



ST SAVIOUR'S SUNBURY

Diocese of London, Kensington Area



The Parish of St Saviour's, Upper Sunbury

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Sunday 14 May 2023**

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ST SAVIOUR'S SUNBURY

Diocese of London, Kensington Area
The Parish of St Saviour's, Upper Sunbury

Annual Meeting of Parishioners (AMP)

The Annual Meeting of Parishioners will take place at St Saviour's Sunbury at 11.30am on Sunday 14th May 2023.

Agenda

1. Prayer and Minutes of last meeting
2. Appointment of **two** Church Wardens
3. Date of next meeting: 12 May 2024

Those entitled to attend, and vote are all adults resident in the parish **and** all members of the electoral roll.



**Diocese of London, Kensington Area
The Parish of St Saviour's, Upper Sunbury**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will take place at St Saviour's Sunbury directly following the AMP on Sunday 14th May 2023. **Those entitled to attend and vote:** Members of the electoral roll.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (The Revd Allen Bower)
2. Changes in the Electoral Roll (Gillian Harrap)
3. Annual Financial Report (Barbie Ryder-Matthews)
 - Independent Examiner's report for the year ending Dec 2022.
 - Appointment of Independent Examiner for period to 31 Dec 2023.
4. Election of lay representatives to the PCC and Deanery Synod (The Revd Allen Bower)
5. Resolution for the term of Deanery Synod representative
6. Wardens' report (Geraint Owen & Guy Trevithick)
7. Vicar's Report (The Revd Allen Bower)
8. Date of Next APCM – 12 May 2024
9. Closing Prayer

Date of next business PCC meeting: 15 May 2023 7.25pm.



Annual Meeting Parishioners (AMP) minutes 2022

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place on Sunday 8th May 2022.

Minutes of Meeting

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting held on 28 March 2021 were approved.

Proposed by Rani Banga: seconded by John Welch: all in agreement.

2. Election of Churchwardens

Geraint Owen and Guy Trevithick, having previously stated they were willing to stand as Churchwardens, were duly elected.

Proposed by Brad Loader: seconded by Kirsty Evans: all in favour.

The date for the next meeting was set as 26 March 2023.



Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) minutes 2022

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place directly following the AMP on Sunday 8th May 2022.

Minutes of Meeting

There were c70 adults present.

The meetings were chaired by Jess Bray outgoing (churchwarden) in the absence of Rev Allen Bower.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 28 March 2021 were approved.

Proposed by: Kirsty Evans, seconded by: Julia Jaeger: all in favour.

2. Electoral Roll

The Electoral Roll Officer, Gillian Harrap, reported that the electoral roll now stood at 227 people, 5 names had been removed, 30 added and there is one request to be removed outstanding.

3. Financial Report

The Financial Report had been prepared by Barbie Ryder-Matthews and agreed by the PCC on 14 April 2022. Due to the lack of time for people to read the various reports, it was agreed that any questions could be submitted over the coming week and these, plus the answers, would be posted on the church's website. Until then the report was on hold for approval.

4. Appointment of Auditor/Examiner

Barbie Ryder-Matthew (who joined the meeting via zoom) asked that Costas Liasu of FigTree Accountancy Ltd (based in Sunbury) be reappointed as the Financial Examiner.

Proposed by Gillian Harrap: seconded by John Welch: all in favour.

5. Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA)

Barbie Ryder-Matthews had prepared this the last financial year, January to December 2021, which showed an income of £315,908, with £178,439 in the general fund, £129,301 in the restricted and c£8,000 in the buildings fund. Expenditure had been £276.000 so there was a slight surplus.

6. Annual Report

The names of the staff listed in the Annual Report did not include Caroline Pollard (who was only employed for a few weeks before she resigned) and some staff titles had been missed; the Oasis Report had not been included either. There were no other questions on the Annual Report.

