work, spoke about how the church commissioner's funded programme was looking to hire a full-time youth hub leader who will be based at Esher High school, (Josh Baines has since been appointed), but will also look to work with the churches in our deanery.

The May meeting took place on Ascension Day at St James in Weybridge and Father Damien led a short service of communion to celebrate. The speakers were Steve Collins, the *Net Zero* programme's manager for the diocese (plus other dioceses) and Alison Moulder (Diocesan Environmental Manager). We were able to see how St James' is working towards its aim to achieve net zero by installing solar panels on their south facing roof, enabling them to put heat maps in the lady chapel, and see first-hand how well their new LED lighting works. We learnt how global warming has been on the agenda since 1896 with the discovery of the Greenhouse Theory and is a present emergency. One of the *Five Anglican Marks of Mission* is to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth, so Eco Church is important to us as Christians, helping people grow in discipleship and become credible in the community. As a church, we were urged to fill in the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT), move forward with Eco Church and obtain an energy audit. We learnt that funding is available to support churches addressing net zero, and that there are benefits in working collaboratively with other churches and using networks such as SLACK.

On October 8th at St Paul's East Molesey, Jackie opened her first meeting as the new Area Dean and the Revd Anne led us in prayer. One of the difficulties faced by churches today is how to share the good news with Generation Alpha (2010 – 2025). The evening was led by Andy Poole, School Hub leader in Dorking, who shared research into this generation and how we may find ways to reach them. Many of this generation were born in the pandemic, they are constantly online and their world is shaped by influencers and the content they view, so they find their identity in a virtual space. They may have no connection with church, growing up in a secular world, but hold Christian views of morality, peace and justice. Generation Alpha prefers to gather online, so their social skills are

slower to develop as they spend more time in the virtual world. They are, however, educated, goal-orientated and climate conscious and want to explore depth of ideas rather than a simplistic ideology. Research shows there is a renewed longing to explore more about the reality they experience and a hunger to meet with God and search for spirituality. Many are looking for places that listen, welcome and involve them. As churches, we are well placed to do this and provide leaders who can coach them through life and support their journey. They want guidance not more knowledge, coaches not teachers. The church can listen and facilitate them in finding a God who loves them in what they often see as a broken world. Andy summarised four opportunities: share that The Kingdom of God is near in this broken world; support their longing for community; encourage them in a mission based on social action and their desire to act; and share a reflective faith where they can grow alongside people willing to embrace the journey with them

Suzanne Barrett and Margaret Hicks – Deanery Synod Representatives

VIII. Safeguarding Report

During the year, the historic Safeguarding case within our Church was finally resolved when the perpetrator was found guilty as charged. This verdict and subsequent sentencing brought a certain closure to both the victim and others involved in a case going back decades. The level of support I was able to give the victim was only possible thanks to the ongoing involvement of Bishop Andrew, Jackie our vicar and all of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. It is to be hoped that other victims of abuse will now be encouraged to come forward and find resolution for their own betrayals and that they too can then move on from the past.

Much administrative progress has been achieved during the past year as St Peter's Safeguarding procedures are now being recorded and monitored on what are known as Safeguarding Dashboards which allow our Parish to be aligned with National Safeguarding Standards. During the year we have worked to extend our existing Safeguarding Dashboard by the introduction of a Safeguarding Hub. Tools within the Hub can be switched on in three stages: Stage 1 DBS and Training Records; Stage 2 Role Descriptions and Person Specifications; and Stage 3 Safer Recruitment and People Management. Whilst some progress has been made to become compliant with the various stages, it will take some time before we can claim to be fully compliant.

Thankfully, no new safeguarding concerns were reported during the current year.

I would like to record my appreciation for all the work done by Lorelie Staines and Andrew Strong, for without their expertise, I could not do my job as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Lynne Watson – Safeguarding Officer

Vicar's Report

² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray for us as well, that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, ⁴ so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. (Colossians 4:2-5)

2024 was a year of continued growth with many highs and a few lows too. It would be impossible to record everything that happened in the life of St Peter's, so instead I will attempt to give you a flavour of the year and some of the highs and lows.

We began 2024 with a new service time as the 10.00am congregation generously moved to 10.30am to allow our Breakfast Praise children and their parents time to stay for refreshments and fellowship after the 9.00am service. This has had a positive impact on our relationships with our younger families as we have been able to get to know them and have those important faith conversations. At the same time, we re-branded the 1st Sunday Service as our 'Family Communion', with children involved in the readings, prayers, handing out of streamers etc. At the suggestion of one of our younger members, we introduced the 'Open the Box' slot. Each month a child picks a random object that the preacher has to tie in with the theme of the service. This is very popular with the young people who have provided the objects, which have included a pinecone, a toy elephant, a lightsabre and many more creative ideas to keep the preacher on their toes! It has been encouraging to see the growth in the number of children attending this service, including several of the older children and their families from our Breakfast Praise service.

