



ALL SAINTS KINGSTON

Annual Report



2023-2024

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TEAM RECTOR'S REPORT – Revd Joe Moffatt

'Now the green blade riseth' is a wonderful Eastertide hymn that comes to mind when thinking of the new signs of growth in all three of our churches in the Kingston Team Ministry.

Rev Lindiwe Maseko was licensed as Team Vicar of St John the Evangelist (Spring Grove) in January 2023. The joy shared at that service has continued to spread through her ministry with local schools, the Little Groovers, the Diddy Disciples and a new Sunday afternoon Junior Church. It's the one church in the team where children sometimes outnumber adults! Meanwhile, a brilliant group of volunteers runs a very successful bar at the regular Banquet Record gigs, engaging warmly with the music fans while ensuring a good income stream for the church.

At St John the Baptist (Kingston Vale) they continue to host a wonderful programme of community events in their orchard. The highlight in 2023 was undoubtedly a fabulous Coronation Garden Party. For much of the year Rev Mandy Beck took on extra leadership responsibility at the Mental Health Trust where she works part-time. Thankfully, Lindiwe was able to offer a day a week to provide some ministerial cover, while Mandy was working an extra day at the hospital. This just shows how helpful it is to have a team ministry. Mandy then took a well deserved sabbatical in the autumn and is now back to her normal pattern, helping St John's in the Vale to look at some exciting plans for the future.

At All Saints we went big on the Coronation, broadcasting the national online service on the preceding Sunday and then hosting the Borough's celebration with an amazing street procession that culminated in a packed-out church service. This was quickly followed by the Ordination Service for priests in the Kingston Episcopal Area – and the arrival of our curate, Rev Sarah Williams. Sarah has since been involved in many of our new initiatives, notably a Youth Café on Sunday afternoons and a Bereavement Café once a fortnight. In September we also started 'Lifting Young Voices' which is a project led by our Director of Music, David Condry. It involves him going into two primary schools (St John's CofE and St Joseph's RC) every week to teach class singing lessons. At the same time, he runs a Junior Choir for children aged 7-10. We hope to expand this programme to include more schools and to integrate our Junior Choir into the church community.

I'm very grateful to Mandy, Lindiwe and Sarah. It is a blessing to have a team of colleagues who enjoy meeting up with one another every week for prayer and mutual support. We're also very grateful for the wider ministry team that includes our ordained colleagues, Rev Sandy Cragg and Rev William Allberry, and our licensed lay ministers, Isobel Robinson, Andrea Campanale and Penny Jivani.

Finally, its good to have a team outing every so often and I was delighted that a coach full of people from all three churches enjoyed a day out to Salisbury Cathedral in October. New friendships always emerge from days like this and I look forward to many more.

As a way of summarising our common faith and fellowship, let me finish with the hymn that I started with:

'Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green'

VICAR'S REPORT – Revd Joe Moffatt

Bringing faith to life in the centre of Kingston

This was the Vision for All Saints that was presented at the Annual Meeting in April 2023, following a wide-ranging consultation and a PCC Away Day. The overall strategy for doing this in the next three years was:

To lift our voices, raise our profile and extend our outreach

To do this, we created four priorities, and I'm hugely encouraged by the progress that we've made. Here's what we set out to do, and (in blue) what we've already done:

1. Pioneer new ways to engage with children and young people

- Launch a new Youth Cafe
(started in September in collaboration with Kingston URC – 20 teenagers participating, supported by 8 adult leaders)
- Develop a programme of group singing lessons with local primary schools
(Lifting Young Voices started in September, delivering weekly class singing lessons in 2 primary schools, with termly concerts in church)
- Begin a Junior Choir
(started in September with 18 children, singing termly concerts and church services every half-term)
- Expand our school workshop programme to include faith as well as heritage content
(programme of visits from Year 7 classes from Kingston Academy, led by church volunteers)

2. Raise our profile and extend our outreach through better communications

- Re-imagine our digital presence through a new website, e-bulletin and social media
(Communications Strategy created with external consultant in October; Communications Manager appointed in November to implement the strategy and increase our engagement on social media; new branding commissioned and launched in March 2024 with a new fortnightly ebulletin; new website commissioned in April 2024, to be launched in late summer)
- Relaunch All Saints as a platform for public faith discourse through a programme of talks, seminars and discussions
(a new Faith Talks series launched in January 2024 with four more planned for the rest of the year: high-profile speakers with diverse panels and chaired by the Bishop of Kingston)
- Renew internal & external signage
(Communications Group to review in summer of 2024)
- Consider options for making our external grounds more attractive and welcoming
(initial meetings with internal and external stakeholders recently begun)

