



The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,

St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

in St John's Church, Boxmoor

Sunday 4 May 2025 at 11am

following the Parish Eucharist

Book 3 - Contents

Reports from PCC committees, our daughter churches
and other church organisations

REPORTS FROM PCC COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair : Anne Lyne (Facebook and media). Members : The Vicar (Newsletter), Sally-Anne Bates (Secretary, Magazine and Webteam), Peter Garner, Graham Gibbs, Annie Mitchell, Job Rombout, Rosie Shaw (Webteam, under the supervision of Stacey Barton).

The Communications Committee is responsible for all aspects of communication and media, internal and external, on behalf of the parish. In my time as Chair, the work of the committee has changed to adapt to the modern world of communications and is now vastly different from what it would have been 10 or 15 years ago. Our remit includes the monthly parish magazine, the weekly newsletter, our website, our representation on social media (Facebook), the Christmas and Easter cards delivered to every home in the parish, the issue of press releases and articles about special services and events (for the parish magazine and to Boxmoor Direct for example).

Comms is a large committee, with 8 members currently. If members of the parish would like to contact us, or feel they have expertise they could share with us, we are as listed above.

However, the communications effort in the parish involves substantial input from other people who are not actually committee members. We are very grateful for all the hours put in by Alan Munford and Paul Davies, and not forgetting Deniece Colley.

Since the APCM 2024 we have met 5 times, mostly via Zoom, with an in-person meeting in July. Unfortunately, the scheduled November meeting had to be postponed.

Magazine. Sally-Anne Bates has devotedly and expertly edited the parish magazine for all of her adult life, and now manages the advertising portfolio as well, battling to get all the information in time for the publication to go to print each month, often against the deadline. Our profound thanks go to Sally for this demanding task. Parish Administrator Deniece Colley prints the magazines, then Alan Munford bundles them up ready for distribution. If anyone would like to contribute material for the magazine, then please send it to Sally at magazine@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk.

Weekly Newsletter. The weekly newsletter is created and updated in the Parish Office by the Vicar and Parish Administrator (thank you Mike and Deniece.) We are very grateful to Paul Davies for printing the newsletter and service sheets every week and to Alan Munford for sending it all out by email. Anyone who wishes to submit a short news item for the newsletter should send it by email to newsletter@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk or to the Parish Office.

Social Media. We have a presence on Facebook. The St John's page has 604 followers (up from 552 last year) with the vast majority of the audience being female, aged from early 20s upwards. I share on our page every day the Church of England Prayer of the Day, to facilitate our prayer life, and any other CofE or Diocesan material which seems appropriate and other material of interest as it occurs. It is necessary to post on the page regularly to keep our information appearing in the Facebook "feeds" of our followers. On our page, we promote our own parish services, seasons of worship, events, fundraisers and concerts. Where such information is relevant to the wider community, I share our Facebook posts on to other local groups and pages. If the information is available, I share the posters for concerts performed in the church by other local choirs and orchestras. Each time we publicise an event, we gain a few more "followers". We seek to portray ourselves as an active and welcoming parish.

In the light of current concerns within the church about safeguarding, we now have a social media safeguarding policy, drawn up by Rosie Ackroyd and adopted by the PCC.

Website. We have an excellent website <https://stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk/> designed and set up by Stacey Barton to whom we are immensely grateful. Stacey maintains overall control and advises and trains the team as necessary but has stepped down from the committee due to family and work commitments.

As a Comms team, we know we still have work to do on the website to use its full potential and we hope to embark on this shortly. After a period, which unfortunately coincided with the Christmas season, when our live-streaming of services failed due to circumstances beyond our control, we are now able to live-stream once more. We are grateful to Sally-Anne for taking on day to day responsibility for updating the posters on the website and to the Vicar, for whom the lack of live-streaming capacity has created hours of extra work. As well as information on parish activities, the website provides the link to the (free) ticketing for the busy Christmas services and also has a donations button among its facilities.

If parishioners would like to add material, including photos, or make a comment regarding the website, the Web Team have a dedicated email address webteam@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk.

Parish Christmas and Easter cards. The parish Christmas and Easter cards are an important part of our outreach. They are delivered to every home in the parish, to send seasonal greetings and to inform residents of the times of services and of parish activities. The designs are chosen by the Communications Committee, and the cards themselves are drawn up by the Vicar, in conjunction with the seasonal service posters. They are all printed by Kallkwik (who can do it cheaper than we can in-house now). We print over 8,000 Christmas cards, about half of which are delivered by volunteers within the parish, but the other half, which go to the outlying areas we find difficult to cover, are outsourced to Dor2Dor. The Easter card only goes to the inner areas of the parish (4,000 cards), and we are grateful for volunteers from the congregation who deliver them. Without their help our work would be in vain. I liaise with Kallkwik and Dor2Dor for the printing and delivery, and am very grateful to Alan Munford who, though no longer a member of the Committee, so expertly bundles the cards and organises them for distribution into numbered "walks".