This year the PCC and ministry team also began a new PNP (parish needs process), with the mission enablers from the diocese, which helped to prioritise our discipleship and mission plans for the year. The diocesan focus this year was on 'discipling the core.'

Our 'discipling the core' priorities for St Peter's are to ...

1. **Grow disciples** through our preaching and by continuing to develop and encourage more people to join life groups; and through our termly evangelism hub which equips people to share their faith by embedding prayer and bible reading into their daily lives.

I am pleased to say that during 2024 we grew from one life group to three, which meet regularly, and our evangelism hub has about 15 regular attenders who have created a real enthusiasm and excitement to show and share their faith.

2. **Grow Diversity** through our intergenerational services and events, such as the popular light service and fireworks in the autumn, and by continuing to prepare our children to receive communion. In 2024, Sarah Dunn, our children and families co-ordinator, also completed Makaton courses and we began to introduce signing into our family services.

3. **Grow community** by continuing with our popular Music to Calm the Soul services during the winter months where we are able to reach out to much of our community who would not normally attend a Sunday service; and through our churchyard project which continues to attract local residents to work with the St Peter's team on shared projects. In 2024 we also began planning a building project that would allow us to run a community café alongside the Foodbank that meets on Wednesdays in St Peter's. A team was put together to manage the project, appoint an architect and explore possible grant opportunities.

Our worshipping life remained as important as ever and during Holy week and Christmas we saw good numbers of our congregation and visitors at all of our services. These included a moving and atmospheric Tenebrae service; a joint service and walk of witness with Hersham Baptist Church and All Saints Church on Good Friday (which was well attended despite the bad weather); and great Sunrise and Parish communion services on Easter Day. In our 2024 Nine Lessons and Carols service, our music group was joined by a group of children for a couple of Carols, bringing more families into the church for this service. The Nativity and Crib services, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day services were all well attended, and we raised almost £2000 in 24 hours for our chosen charity, the Shooting Star Children's Hospice. Our sermon series included preaching on the bible stories in our beautiful stained-glass windows and how to be a truly welcoming church.

Very sadly, shortly after Easter, Adela Foddy, a long-time member of St Peter's and a lay minister of our church for many years, passed away after suffering a stroke. Her preaching skills, wisdom and humour are greatly missed.

Later in the summer we said goodbye to our curate, Katrina Jenkins, and her husband, Andy, as she finished her training with us and left to take up a new role as a vicar in Derby Diocese. Many of us were able to attend her licencing in St Giles's Matlock, which was a

joyful occasion. During the summer, we also said goodbye to Sara Holland who decided to leave St Peter's and continue her training elsewhere.

However, the summer was also a time of new ministries emerging at St Peter's. We welcomed Melissa Wood who joined St Peter's while she explores ordination. She has already preached and served at communion services. We also trained four new Pastoral Visitors, Susan Chauncy, Sue Burke, Julie Mills and Margaret Hicks who were licenced by Archdeacon Martin Breadmore in September. I was also appointed as Area Dean for Emly Deanery in addition to my role as vicar of St Peter's.

2024 finally saw the end of a long running, historic child abuse case as an ex-organist and choirmaster at St Peter's was sentenced to three years in prison. I would like to give thanks to Lynne Watson, our parish safeguarding officer, who, along with the diocesan safeguarding team and myself, supported the victim before and during the court case. I would also like to pay tribute to the bravery and grace shown by the abuse survivor before, during and after the conviction and sentencing and we give thanks that justice has been served.

Sadly, at the end of 2024 Sarah Dunn decided to leave her role as children and families coordinator to join a local school where the working hours are better suited to her family. We thank her for her hard work during the year and for the resources she prepared which the team to continue to use.

During 2024 our relationships with the local schools continued to grow and in November the head teachers of both primary schools and I attended a meeting at Diocesan House to discuss and plan more ways for church and schools to work together for the benefit of our community.

Through the highs and lows of the year we have continued to grow in prayer and thanksgiving and my prayer for 2025 is that we continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all we come into contact with. Our aim is to be a blessing to our community.

My grateful thanks go to all who play a part in making St Peter's such a warm and welcoming church: those who work behind the scenes cleaning and flower arranging; the bell ringers; the coffee makers; the servers; the sides people, readers and those who lead the prayers; and the pastoral team. Thank you also to the Vauxmead team for their work in

maintaining this valuable space for the community and to those who ensure that our halls are in good condition.

My special thanks go to the churchwardens, the deputy warden, treasurer and finance team, our administrator and our PCC and PCC secretary. Also, to the ministry team, the occasional preachers and those who use their musical talents to enhance our ministry. Everyone has worked incredibly hard to support me and without you many of the things that we have achieved would not have happened.

It takes an army of people to ensure that our ministry and worshipping lives thrive and I am very grateful for all who play their part,

Jackie Richardson, Vicar