3. Invest in our partnerships so that we better understand the needs of our community

- Begin a weekly Bereavement Cafe
(2-day training for 12 volunteers delivered in July; café started in November, every fortnight; well-received with average attendance of 6 plus 4 volunteers each session)
- Identify up to 6 primary partners as a focus for learning and collaboration
(successful joint bid with Kingston WelCare for funding to appoint a senior Playworker/Family Support Officer. Stay and Play sessions to start in May 2024. Hosted training events with KCAH. Christmas Tree Festival supported WelCare, KCAH, Samaritans, Refugee Action Kingston)
- Explore further opportunities to work in partnership with our sister churches in the Kingston Team ministry, with our town centre ecumenical partners and with Kingston Inter Faith Forum.
(Running Youth Café with Kingston URC; fully engaging with Churches Together in Kingston and Kingston Faith & Belief Forum, regularly hosting special joint services).

4. Work to become an Eco Church

- To be accredited by the end of 2026 as a Silver Eco Church and to have a clear understanding and road map of what we would need to achieve in order to become accredited to a Gold Standard by 2030.

(New LED Lighting installed; annual Care for Creation service inaugurated September 2023; Bug Hotel created in churchyard; weekly eco-tips in bulletin; Bronze award submission in summer 2024)

Remember that this was a three-year plan, so its fantastic to reflect on what we've already achieved in the first year. This is due to a lot of hard work and dedication, especially from the working groups for each priority which bring together staff, PCC members and regular members of the congregation. It's wonderful to see this level of collaboration and teamwork.

In addition to all these developments we've also enjoyed some wonderful highlights:

- Celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III: recording the National Online Service for the preceding Sunday (which had 3,900 views); and on the weekend itself organising a fabulous town-entre Coronation Parade which culminated in a glorious Service of Thanksgiving.
- Welcoming our Curate, Rev Sarah Williams, who was ordained as a deacon in Southwark Cathedral on June 24th. Sarah has since been a wonderful addition to our Clergy Team, preaching regularly and taking a lead on the Youth Café, Bereavement Café, School Outreach and Discussion Groups.
- Enjoying a Parish Outing to Salisbury Cathedral on October 28th, bringing a coach load of people together from our three team churches and enjoying a beautiful Choral Evensong sung by our choir.
- Installing new artworks: a striking sculpture, 'Christus' by Peter Eugene Ball, gifted by Jim and Eppie Bates and dedicated at our Christ the King Service on November 26th; and the next three Saxon King Embroideries, with a grand unveiling at our Epiphany Carol Service on January 7th.

I'm deeply grateful to all my colleagues, to our wonderful churchwardens and to everyone who has helped to 'bring faith to life' in such a vibrant, varied and engaging way this past year. I couldn't be more happy and grateful to serve as your vicar.

CHURCHWARDENS' ANNUAL REPORT – John Dewhurst & Roshan Jathanna

Another eventful year in the life and work of All Saints Church saw a number of very significant developments. Perhaps the most important was that we were able to welcome Revd Sarah Williams as our new part-time Curate. Sarah was ordained deacon at Southwark Cathedral on Saturday 24th September, and took part in her first service at All Saints the following morning. We were also delighted to welcome Charlie Thompson, an Ordinand who will spend a year with us as part of his training for the Ministry.

A new Mission Action Plan (MAP) was agreed by the PCC in May 2023, identifying four priority areas: Children and Young People, Communications, Community Partnerships and Eco Church. The plan sets out specific aims within each priority area, and there will be a working group for each priority area, each with chair to oversee progress (currently: Eco-Church: Graham Nash; Communications: Julian Adams).

Two new initiatives that stem directly from the MAP's priority areas have begun very successfully. A fortnightly Youth Café, which takes place from 4.00pm to 5.00pm on Sunday afternoons under the leadership of Sarah, is steadily building up its numbers, with participants including young people from the United Reformed Church as well as from All Saints. The 'Lifting Young Voices' project, which began in September, has rapidly gained momentum during the year, with regular work by our Director of Music in two local primary schools and also with the establishment of a Junior Choir which rehearses in the church on Friday afternoons after school. This choir now has eighteen regular and enthusiastic members and has taken part in two Sunday morning services, including Mothering Sunday, along with an extremely well-attended and inspirational 'Lifting Young Voices' concert in November.