General event publicity. The Comms Committee always needs to be aware of parish events and decide what level of publicity is required. We do make use of posters and publicity material supplied to us from other committees and branches of parish life, but it is not our function to create posters for other parish groups, only to share appropriately information made available to us. Where necessary, we can generate press releases. For event publicity, we are indebted to Alan Munford, who occasionally undertakes the task of designing posters and is entirely responsible for designing and procuring banners, sometimes liaising with the likes of David Doyle to gain sponsorship. Alan reserves the prime location on the Moor opposite the station for the Christmas Tree Festival banner a whole year in advance.

Media. From time to time I write articles about events for the parish magazine, also articles on behalf of the parish for Boxmoor Direct to promote our major fundraisers. In the past I have also submitted pieces to the Gazette/Hemel Online, but this no longer seems to be worth the effort. I would like to express my personal thanks for all Sally-Anne Bates does to keep the committee on track, to record our activities, and for sharing with me as appropriate posters and images in the correct format for me to use on social media. I am grateful for the support from the committee and their participation in getting the job done and to the Vicar for the large part he plays in our parish life and communications.

FINANCE AND GIVING COMMITTEE

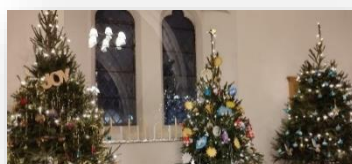
Chair : Chris Angell. Members : The Vicar, Jo Fisher, Mark Harbour, Job Rombout.

The Committee met regularly during 2024, both on-line and face to face, to review financial progress, agree reports and propose budgets for the PCC's consideration. A joint meeting was held with the Fundraising Committee to "brainstorm" ideas for increasing income and, in particular, possible new sources of revenue. Support was given to the Churchwardens in dealing with erroneous billing and charging against our direct debits by energy suppliers to all three churches. Resolution of the issues, payment of outstanding charges and refunds and establishing correct gas and electricity usage levels going forward all remain to be concluded, but progress continues to be made.

Bucket collections were organised in support of various Disasters Emergency Committee appeals. Note 11 to the Annual Accounts sets out the outward giving recommended to the PCC by the Committee, detailing the Charities supported either directly or through these special collections. The Committee struggle to keep the financial ship on an even keel and would welcome anyone from our three churches with financial expertise and/or an interest in Missions giving to join us. New ideas and a fresh perspective can only help!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Chair : Cathy Shaw. Members : The Vicar, Chris Angell, Jean Garner, Anne Lyne, Di Tovey.



The role of the Fundraising Committee is to schedule and plan a set of fundraising events and activities over the course of each year, to aim to meet the fundraising target set in the year's budget, and coordinate delivery of these. We also aim to gather feedback and learning from key events and discuss this as a group, to understand what worked well and what we could try differently in future, both in terms of financial results and to make activities and events more accessible, enjoyable and contribute to fellowship within the church and build connections with the parish community. The committee members directly organise some but not all fundraising events. We have a general

responsibility to find lead organisers for all planned events, and support them where needed. In 2024 we planned and delivered six main events (three quiz nights, the Summer Fete, Countdown to Christmas Fayre, and Christmas Tree Festival). In addition, some income from activities connected with our 150th anniversary celebration events was included in the fundraising target and results, and a range of smaller activities undertaken by the congregation also contributed to the total over the year.

Event	Date	Financial result (approx.)
Quiz night 1	10 February	£704
Quiz night 2	27 April	£795
Summer Fete	15 June	£2,475
(150 th Celebration)	June	£1,000
Quiz night 3	5 October	£800
Countdown to Christmas Fayre	23 November	£2,700
Christmas Tree Festival 2024	13-17 December	£3,850
Other activities		£1,922
TOTAL		£14,246

Some key learning and results from the year's activities include:

- ❖ The quizzes (for which thanks go to many people, but especially Alan Munford and the Vicar) remain very popular, and frequently sell out. They do require more than one person to deliver (at least three and ideally more, to cover off all activities related to planning and collecting bookings, preparing and calling the questions, collecting and marking responses, organising and running raffles and auxiliary activities).
- ❖ The Summer Fayre was a very pleasant event, and well attended. Based outside (subject to weather) we were blessed with sunshine once more. This year we were unable to identify a lead organiser outside of the committee but aim to do so for 2025.
- ❖ The Countdown to Christmas Fayre was a similarly successful and happy occasion.
- ❖ For both the Summer and Christmas fayres, a huge effort was put in by many people ahead of and on the day to make the events a success (and indeed this is the case every year, and hugely appreciated by the committee and event organisers). Our sense from the numbers attending, atmosphere on the days, and anecdotal feedback is that both these events make a strong contribution to sense of community in Boxmoor. One regular visitor even comes across from her home in Essex every year, she likes it so much!
- ❖ The Christmas Tree Festival was once again a major success, organised wonderfully by Jean Hammond, and outperformed its own fundraising target substantially. As focussed wrap up review was conducted by the organising group, to support similar strong performance in future. It continues to play an important part in St Johns' programme of events for Christmas, and in our witness and outreach, drawing people into Church, to the much-appreciated Carols around the trees outside, and to Christmas services inside. (and provides stunning decoration of the Church for the whole period as a lovely side-effect!).
- ❖ It is noted that all events would benefit greatly from additional helping hands and organisers, and the Committee team is keen to find ways to support people to get involved.