7. Election of PCC Members

Geraint Owen thanked the PCC members who were standing down for all their hard work over the past year: Barney Vanstone (PCC and warden for 8 years), Katrina Desborough (deanery) and Kim Davies (safeguarding).

The following people had stood for the five vacant places on the PCC: Lisa Cook, Gillian Harrap, Jess Bray, Hannah Welch, Doug Potkin

Andy Davis proposed: Sarah Higgs seconded: and all in favour that these nominees be elected to the PCC.

8. Wardens' Report

Geraint Owen gave the following wardens' report:

- The PCC has met bi-monthly over the last year.
- Church life feels to be returning to a more normal form following the pandemic. There is still a presence online, but aiming to move to be more of a worshipping community together and becoming more like a church family again.
- Julia Jaeger had put in a tremendous amount of work regarding the modular build, which was needed to create a dedicated space for children, with the area in front of the modular build being grassed over.
- The Glebe has reverted to being a home again and as a church we have welcomed Sophie Raeside (together with her husband Simon) as the new curate.
- The church office has now moved into the Vestry in the church, with Loraine Hutton the new Operations Director.
- Other new staff included Steve Banks-Smith who is in charge of the foodbank administration, Caroline Pollard (who asked to be released from her role after one month) and Joshua West (who left after three months); it is hoped that a new children's pastor will be employed soon.
- There had been an amazing "vision day" on Saturday 7 May 2022 involving staff, PCC and Deanery members and heads of ministries to start planning for the next five years (Mission Action Plan – MAP).
- The church building needs to be completed and there is active fundraising to make the church accessible to all.
- Following the planning permission granted in November 2019 for the side of the church to be completed, a "footings" hole has been dug (and approved by the council) as this prevents the planning permission from expiring after 3 years.
- Looking forward to feeling that the church is a family again, with people feeling it's a safe space, somewhere they are encouraged and learn to love Jesus more.

9. Vicar's Report

In Rev Allen Bower's absence, Jess Bray read out his report which looked at Isaiah 43:18-21:

Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Allen said that St Saviour's had been through a difficult time with the pandemic but that he was very excited for the future. We need to be an "open-handed" church, as we have so much we can give to those in the local community, but to do this we need to grow resources.

10 Any Other Business

Gillian Davies asked why Sonia Berry had not been included in the list of staff in the Annual Report. Sonia had resigned due to health issues but her name (and dates of employment) needed to be added. Whilst considering a replacement for Sonia, contractors have been employed to clean the church.

A query was raised about where vacancies in the church are advertised.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Guy Trevithick at 12.10pm. Next meeting scheduled 26 March 2023.



Report of the Parochial Church Council to the APCM 2023

1. PCC REPORT

Since the APCM last year the PCC has meet 6 times, all meetings were quorate and minutes taken.

2. PCC ADMINISTRATION

Members of the Parochial Church Council from March 2022 - May 2023

VICAR	The Revd Allen Bower (Ex-officio)
CURATE	The Revd Sophie Raeside (Ex-officio)
WARDENS	Mr Guy Trevithick Mr Geraint Owen
DEPUTY WARDENS	Mrs Jessica Bray Mrs Barbie Ryder-Matthews
DEANERY SYNOD REPS	Mr Norman Head (Ex-officio) Mr Stephen Pal-George Mr Simon Greatwood Mrs Lavinia Bamford Ms. Christine Rogers
ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE PCC	Mrs Barbie Ryder-Matthews (Deputy Warden) Mrs Jessica Bray (Deputy Warden) Mr Keith Willsher Miss Hannah Welch Mrs Rani Banga Mr Brad Loader Mrs Lynnette Peckett Ms. Gillian Harrap Mrs Lisa Cook

PCC SECRETARY	Mr Doug Potkin
TREASURER	Mrs Jenny Welch (Non-Voting)
ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER	Mrs Barbie Ryder-Matthews
SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS	Ms. Gillian Harrap
HEALTH & SAFETY OFFICER	Mrs Lisa Cook
	Mr Brad Loader

3. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Once again I am indebted to the work of our treasurer Barbie Ryder-Matthews, for her faithful and wise guidance throughout the year. Thank you to all who partner with us in seeing lives transformed through your giving. Everything we do is due to your incredible generosity. One way you can make a real difference is to give regularly by standing order and help us to claim gift aid. You will find the full financial report on a separate document, and if you have any questions please feel free to contact the Treasurer.