The Eco Church MAP priority was marked at a special 'Caring for Creation' service on Sunday 24th September. The service included the dedication of the 'Bug Hotel' which had been constructed in the South Churchyard by members of the Eco Group.

We were very sorry to have to say goodbye to Pippa Joiner, our Learning and Outreach Officer, in September. Pippa has moved on to take up an exciting new opportunity in a school. We are immensely grateful to everything that Pippa did for All Saints in her years with us, not least in co-ordinating our teams of volunteers, organising the hugely popular 'Thumbs Up Thursday' activities and generally promoting wide interest in our rich heritage. We miss her enormously, and are extremely grateful to her for continuing to help us on a freelance basis for several months after her official leaving date.

The vacancy created by Pippa's departure enabled the administrative team to be reconfigured in a way that more closely matched the needs of the Mission Action Plan. Jenny Bridges was redesignated 'Operations Manager', a title that more closely aligns with the work she actually does (and it is truly a *huge* amount of work), whilst a new post, Communications Manager, was taken by Kate Shrimpton following a rigorous selection process, who was already working with us on Fridays as Music Administrator. Kate has already made a huge impact with her work with the introduction of a weekly, and already very popular, e-Newsletter and, in conjunction with the Comms Group, 'rebranding' every aspect of All Saints communications. A new logo made its debut appearance on the Mothering Sunday pew sheets, and a new website is in development.

The weekly round of mid-week and Sunday services has been well maintained throughout the year, along with a number of 'special' services. The Coronation of King Charles III was celebrated at a splendid Civic Service led by the Bishop of Kingston on Sunday 7th May. The sequence of Christmas carol services, from Advent through Christmas to Epiphany, were once again very successful. Attendance at these services was close to the levels reached in pre-Covid years, and they were watched by considerable numbers of people via our YouTube livestream. A well-attended All Souls Requiem Eucharist took place on the evening of Sunday 30th October. The annual Crown Court Service took place on Monday 25th September, followed by the civic Remembrance Service on the morning of Sunday 13th November and the Kingston Mayoral Service on Sunday 12th June. We also hosted the Kingston Episcopal Area Ordination Service, conducted by the Bishop of Kingston, on Saturday 1st June.

The newly installed Carillon (actually an electronic chiming device, located in the tower) was dedicated by the Archdeacon of Wandsworth at Choral Evensong on Bell Sunday, 23rd April. This service also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the augmentation of our peal of bells from ten to twelve. The Peter Eugene Ball sculpture 'Christus', donated to All Saints by Revd Jim Bates, a former Vicar, and mounted in the North Transept, was dedicated during the morning service on 26th November, appropriately the feast of Christ the King. Jim preached the sermon at this service, at which we were also delighted to welcome Eppie, Jim's wife. The three glorious new Saxon Kings embroidery panels, which were installed at the East End in December to join the King Athelstan panel, were unveiled and dedicated during the Epiphany Carol Service. A magnificent and extremely well-attended Memorial Service to commemorate the life of David Nield, former Director of Music, took place on the afternoon of Sunday 15th October under the direction of Simon Toyne, himself a former All Saints and Tiffin School Director of Music.

We are immensely grateful to our excellent musicians: the organists, the choir and the bellringers, for everything they did to make these special services, and also our regular weekly services, so successful. Choral Evensong on Wednesday afternoons at 5.30pm has become a well-established component of our weekly round of services. Six funeral services have taken place at All Saints during the last year, along with five services that were conducted by a member of our Ministry team elsewhere. There were two wedding services and a total of nine baptisms.

The day-to-day work of All Saints has continued to be supported by the dedicated efforts of a huge number of people, both our immensely hardworking staff (Jenny, Pippa, Kate and Richard) and our many volunteers and especially those who coordinate their activities from behind the scenes. Special mention must once again be made of the invaluable contributions of Isabel Isaacson, PCC Secretary and Sacristan, Alastair Deller, Honorary Treasurer, and Paul Thompson, assistant churchwarden with delegated responsibility for premises and insurance. The separate reports of the many and varied group activities that take place week by week are an eloquent testimony to the continuing rich tapestry of life at All Saints.