As the year drew to a close, the Committee turned its attention to planning for 2025. With a substantially higher target to meet in 2025 and likely beyond according to budget needs, there will be a greater variety of activities and events planned alongside all our usual events as set out above,

and some new experiments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank wholeheartedly every member of the committee, who engage with energy and commitment. We will be delighted to welcome new members – please don't hesitate to speak to me if interested. I would also like to thank all the many church friends who come together and put so much effort in to make these events go so well, and provide both contribution to funds and much fun.

HALL COMMITTEE

Chair : Bob Hammond. Members : The Vicar, Peter Garner, Mark Harbour, Lorraine Ioannou, Graham Liddle (Bookings Secretary), Di Tovey.

The hall committee has worked hard this year to ensure that the hall is kept up to standard and run smoothly in the day-to-day usage. Thank you to Graham Liddle for his continued efforts with the hall bookings and to Di Tovey for her overseeing of the opening and closing of the hall on a daily basis. A big thank you to all committee members for their hard work and support.

This year we have renewed the chairs in the hall; we have had very good feedback about them from all hall users. The old chairs were all put to good use, some to St. Francis and others to various church projects within the Dacorum area.

We have employed new cleaners who are doing a sterling job. Except for bleach, all detergents, soaps and cleaning products are now Eco-friendly. We use large containers for these which are then decanted into the smaller dispensers for ease of use. Thank you to Dee Fisher for her help with this matter.

The Hygiene Inspection of the kitchen took place on Wednesday 26 March. I am pleased to report that this went very well and we are now awaiting our star rating, which should arrive in early June. Well done Di and Lorraine!

Notice boards have been fitted in the hall to display any relevant safety & usage information. Thanks to Mark Harbour for this.

The hall committee members are happy to receive any suggestions or feedback concerning the hall.

PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Chair : The Vicar. Member : Carole Lewis.

This Committee meets on a confidential basis; for obvious reasons its proceedings are neither minuted nor reported publicly.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Chair : Lorraine Ioannou. Member : Di Tovey.

The Social Committee runs events in church that are not-for-profit events and St John's lunch club aims to provide a Sunday lunch every 4-6 weeks depending on other activities arranged.

It was decided with the lunches to limit the number to 36 maximum which seems to be working quite well and does not put too much pressure on the cooks, as it seems to be the same few people who volunteer every time. Marian Davies has made a useful connection with Cooks at Berkhamsted who provide ready prepared meals for which they give us a discount which is a great help in keeping the costs down.

J&J Butchers at Warners End are very generous with their discounts if they know it is for Church. The highlight of the year for the Social Committee was the Jubilee Mass for our 150th anniversary, followed by lunch for 46 people including the Bishop of St Alban's.

The following day, which was Bank Holiday Monday, the Vicar and several intrepid members of the congregation "beat the bounds" of the Parish stopping at several watering holes en route. We provided hot dogs and burgers on their return.

We once again held a Pancake Party for children under 12. The Vicar once again was referee taking all the children into church to run down the aisles tossing their pancakes as they ran. Proceedings in the kitchen were somewhat enlivened when we managed to set the fire alarms off and were unable to work out how to switch them off – the tea-towel trick does not work in the Church Hall. Eventually the Vicar located the box where the off switch was and peace was restored.

Many pancakes consumed and we managed to satisfy most, if not all, of the children.

In the evening the adults had a very enjoyable chocolate and prosecco party. A large amount of chocolate was consumed in the shape of a chocolate fountain with marshmallows and strawberries, chocolate flan, boxes of chocs, choc cakes and biscuits. All this was washed down with prosecco or coffee, everyone went home feeling very satisfied.

It would be nice to have a few more volunteers to provide a Sunday lunch. If there are enough people then it would only involve cooking once or twice a year and it does not have to be a Sunday roast, it could be a shepherds pie, a pastry topped pie, a casserole or something brought in. There are always people who are prepared to make a pudding and funds to remunerate anyone who provides food.

REPORTS FROM DAUGHTER CHURCHES

ST FRANCIS, HAMMERFIELD

Contact : Trevor Standen.

The last year has seen a further increase in numbers of regular worshippers at SFH, with a pronounced increase in the under 40 age group. Numbers are up by at least a third compared to 5 years ago.

The Year has seen us help raise much money for local charities, not the least of which has been The Hospice of St. Francis, via our Autumn Fair, our Christmas Carol Service and our coffee monies.

On 13 July the new Bishop of Richborough, Rt. Revd Luke Irvine-Capel will preach and preside with lunch being provided afterwards in the hall. All are welcome (we need prior notification of any coming to lunch). Several of us journeyed to Canterbury for his consecration.

Hall bookings and revenues are significantly increased over those of last year.

We also welcome Fr. Edmund Cargill Thompson to the rota of priests.

ST STEPHEN, CHAULDEN

Contact : Jean Garner.