Yours sincerely, Revd Allen Bower.

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Saviour's Church, Upper Sunbury, TW18 7TP
Report and Financial Statements 2022**

Financial Review

The PCC's main source of funding is the "free will" offerings of church members.

Financial Position

Unrestricted funds

The financial position for the year has been challenging with donations being reduced due to the Church being shut during the Covid pandemic with members of the congregation struggling financially.

In overall terms at 31 Dec 2022 unrestricted funds stand at:

	£	£112,684	2021	£117,103
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Overall there was a net surplus/deficit of:

	£	-£2,214	2021	£33,851
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Historically unrestricted funds of £244,635 was designated by the PCC to enable the purchase of the property at Walsey Road for curate use. The property was sold in 2017 for £419,736 and after costs, £400k was designated towards the building fund project.

Restricted funds

The details of all the restricted funds received are set out in detail in note 10 to the accounts. A separate restricted fund manages the financial aspects of the Building Community project and this is reported in a separate column headed "BCP" and forms part of these financial statements.

At 31 December 2022 Building project restricted funds: 10a £148,591

At 31 December 2022 Asset Sales: 10b £0

At 31 December 2022 General restricted funds: 10c £55,869

At 31 December 2022 Fuel Fund project restricted funds: 10d £19,652

At 31 December 2021 Building project restricted funds: 10a £307,026

At 31 December 2021 Asset Sales were: 10b £0

At 31 December 2021 General restricted funds: 10c £99,598

At 31 December 2021 Fuel Fund project restricted funds: 10d £5,594

Reserves Policy

The PCC's aim is to have an unrestricted reserve level that is neither deficient or excessive, and seeks to strike a balance between two competing needs: on the one hand to have sufficient funds available to meet unexpected costs and/or loss of income, and on the other hand, to optimise its use of available funds to make the church's vision a reality in the local community. The Reserves Policy set in 2005 was revisited in 2013 and agreed that unrestricted funds should be available to meet any contingencies that may arise up to an amount of £25,000. The current unrestricted funds are in line with this level and are considered appropriate.

The PCC regularly review the position in light of their existing and anticipated commitments.

Risk Management 2022

All Health and Safety requirements have been up-dated including any necessary Risk Assessments.

Quinquennial

Our quinquennial inspection took place in November 2018. The porta cabin, which has reached its life expectancy, will be dealt with as part of the build project. The asbestos roof requiring replacing will be removed as part of the build project.

Auditors/Independent Examiner

The accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 fall beneath the audit threshold and are therefore subject to review by an independent examiner.

Approval

The report of the PCC for 2022 accounts was approved by the PCC on the 28th April 2023

Revd Allen Bower

Date: 28th April 2023

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Saviour's Church, Upper Sunbury, TW16 7TP
Report and Financial Statements 2022

Independent Examiner's Report to the PCC of St Saviour's Church, Sunbury Upon Thames

I report on the accounts of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Saviour's for the year ended 31 December 2022, which are set out on pages 11 to 16.

Respective responsibilities for the PCC and the examiner

The PCC is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The PCC considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) but that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income exceeds £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and Chartered Global Management Accountant. It is my responsibility to:

- 1 examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2012 act;
- 2 to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- 3 to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act and the Regulations have not been met; or

(2) To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: _____



Date: 26/04/2023 _____

Costas Loizou ACMA CGMA
Figtree Accountancy Limited
25 Claremont Avenue
Sunbury-On-Thames
Middlesex
TW16 5LX

4. CHURCH WARDENS' REPORT

The life of St Saviour's in 2022 was characterised (as ever) by new & unexpected events. However, through the uncertainty with its accompanying challenges we have much to be grateful for.