The church has continued to be open to visitors throughout the week from 10.00am until 4.00pm, and the 'Café at the East End' ('Sarah's'), managed by Sarah Cogger and her excellent team, continues to attract a highly appreciative following of both regular customers and occasional visitors. The Vergers and the Listeners combine to ensure that there is always a warm welcome for visitors, whatever their reason for coming into the church. The newly-established Bereavement Café meets fortnightly on Wednesday, providing a safe and confidential place for the bereaved to talk about their experience of loss with people who understand. On Saturday mornings, members of the Gardening Group often pause to talk with passers-by as they work in the churchyards, providing another form of mission outreach activity to the local community. The Christmas Tree Festival, very capably organised by Liz Deller, was

once again a great success, attracting large number of visitors to the church and raising a significant amount of money for local good causes.

The report of the statutory five-yearly inspection of the church building and the churchyards (known as the 'Quinquennial Inspection') commented that '*... a visit to the church is a very uplifting experience*'. Ptolemy Dean, our Appointed Architect, found the church to be well-maintained, dry, stable and well-heated. The various maintenance issues identified by the inspection are in the process of being addressed, with priority being given to the most urgent items. (See the Churchwardens' Fabric Report, below).

Significant work on the building during the year has include the conversion of the interior lighting to a more flexible and environmentally-friendly LED system, the reinstatement of the failed bird-deterrent wires on the exterior of the south walls of the church, and some extensive work on the organ which amongst other things will make it more reliable in periods of extremely hot weather.

The church building has continued to work very hard for its living, being regularly hired for weekly rehearsals, frequent concerts both at lunchtimes and in the evening, meetings and receptions of various kinds, and the highly popular (with a younger demographic) 'Pop-Up Shop', held normally on the last Saturday of each month, selling 'vintage pre-loved fashion clothing'. Two notable events, which linked to the 'Community' strand of the MAP, were organised by the local South Korean community, with a concert in September involving impressive performances from their 'seniors' and the second, in October, involving a substantial number of children.

The Churchwardens would once again like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the Clergy, the Deputy and Assistant Wardens, the PCC and the whole congregation for their continuing support over the past year. It has been a source of great strength to us and has been enormously appreciated.

ANNUAL FABRIC INSPECTION: SUMMARY REPORT - John Dewhurst & Roshan Jathanna (Churchwardens), Paul Thompson (Deputy Churchwarden)

The Churchwardens are required to inspect the church building and the churchyard at least once each year, or to arrange for this to be done on their behalf (*The Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure, 1991*). The Churchwardens are required to present an annual report on the condition of the building to the Church Council. The report is then presented to the Annual Parishioners' Meeting, with any amendments required by the Church Council (*A Handbook for Churchwardens and PCCs, 1997*).

The Churchwardens are pleased to be able to report, on the basis of the annual Fabric Inspection that was carried out along with a Risk Assessment on 3rd March 2024, that the church building is structurally sound, watertight, secure, safe, in generally good decorative order, clean and tidy, well-lit and heated, and is accessible by wheelchair. The external condition of the building is no worse than may be expected for a building of its age. The Quinquennial Inspection of the church building and its environs was carried out by Ptolemy Dean Associates, our designated Church Architect, in February of this year. The various issues identified by this inspection will be addressed in order of recommended priority. The Fabric Inspection did not identify any significant issues that were not listed in the QI Report.

The churchyard is judged to be safe and is clean and tidy (thanks in no small part to the continuing work of the Gardening Group) and does not pose any threat to neighbouring buildings. Trees that are slightly overhanging the neighbouring Thames Street properties are to be reduced in height by our usual contractor once permission has been obtained from the Council's Tree Protection Officer.

As was the case in 2023, the inspection noted some weathering and aging issues on the external of the building, which includes some maintenance work that will be carried out by our maintenance contractor during the coming months.

The broken pigeon deterrent wires along the top of the South walls were replaced in May 2023. The inspection found that some of the repaired wires had themselves failed, and the contractor has agreed to reinstate them at no charge.

Gas, electricity and lightning conductor safety certificates are all up to date, as is the church's Public Liability Insurance.