As a congregation we try to minister particularly to the elderly which is a great joy and we continue to be a witness to the Church of England in Chaulden. We always ring the bell before services.

We are small in number but our members come every week and enjoy the worship and the fellowship. We appreciate Mike's regular visits which enables us to celebrate Holy Communion at least once a month: on the other Sundays we welcome Carole Lewis to lead worship and to preach. When they cannot come, then Richard, Anne and I have permission to lead a service and give a message.

During Lent we again welcomed a number of our friends from St. John's for a Lent group on Thursday morning, this year led by the vicar and including Holy Communion.

Expenditure on the building has been minimal. Please see the full financial report on St. Stephen's which is included in the annual account and which shows that the congregation contribute generously to parish funds.

Why not come and join us one Sunday at 11.30 a.m?

REPORTS FROM OTHER CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Contact : Val Darville.

The Bereavement Group is a Team led by the Vicar, assisted by our Lay Reader Carole Lewis, together with four members of the congregation.

Following a funeral taken by our Clergy we contact the bereaved families and offer our help which usually consists of providing a good listening ear. This past year the Clergy have taken 30 funerals. Each family have been contacted by the Team to offer support at this very difficult time. We sometimes need to contact several members of the family to ensure that they all feel supported.

We hold regular meetings in strict confidence to discuss between ourselves the best way we can offer help and to ensure the appropriate person makes contact.

After we have made contact we send a copy of our monthly magazine to the bereaved family together with the dates of the forthcoming Friendship Teas.

The Friendship Teas provide an opportunity for the bereaved to meet new people and make new friends at a very difficult time. We try to encourage those now left on their own to come along. Invitations to the Remembrance Service in November are sent to the families of the bereaved where our Clergy have officiated at the funerals during the past year. We have found that this Service provides a focus for the bereaved and provides comfort to the families.

BIBLE READING NOTES

Contact : Jane Prew-Bridgwood.

There are several publications available on this subject, however, the most popular with St John's readers is New Daylight. For each day there is passage from the bible followed by a simple and interesting interpretation. It is published three times a year and costs £5.25 per issue. A larger print version is also available at £6.50. If you are interested and would like to see a copy, please call Jane Prew-Bridgwood on 01442 214441.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL GROUP

Contacts : Jean Hammond, Anne Lyne.

The Christmas Tree Festival Committee is, as its name suggests, an *ad hoc* committee which meets between July each year and the January of the following year, to organise the Christmas Tree Festival, a large undertaking, and follow up with a meeting to discuss what improvements could be made for the following year. Jean Hammond bravely agreed to take on the lead role on the committee from the 2023 Festival onwards, working with a small committee which includes Bob Hammond, Alan and Yvonne Munford, Anne Lyne, Di Tovey and Lorraine Ioannou, all of whom played their part fully. This is in no way a limited committee and if anyone would like to join us, you would be more than welcome. The preparation for and the running of the Christmas Tree Festival takes up many hours, days, weeks and months each year. We are very grateful to Jean Hammond for doing such a sterling job. Nevertheless, the Festival could not take place at all without the

generosity of those who sponsor and/or decorate the trees and as a Committee we recognise our debt to them.

The Committee and the entire parish owes a great deal of gratitude to Jean Garner for all the many years in which she organised the Festival without the help of a backing committee, originally as a fundraising event for Music at St John's, and during which the Festival grew and grew.

The theme chosen for the 2024 Festival was "Joy to the World!" The Festival itself opened on Friday 13 December and finally closed on Tuesday 17 December. The way the dates fell for the 2024 Festival enabled us to open it on the Sunday, after worship, as well, whereas in some years, the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols in the evening means it cannot be open to the public on the Sunday.

There were 28 decorated trees inside the church (22 medium and 6 large), the sponsorship for which raised a total of £1,240. Outside there were 16 large trees and 2 extra large, raising a total of £2,380 from sponsors. The refreshments brought in £453 net, a very good achievement, for which we acknowledge the very hard work of the refreshments team of Di and Lorraine and their families and all others who helped.

Alan Munford is analysing all the detailed footfall statistics, but we believe that the actual number of visitors was around 850 over the course of the festival (at least 531 paying adults, probably many more) – a very worthwhile community engagement. It is also highly likely that people who visited the church for carol services both during and after the festival may have made donations through the Good Box, so takings could be even higher. During the festival itself, £299 was taken on the card machine, including some payments for refreshments, for glühwein and for the small raffle.

The final grand total was a marvellous £3,850.

The Carols Around the Trees on the Saturday afternoon was, as always, a very enjoyable event. We offer our thanks to Vicar Mike for leading the service and being generally in charge of the event (with help from Abbie), to Keith Beniston for accompanying us on the keyboard, not to mention Richard Lyne for donning the big red costume and beard once more. Mike had printed out at least 200 carol sheets; these had all been taken and people were sharing. Our estimate is therefore that there were around 300 people taking part.

The Christmas Tree Festival 2024 was a very successful event which surpassed all our expectations. However, the committee will not rest on our laurels, and will as always try to seek ways in which we could do better next year.