In 2022 we started to encounter some of the medium to longer term legacy of the Covid-19 restrictions of 2020/21. The need for example to continue to live stream services with people joining & connecting with the church community through a mix of online activity & attendance in person. This is likely to continue into the future.

In 2022 we were able to re-introduce the full range of activities the church has historically undertaken. Beyond the Sunday services (The10, The4 & The6) the Wednesday Oasis service, the Community Work, schools, youth & kids work as well as other numerous activities. Staff & volunteers have all worked tirelessly to re-establish the rhythm of church life and engage with the many people that we serve. The resumption of the full range of church activities obviously meant we incurred higher costs than in 2021. This at a time when the steep increase in inflation further increased the costs we incurred in the daily operating of the church.

At the beginning of May 2022 Revd Allen Bower started what would prove to be a period of 5 months of compassionate leave. We are delighted that Allen returned to work full time – after careful consideration by Allen himself & those others from the Diocese who were supporting him - at the beginning of November. We are very grateful for the support given to Allen & the wardens by Archdeacon Richard. Likewise the response & support given by the local clergy (a particular thank you to Father Joseph, Revd David Vanstone, Revd Michael Burley, & Revd Tim Rose), the staff team & the volunteers across the church community was impressive & humbling.

The list of people to acknowledge & thank by name is too long for this report. However there are many vivid memories of people giving generously of their time, energy, skills & financially for which we are deeply grateful. Meetings & plans on all aspects of church life were still conducted with decisions taken in unity (not without some robust discussions as is healthy!). Practical work was completed on parts of the church buildings. Meetings were led, teaching was given, financial challenges faced, calls to prayer & fasting were heard & acted upon & the schools & the community work continued.

Many people have given much in 2022.

A fitting testimony to the servant hearted people who make St Saviour's what it is.

Geraint Owen & Guy Trevithick

5. OASIS REPORT

Our Oasis community continues to meet every Wednesday for a more formal service with Holy Communion followed by a time of fellowship. The congregation has seen a number of new people join them plus the return of some familiar faces.

We have been blessed to have a few local clergy join us to preside over communion when our clergy were unavailable. During August we had a more informal time of meeting with a Thought for the Day and a time of prayer and fellowship. The year ended with a Carol concert.

6. KIDS' MINISTRY

The year began with Kids' Ministry being led by a number of core members of the team. We are grateful to Hannah Welch who continued to support the administration of the Kids' Ministry whilst we went through the recruitment process.

In April we were thrilled that Claudia Aimer joined the team as Kids and Youth Pastor and took on the full running of the ministry with 2 groups running on Sundays, called Mini Church in the Chapel and Kids Church in the Modular Building. Our focus was to find an identity for the building and the groups. In September we were very happy to launch The Light House and our groups Stars (birth to 3 years), Sparks (3 years to Year 2) and Blaze (Year 3 – Year 6).

Our team has grown, not only in numbers but those willing to step up and do more on a Sunday. We are still low on numbers and more volunteers will just make Sundays run smoother with scope to grow.

In September we also started Junior Kick Academy which runs the first Friday of each month for an hour; this is catered for Year 3 – Year 6 children. On Thursday we have a stay and play in The Light House that runs adjacent to The Haven allowing for families to stay for lunch afterwards.

At the end of the Spring term 2023 we had transitions sessions for the kids moving up to youth and on the last day we had a celebration service where we were able to pray and present the Year 6 kids to Youth. Also the Year 2 kids in Sparks have moved up to Blaze.

7. YOUTH MINISTRY

During 2022, we have continued to bring sessions to young people both at St Saviour's and in three local secondary schools, social activities for the young people to enjoy, and The 4 service. At The 4 we have seen young people preach, host, lead worship and be involved in the band, visuals and welcoming.