CHURCH FLOWERS

Contact : Julie Boyce.

Fresh flowers are on display most weeks of the year in St John's Church which include an arrangement at the Altar and a ring of flowers around the Paschal candle. There is generally no cost to the church finances as we have continued support from many members of the congregation who sponsor flower arrangements, usually for a special occasion. A very small team of dedicated flower arrangers and most of whom are congregation members, purchase and arrange the flowers for the sponsor. An optional message from the sponsor is included in the weekly Newsletter.

In addition to the regular Altar arrangements Mothering Sunday posies are assembled for distribution during the Sunday service. On Maundy Thursday an arrangement of beautifully scented white flowers is arranged on the Altar of Repose to evoke a sense of calm reflection. The Easter Garden in the porch heralds the start of Easter when the church is decorated with lilies at the Altar and flowers around the Font and on the window sills. At Harvest Festival, again the church is adorned with flowers, fruit and vegetables celebrating the harvest. At the start of Advent, the Advent ring is decorated and candles are placed in it to be lit during the weeks up to Christmas. We have a full floral display year with short breaks during Lent and Advent.

Any budding flower arrangers are very welcome to join our team. We also welcome those who wish to sponsor arrangements. I would like to thank all our sponsors and flower arrangers, especially Jean Frith, for their support.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Contact : Keith Beniston.

St John's Junior Choir is now a firm monthly fixture at All Age services and continues to flourish with Helen Isaacs at the helm. A separate report from Helen refers.

The Adult Choir makes the majority of its contributions to evening services through monthly Choral Evensong, Carol Festivals and other seasonal special services. The choir depends quite substantially on regular visitors from other churches, but these singers have become so regular that we now don't say "....and friends" as the membership is robust and regular. Choral services do continue to attract a loyal following, though I wish there was some way to encourage many obviously musical members of the church to attend more often. I wonder if some have perhaps forgotten how thrilling Anglican Church choral repertoire is when done well- and I believe we do indeed do it pretty well! Perhaps 2025 might be a year to renew acquaintance with the wonderful traditional Choral Evensong format? Nicholas King continues to thrill listeners with his colourful accompaniments, particularly in the Psalms. Nicholas' forthcoming marriage to Joy has delightfully netted us an extra choir member, and she is one of a number of new adult members. We rarely pay fees to more than three singers these days, almost invariably in the tenor department! Being in the choir is a wonderful social experience – why not come along and see- Fridays at 7pm. There is no audition as such, and while reading music is desirable, it is not essential, as several members demonstrate regularly.

Financial support from the PCC, MASJ and The Jennifer Worth Trust is invaluable, enabling us, from time to time, to tackle more ambitious programmes with the addition of instrumental resources.

On the cards as I write we have some exciting ventures ahead before the Summer break. These include:

June 8 : Rutter, Gloria and other music (A Special Service with brass ensemble).

MASJ (Music At St John's) also remains very active in promoting and running musical events (see MASJ Website for full details).

In particular, on Saturday 10 May at 7.30pm – a concert of popular music for String Ensemble.

Sunday 29 June at 6.30pm – A Trio Recital (Violin, Cello and Piano) led by Nathaniel Anderson Frank (Leader of the BBC Concert Orchestra).

Overall then, I can report another happy past year in the choir, continuing to work in happy harmony with The Vicar, and celebrated as usual, just before Lent, with a fine annual dinner! If you have not

recently attended a choral service, please come and hear for yourself. The vast majority of our services including choral services are readily available to revisit on the Website.

Finally, speaking for myself I'm happy to say that I continue greatly to enjoy my role as Director of Music at St John's.

ECO CHURCH

Contact : Dee Fisher.

Our journey on becoming an Eco Church so far

In order to join with the Church of England's broad objective of being carbon neutral by 2030 we have signed up to the A Rocha Eco Church scheme.

We started on 14 January 2022 and it has taken two long years to achieve Bronze level - for which as Church we should be very proud.

The next level is silver then gold - both being a lot harder to achieve!

Our journey to Bronze followed the A Rocha EcoChurch Survey. You can find St Johns on the EcoChurch website to see what we've achieved so far and follow our onward progress.

As part of the survey there were five areas that we had to consider. These were:

Worship and Teaching / Buildings / Land / Community and Global engagement / Lifestyle.

This survey is changing this year and getting even harder to complete successfully.

Our achievements so far!

For worship and teaching there are now sermons about the environment and 'saving God's creation'.

Regards the building we now have some secondary glazing and we have two water butts installed.

Community and Global Engagement - We are trying to promote Fairtrade Fortnight which has now moved to September and this year falls from 22 September to 5 October.

We have managed to twin two toilets at the back of church and two taps for clean water.

In addition there is a new bin at the St John's Church Hall entrance to recycle your 'unrecyclable' waste such as crinkly plastic, sweet and crisp wrappers. This is proving a great success - thank you!

Di Tovey and Lorraine Ioannou try to minimise leftovers and freeze anything left over and use some food Andreas Ioannou grows on the allotment.

Notices have been placed below light switches to remind people to turn lights off when they leave a room.