Claudia Aimer joined the staff team in April 2022 as our Kids and Youth Pastor and has been working with Sonia Stead to run some of our youth activities. Sarah Welch finished her placement with us in August 2022, which she had been doing as part of her BA in Theology and Youth Ministry at St Mellitus. It was great to have Sarah on the youth team and supporting her as her placement church.

We have also been able to provide support for local youth and children's workers and hosted a Spelthorne deanery training morning in February 2022. Sonia also did some filming with the Diocese of London Compassionate Communities' team regarding young people's wellbeing. Sonia also took part in a Diocese of London Board for Schools film about churches and schools working together,

discussing Bishop Wand and St Saviour's working together to help students manage anxiety. During Easter holidays in April 2023, we were able to partner with Kick to provide one multi sports day camp for kids and another for youth, which was great fun for all involved.

With the help and support of the youth team it is wonderful to see God do amazing things. It is such a privilege to share the good news of Jesus and shine his light at both St Saviour's and beyond in local secondary schools too.

8. PRAYER

Prayer continues to underpin everything that we do at St Saviour's. We have a number of prayer meetings throughout the week including Tuesday morning Dynamic prayer, Tuesday morning staff prayer, Wednesday Men's breakfast and prayer as well as our monthly prayer meeting which runs over zoom. We are thankful to Guy Trevithick, John Welch, Julia Jaeger and Christine Rogers for leading these prayer meetings.

9. WORSHIP

The past year has been particularly challenging for the worship ministry. We have lost some significant members of the team whom God has called to amazing things, as well as valuable members having had family commitments. I implemented the solution to invest in click track technology, which has released any restriction on the more upbeat and technical songs whilst having less team members. We are currently sourcing tracks from Multitracks.com and using Playback software. We are trusting God and always praying for new, skilled members of the team. We also upgraded our speaker system which has been such an incredible blessing and makes a substantial difference to the sound.

The team attended a couple of worship training opportunities which were well attended and fruitful for them. I also link up with the other HTB worship pastors via CRT network which is invaluable for me, to share best practice and gain support. I have also recently linked with the local worship pastors network of local C of E churches in the area.

We held a classical concert for the Ashford Orchestra which raised over £600 for the church. We continue to offer worship at all 5 services every week, with the emphasis on encouraging the youth in supporting them to lead worship at The 4. Over the summer term, we engaged the church in a number of successful Spirit-filled worship evenings at The 6.

10. COMMUNITY MINISTRY

We ran a Community Celebration for the Queens Jubilee which hosted over 150 people, with Lunch provided and games & activities.

In August we organised for 3 coaches to go to West Wittering and provided a family day out for the local community, including ice creams for the children.

We launched The Haven which runs on a Monday and Thursday, it is a safe place for the community to meet new people. We have also been funded by A2 Dominion and provide a knitting group which has 15 + members.

We worked with our Kids Ministry to provide a Stay & Play group for 0-pre-school aged children which is held every Thursday during term time in The Light house.

We have a relationship with Talking Therapies NHS this allows us to refer clients with mental health issues.

On Maundy Thursday we provided over 100 lunches for the which was provided and served by Kempton Jockey Club. Each child also received an activity box and an Easter egg. Including surplus foods, foodbank parcels and the lunch 488 people were fed.

We held a Christmas party for over 100 children and their parents –carers. We provided a Christmas tea party, games and a Nativity puppet show. We provided 100 families with Christmas gifts and vouchers for each child to the value of £25. Each family received a Christmas Blessing bag which contained special Christmas goodies.

This year we have received many donations from food to cash donations. We have been blessed by corporate companies across Surrey, these include local authorities, The Rotary Club, Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council. We have created strong relationships with local schools, health authorities, DWP, Citizen Advice Bureau. We meet regularly with other local foodbanks via Spelthorne Borough Council. This gives us an opportunity to work together and to let the authorities know where support is needed.