Lifestyle - Although we held a Present Swap at St John's, a Toy Swap at St Stephen's and a Christmas jumper swap at the Christmas Tree Festival - these haven't done as well as hoped but still got the message out into the community.

We have also got an Eco Church notice board at the back of church - please have a look and provide feedback.

What happens next?

One of the main things we need to do to get Silver is work out the Church's carbon footprint and to undertake our own personal footprint review.

We still have a long way to go to get to Silver and Gold by 2030 but hopefully we can all do our bit to achieve this goal.

FRIENDSHIP TEAS

Contact : Wilf Stepto.

This year we've had one guest speaker from the Heather Club, and a concert from the Ukes-a-daisy Ukelele band, who will come again in June. We plan to ask Keith to play the piano at our December Carol service.

There are no plans for any future talks.

We normally get around 15 to 20 people, though the exact number varies. There are enough people that they can take turns having different conversations, but not so many that it becomes difficult to hear the person next to you.

The typical amount raised for St John's Church is in the £40-£50 range, though we rarely remind them.

Melissa Hart and I take turns hosting/giving the opening prayer, and she and her husband Simon help me to set up and clear away.

Melissa and Simon usually bring something homemade, which is different each time. They also hold a small Arts and Crafts stall, the same one that they do at the St John's Christmas and Summer Fayres. Melissa's mother Karen sometimes comes and does a card stall of her own. I bring homemade sausage rolls and liver-and-onion pasties, while my grandmother makes the sandwiches. Rae Warby does not come very often, but usually brings a small something.

Teddy the dog is always there to greet people with a smile, taking some of the pressure off everyone else.

There are three people who do most of the washing-up after each service, these being June Forrest, Marion Horton, and Carole Crowhurst (except when she brings her dog Millie). Cristina is a very big help when she's able to come. Graham Gibbs usually helps as he is there to lock up. Most of the guests will put the dirty crockery into stacks, and a few of the more able-bodied ones will bring it to the kitchen hatch.

JUNIOR CHOIR

Contact : Helen Isaac.

The Junior Choir at St John's Church continues to thrive, offering a welcoming and engaging environment for young singers. With approximately 12 regular attendees aged between 5 and 11, the choir provides an opportunity for children to develop their musical skills while actively participating in worship.

Rehearsals and Leadership Rehearsals take place twice a month on a Friday evening from 5:30 pm to 6:15 pm. These sessions are led by Helen Isaac, with assistance from Marian Davies. The structured yet enjoyable rehearsals include warm-ups, learning or practicing the chosen song, and time for snacks and team games to foster friendship and collaboration among the children.

Performances and Participation Each month, the Junior Choir performs a Christian song during the all-age Eucharist, typically on the first Sunday of the month. The songs are carefully selected to align with the themes of the service, enhancing the worship experience for the congregation. While the choir sings together as a group, there are often opportunities for soloists and small ensembles to contribute to the performance.

Growth and Development Over the past year, the choir has experienced significant growth in membership, reflecting the enthusiasm and dedication of both the children and their leaders. Their ability to sing in harmony has greatly improved, demonstrating their commitment and progress in choral singing.

Welcoming New Members The Junior Choir warmly welcomes new members aged 5 to 12 who are interested in joining. If you would like to attend a rehearsal or learn more, please contact Helen Isaac via email at happyhellysinging@gmail.com.

We are excited for the future of the Junior Choir and look forward to sharing more wonderful musical moments with the St John's Church community.

JUNIOR CHURCH

Contact : Jo Fisher.

Over the last year junior church has been a consistent offering for the young people on Sunday mornings. Alongside this we offer Tiny Tots on a Tuesday morning and are doing Messy Church every couple of months.

During junior church the focus is usually on the Gospel reading for the day, though we do cover other subjects like prayer. We have a steady number of young people who attend, of from age 3 upwards, and they are always excited to share what they have been learning.

Themes we have covered at Messy Church are Lent/Easter, Advent, God's beautiful world and many more.

We couldn't do Tiny Tots, Junior Church and Messy Church without the help of the following people: Rosie Shaw, Rosie Akeroyd, Mary McCluskey, Marian Davies, Annie Mitchell, June Young, Yvonne Munford, Di Tovey.

Thank you to all our other helpers who contribute in many other ways, including serving tea & coffee, playing the organ and leading worship.

KNITTING AND CRAFT GROUP

Contact : Jean Hammond, Sue Horsnell.

We meet every other Tuesday in the main church. This is a very friendly and open group, happy to welcome anyone who would like a couple of hours chat and or craft, a good cuppa and biscuits too. We have an average of 8 regulars who knit and make items to sell at the church's Fayres etc.

This year we have already raised around £100 from the sale of our Easter knits.

MUSIC AT ST JOHNS

Chair : Mark Harbour. Board members : The Vicar, Keith Beniston, Paul Davies, Nicholas King, Nyree O'Brien (Herts Music Service), Job Rombout.

Our charity has continued to promote music for all in the local community, especially the younger members.