11. WOMEN'S MINISTRY

During 2022 we held 8 events with 20 - 30 women at most events. We settled into a rhythm of 3 events a term, breaking over holiday periods. Sue Willsher & Rev Sophie Raeside led a small team with Julia Jaeger and Sue Mackintosh. During 2022 Rachel Tully & Yvette Kemp joined the team, and sadly Sue Mackintosh decided to step down - we again thank her for her faithful service over the years!

Using feedback we had received from our ladies, this year's events focused on key topics of interest with a variety of guest speakers and interspersed with time to purely socialise and get to one another better. Topics included: Sophie leading us in a time of prayerful reflection using the Examen to get the year started; then a range of external guest speakers (either virtually or in person as location permitted) looking at sustainability; grief; anxiety & overwhelm; a wonderful taster session of Kintsugi Hope; and we ended the year looking at discipleship and with a time of thanksgiving & worship as we reflected back on the year considering all God's goodness.

12. LIFE GROUPS

Our hope is that fellowship and discipleship will be central to everything we do at St Saviour's and that everyone will get plugged into a Life Group.

Over the past few years we have had Allen, the Raesides', Bangas', Agars' and the Welchs' step down from hosting Life Groups. With a shortage of groups Revd Allen & Revd Sophie were looking into some alternative solutions to best cater for those seeking to join a Life Group. These plans were postponed with Allen on compassionate leave and Sophie taking maternity leave.

However, Life Groups hosted by the Davis', Jen Dougherty, and Bill Adams continue to meet. It has also been so exciting to see the commencement of three new Life Groups, hosted by the Willshers', Kemps' and a Community Life Group on Thursdays.

We are so grateful for all the Hosts, past and present, who have given out so much to facilitate these groups.

13. OPERATIONS

We have continued to have 4-5 services a week at The O, The Haven, The 10, The 4 and The 6. Numbers attending these services have continued to grow, and it has been amazing to welcome so many new people to St Saviour's. We have been blessed to have a wide range of preachers and service leaders each week, and are very grateful for their hard work and to that of the worship, tech and welcome teams who make our services run so smoothly.

We have carried out 2 baby dedications, 2 baptisms and taken 5 funerals during the year.

All of the Health & Safety checks/inspections and Risk Assessments are all up to date and were carried out on time.

We have implemented the new Diocese Safeguarding Dashboard and have achieved a 99% progress rate. All of our teams are now DBS checked and have carried out their safeguarding training.

14. PAID STAFF CHANGES

Claudia Aimer was employed as Kids & Youth Pastor April 2022.
Sarah Welch position as Youth Student finished in August 2022.
Revd Sophie Raeside went on maternity leave in December 2022.

15. DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

With the lifting of restrictions, Synod was once again able to meet in person rather than by zoom in February, June & October. Synod meetings provide an opportunity for sharing news and enjoying friendship with the clergy and lay representatives from the eleven churches within the Spelthorne Deanery.

Clergy moves within the Deanery – there were no appointments, retirements or resignations this year.

The February meeting featured a presentation by Rev Jonathan Rust Director Of Mission for Kensington Area on "Living in Love & Faith"(LLF) which is one of the pillars of the London Diocese Capital Vision 2030, His talk, illustrated with slides, acknowledged that human sexuality, relationships and marriage can be a difficult subject to discuss for those of the "baby boom" generation and that the Church has often appeared to be out of touch with modern society and not welcoming to all people in our communities.

Fr Robert Thompson (a member of General Synod) spoke and led a discussion on The Parish System at our June meeting. Amongst items discussed were: What animates us about Jesus? What do we feel about Church Plants?' How do we offer a welcome to those from a different cultural background? Also, how do we ensure that by "growing younger" we do not alienate older members of our congregations?

Our final meeting in October heard from Alison Tsang, from the Diocese, who spoke on Compassionate Communities & Modern Slavery. Her talk highlighted key areas: Caring for God's creation; Mental Health & Isolation; Refugees, Asylum Seekers & Modern Slavery; Money, Debt & Food Insecurity; Safer Communities for all young people & Housing & Homelessness.