MASJ has also helped to enrich the music at services in the church, including providing total grants of £2,000 in the last year to the church to help cover the costs of a harp for the Ceremony of Carols in February, an orchestra for Feel the Spirit in October and an orchestra for the Festival of Lessons and Carols in December 2024.

Lunchtime concerts: Two series of Friday lunchtime concerts took place in 2024, the first in the Spring which included a performance by Alex Wyatt on his grand piano that MASJ are housing for him and which is used at various concerts, and the second in the Autumn of 2024. These proved increasingly popular with growing audience numbers. Our thanks to Paul Davies for all his effort in managing these events. The next lunchtime series will be the Spring series and commences in May 2025.

For other concerts (normally held on Saturday evenings) we continue to use TicketSource to make ticket purchases really simple for everyone coming to our events.

Educational events: UniSound and Unisong events took place throughout the year. The Unisound Wind Day on 27th March 2025 had gone well. The Unisong Day took place on 20th June 2024.

The WOOFYT days were held on 12/13 March 2025, two days due to the popularity of previous events. As a result of HMS taking a different approach with the publicity and the commitment of local schools we had a full compliment of schools and groups. This year we also had a visit from Andy Tate of The Institute of Physics (IOP) who provided quite a lot of merchandise for the school children. The feedback was very positive and one example was 'It was an amazing and fab excursion. The kids have found out lots from the first hand experience. Thanks a million!'. The event was again largely funded by IOP with MASJ paying the difference. Jeremy Sampson continues to provide an interesting presentation on how a musical organ works and includes interactive tasks.

The educational events involve many local schools such as South Hill, Boxmoor, George Street, Great Gaddesden and Holtsmere.

Dacorum Music School (DMS) continue to work closely with us for all of these events and early in 2025 MASJ signed a revised partnership agreement with DMS within the Hertfordshire Music Services.

Bursary Scheme: During 2024 we had two applications although one was eventually returned when the activity was not completed. We do continue to promote the scheme at the Education events hosted at St John's and with help from DMS and a change in our approach is being looked at to get closer links between MASJ, the DMS and children that would benefit from the scheme in particular by extending their lesson time.

Other Events: We held our Annual Music Festival over the weekend of 11/12 May, this year we collaborated with the Mayor and his Jamboree which commenced on Saturday 4 May at St John's with a Hemel Symphony Orchestra concert. The Music Festival weekend began with a lunchtime concert on Friday 10 May and then on the Saturday lunchtime DMS held a 'Cartoon Themed' concert involving local schools which was very popular. This was followed by the Vale Symphonic Wind Band concert on Saturday evening. On the Sunday evening at St John's we hosted a Civic Celebration service attended by the Mayor and various other dignitaries to conclude the Mayor's Jamboree. We again held our annual 'New Year's 10k Run and 4k Walk' on 31st December 2024 and yet again this attracted a good number of participants with 94 runners and 41 walkers. The event was very successful with many participants staying afterwards to socialise and the event raised £1,214 towards future MASJ events. John Garner who has managed the event since 2012 is now handing over the reins so that he can focus on other activities. He has been a brilliant supporter of MASJ and in that time has helped us raise over £14,000 through the annual run and walk. We are very grateful to John.

St John's church has become the base for the Hemel Symphony Orchestra and MASJ look forward to collaborating on events in future. They did perform at St Johns during the last year including on 13 July 'From Triumph to Tragedy' and on 16 November 'Symphonic Titans' which featured Alex Wyatt.

We held our most recent Annual General Meeting on Friday 1 November. This took place after the lunchtime concert that day and was attended by a slightly bigger audience than previous years.

During this period we have seen two trustees leave the board of MASJ, Kris Banks who has changed career and Katherine Cox who has resigned from the role of Treasurer to focus on family life and work. We are very grateful to Katherine for managing the finances for several years and to Kris for helping with educational activities and reviewing our Facebook publicity.

Peter Garner became a Patron of MASJ in 2024.

We have very recently been pleased to announce that Keith Beniston the Director of Music at St John's has joined the MASJ Board and become a Trustee. The governance of MaSJ is by the Board who meet every two months. Anyone on the church Electoral Roll is welcome to join the MaSJ Board and to help us achieve MASJ objectives and have input to our future plans.

Please visit our website at www.masj.org.uk for details of future events and activities promoted by Music at St John's.

PARISH MAGAZINE

Contact and Editor : Sally-Anne Bates.

240 magazines are printed monthly in-house by Deniece Colley, Parish Administrator. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Deniece for undertaking this task and to Alan Munford for all his hard work in making up the bundles for distribution and collecting the money in, also sending out the postal copies and being my proof-reader! I would also personally like to thank Anne Lyne for the support she gives me on the editorial side and to Janet Packe and other members of the congregation who provide photos from the different events held. Also sincere thanks to the Reverend Michael Macey, Carole Lewis, Alan Munford, Jean Garner, Graham Gibbs, Chris Angell, Mark Harbour, Paul Davies, Dee Fisher, Nicholas King and the various Groups and Organisations for all their contributions on a regular basis and to Deniece Colley, Parish Administrator for her monthly support in preparing the Parish Diary and Registers to send to me and to everyone else who supports me as Editor of the Parish Magazine. A special thanks to Chris Lyne who uploads a copy to St John's website together with Clergy Letter and Parish Diary monthly. Thanks also to all the distributors who work so hard in delivering the magazines monthly and would always welcome anyone new who wanted to join the team.

As Advertising Manager, as well as Editor, I am pleased to report that we continue to have the support of our regular advertisers including some new advertisers and occasional one-off adverts for Concerts being held in Church. If you would like to enquire about placing an advert or know of anyone who would like further details, please contact me by email to: magazine@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk.

Items can be e-mailed direct to me at magazine@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk which helps to make my job as Editor much easier but, of course; items can still be left in my pigeonhole or delivered direct to 27 Beechfield Road. I would always welcome any innovative ideas, comments or even complaints regarding the Magazine (how it can be improved) or to receive "letters to the Editor." Also if you know of anyone who would like to receive this publication on a regular basis, please contact either Alan Munford (01442 242543) or myself (01442 266912) with their details or ask them to complete the slip which appears in the magazine, our distribution numbers are still low and we would welcome new readers or any suggestions on how to promote the magazine to reach more members of our local community. The monthly price has remained at 60p or £6 for the year.

The Magazine is a particularly important "vehicle" for communicating what is going on in our Boxmoor Parish including any fund-raising events towards the upkeep and running costs of our three Churches and promoting community spirit. Please keep reading the Magazine! and let me have your suggestions of what you would like to see appear, which I will try to accommodate, space permitting!

POETRY GROUP

Contact : Ken Farmborough.

This group is currently in abeyance.

THE WIDER CHURCH

Contact : Carole Lewis.

The Parish of Boxmoor is part of the Hemel Hempstead deanery which is formed of all the Anglican churches in Hemel Hempstead and Kings Langley. The ministers meet monthly to pray and share information and concerns under the leadership of our vicar who is also the Rural Dean. He exercises pastoral oversight of all these parishes and their ministers and acts as their link with the diocese and the bishops. When there are vacancies or ministers are sick the rural dean carries a heavy burden making sure the parishes are cared for.

Together with other Christian denominations in Hemel Hempstead we are affiliated to "Churches Together in Hemel Hempstead" (CTHH) and seek to support one another in prayer and in sharing the good news of Jesus with our neighbours. On the first Saturday of each month at 8am one of the Hemel churches provides a simple breakfast followed by a time of worship including prayer in groups ending at 9-30. We took our turn in welcoming about 40 fellow Christians to St John's last November. This monthly activity is known as "Pray Hemel" and all are welcome to join in.

On every Good Friday the CTHH committee organises the walk of witness and ecumenical service in the town centre. Together with our catholic brothers and sisters we ourselves walk the stations of the cross along the moor from their church to ours led by children and young people . As a very busy church it is not always easy for us to support ecumenical events but it is important that we are aware that we are a part of a much bigger movement than our own parish or denomination and that we do whatever we can to be a part of this greater whole.

TINY TOTS

Contact : Annie Mitchell.

We are continuing to attract new families to our term-time weekly meetings and it is good to see new mums and dads, grandmas and grandads and childminders bringing their little ones along on Tuesday mornings. We currently have about 45 under 5s on our Register, including new-born babies, and have been getting between about 18 -25 Tots coming to each session, starting off with toys and activities in the hall. Thanks to 'Auntie' Jean Frith we have refreshments at about 10am. We then process into church for our little service of action songs and prayers led by Father Mike – the 'froggy prayer' where they get to jump off the chancel step being as popular as ever! We are so grateful to 'Auntie' Mary Bennett who plays the piano for us every week - the little ones really enjoy joining in the songs and it's a real joy to see them having fun!

We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day for our picnic during the summer holidays which attracted a good number of families – it was lovely to have some older brothers and sisters joining us too. We managed to run the popular toy stall at both the Summer and Christmas Fayres and made a good contribution to church funds from both events. Our little ones did a grand job of decorating our Christmas Tree at the Festival.

As always we are extremely grateful to our team of regular helpers, especially 'Aunties' Jackie May and June Young.

New members are always very welcome to join us – just come along!

TOGETHER ON MONDAY

Contact : Di Tovey.

Our group membership is currently at 32 and between 20-25 members attend each meeting.

A New Year lunch at Redbourn Golf Club was very enjoyable as was our lunch in August at Little Hay Golf Club.

Our charity for 2024 was Historic Churches in Beds, Herts and Bucks. Their chairman Malcolm Grant gave us an interesting and informative talk about the invaluable work done in restoring and taking care of these churches.

Our summer outing in July was to Bomber Command HQ in Stanmore which is now a museum.

We have a varied programme with speakers from the community as well as church members. Talks range from the St John Ambulance ,the Mercy Ships, Hemel during the War, Eradicating Poverty, Ramblings from the Vicar as well as two musical evenings We rounded off our year with a selection of Christmas readings and carols followed by a festive buffet.

Our group meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 7.45 pm in the church hall.

The subscription is £15 per year and new members are always welcome.