Annual Finance meetings were hosted by Archdeacon Richard Franks & Rev Mary Spredbury (Diocesan Finance Officer)

During the year reports were given by Nick Wood-Dow & Carolyn Clark on issues discussed at the London Diocesan Synod.

At the October meeting synod approved the appointment of Mrs Jayne Brownlow as Deanery Representative on the Board of Governors of Laleham CE School.

Finally, the following were elected to serve on the Standing Committee of the Deanery Synod: Fr Joseph Fernandes (Area Dean); Rev Simon Douglas Lane & Fr Stuart King as Clergy representatives. Norman Head (current Lay Chair); Deborah Bull & Jo Child were elected as Lay representatives.

16. VICARS REPORT 2023

Matthew Chapter 15

v16-18 "The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."

v28-29 "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Spring is such a wonderful season to write a report because Spring is all about Hope. The harshness of winter is subsiding. Summer is coming. It's quite eschatological; the now but not yet. We see signs of better things to come.

The last twelve months have felt a bit like winter. As we emerged from the pandemic we hankered after some form of normality. We longed for a spiritual summer, a time of renewal. However, our reality felt more akin to survival. Like many churches across the nation, we discovered not everyone has returned to regular worship. Reasons include people relocating, retiring, illness, bereavement, new work or family pressures.

The effect of this has impacted every area of our worship life.

We have struggled to resource teams in Welcoming, Prayer Ministry, Life Group Leaders, Kids, Youth, Foodbank, Preachers, Service Hosts, Pastoral Care and Worship.

The funding we receive not just from the congregation, but also from outside agencies, has been greatly reduced. This combined with the rising cost of living presented some uncertainty. We began conversations on where costs might be cut and how any decision may affect the future of our mission here in Sunbury.

I myself was absent on an extended period of compassionate leave, which no doubt only compounded any uncertainty.

While I have been reflecting and praying about what God might be saying in all of this, I have been drawn to the words of Jesus in Matthew 25, the parable of the Bags of Gold.

Jesus gives a blueprint for an environment, a culture, a way of life, that bears fruit, brings blessing and transforms lives.

It is a culture where taking risks for Jesus is encouraged, failure is embraced, and making space for Jesus is prized.

It's so exciting to see some of the fruit of this Spirit-led, risk-taking culture throughout the life of St Saviour's.

- Many new people attending.
- In person Christmas and Carol services.
- A packed church on Easter Sunday with 11 baptisms.
- Stories of transformed lives.
- Attending the summer Focus camp and seeing so many from St Saviour's encouraged and fired up in their faith.
- Our Friday evening Youth sessions growing and full of life.
- Joining with other churches for youth events.
- Launching The Light House, a vibrant space for young people to grow and be nurtured.
- Launching a Stay & Play toddler group.
- Welcoming our new Kids & Youth Pastor.
- Transforming the safeguarding culture at St Saviour's.
- Men & Women's events, with fellowship and inspiring speakers.
- A Women's Bible Study group.
- Seeing the Haven become a hub for fellowship, surplus food, foodbank, breakfasts, lunches, Citizens Advice, Debt Advice, Housing Advice, Fuel Support, Knitting Clubs, Life Groups, Worship, Mental Health support, and so much more.
- Invitations to local primary and secondary schools where we have shared the Good News of Jesus.
- Supporting the Bishop Wand school achieve an outstanding SIAMS report.
- Seeing a packed church as we hosted Kenyngton Manor school's Christmas service.

These are the seeds of courageous risk-taking for Jesus. These are the awesome signs of a spiritual Spring. Winter has gone; Summer is not here yet, but it is coming.

I am indebted to those who stepped up during my absence and faithfully led St Saviour's at a most challenging time. I am also incredibly grateful to all our staff and volunteers who give out so much, often behind the scenes, and often with little appreciation.

And I am so thankful for all God has done and continues to do. To Him be the glory.

Lots of love, Allen