SAXON KINGS – Revd Sandy Cragg

King Athelstan is no longer in solitary splendour on the East Wall as the next three Kings in the Series were installed and unveiled after the Epiphany Carol Service. They have generated a great deal of interest among visitors.

The first panel in the series, Edward the Elder, is now in production and the Team are working very hard to fundraise to complete all the remaining panels for next year, 2025, the 1,100th anniversary of the coronation of King Athelstan.

They have a series of talks booked to local W.I.s and craft groups to generate interest and donations to the Book of Names and other exciting developments are in the pipeline - we'll keep you informed.

Have you nominated a loved one yet for the Book of Embroidered Names? At £100 for a name of up to 20 characters, this will ensure their name is recorded in the church for generations to come.

If you belong to a club or association that might like to book a presentation on the Project, please contact Kate Shrimpton at comms@allsaintskingston.co.uk, and for any general information speak to David Robinson/Joni Timmins/Sandy Cragg.

ALL SAINTS PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL – Isabel Isaacson

The All Saints Parochial Church Council met five times during the year following the 2023 APCM (May 2023-April 2024) and there were also five meetings of the PCC Standing Committee during this period. There are 12 elected and co-opted members and 9 ex officio members including the clergy, wardens and Deanery Synod representatives. The average attendance at meetings was 18. The PCC's regular business includes the monitoring of the Church's finances, reviewing Church life and events, health and safety issues, including safeguarding, and preparing for forthcoming services and other events.

The creation and adoption of our Mission Action Plan in May 2023 provided an important focus for the work of the PCC. We identified four priority areas: children and young people, communications, community partnerships, Eco Church. The MAP sets out specific aims within each priority area and working groups have been formed to carry these out and to report on progress to the PCC. Some examples of initiatives are as follows: the *Lifting Young Voices* project; the *Youth Café*; a review of the web-site and branding; the creation of a fortnightly All Saints E-Bulletin; the *Caring for Creation service*; progress towards Bronze Eco-Church award; the setting up of the bereavement café.

SAFEGUARDING – Alexandra Crook (Parish Safeguarding Officer)

As Parish Safeguarding Officer ("PSO"), I work with the PCC to implement the policy and procedures found in the House of Bishop's Promoting a Safer Church safeguarding policy statement, the House of Bishop's safeguarding Policies and Practice Guidance while being responsive to local parish requirements.

The PCC must promote a safer church for all in the church community and ensure there is a plan in place to raise awareness of safeguarding matters, promote training and ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously by all those in the church community.

Our parish continues to promote Safe Recruiting for volunteers in accordance with the procedures set out in A Safe Church. The safeguarding policy and procedures and names and contact details of the PSO are also advertised on the church premises and in the Volunteer handbook. The PSO is the main DBS administrator and DBS checks are now renewed every 3 years.

We continue to use a shared secure online safeguarding account which is only accessible to a restricted number of people who need access to it. This secure safeguarding account contains electronic files relating to safeguarding, including a document recording DBS checks. Volunteers are aware of and work to the House of Bishop's safeguarding guidance and we keep a register of training to ensure all volunteers get safeguarding training every 3 years.

Over the coming year the PSO will:

- Continue to respond to any safeguarding concerns as they arise;
- Keep safeguarding prominent at PCC meetings;

- Liaise with the churchwardens when annual health and safety and fire inspections of the premises occur;
- Review risk assessments for all new and existing parish activities where children and adults who may be vulnerable may be included;
- Adhere to the Code of Safer Working Practice (Appendix 19);
- Ensure we observe the correct ratios for adult/children in each group;
- Continue to update safeguarding policies (these will go past the PCC, and then onto the church website and Volunteer Handbook for all to view);
- Advertise the parish Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in summary on the church premises and publicise the name and contact details of the PSO;
- Ensure full recruitment procedures are followed for all staff and voluntary workers;
- Chase up any outstanding training certificates and DBS checks; and
- Continue good record retention and security

I wish to thank the guidance and support received from the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT – David Condry

The past year has been highly successful in terms of standards and recruitment, and we have been increasingly busy. In addition to our usual weekly work of three fully choral services, the choir has been fully involved in the celebrations of the King's coronation, the wonderful memorial service for former Director of Music, David Nield, not to mention the ordination service, many extra Christmas services, increasing numbers of weddings and, sadly, several funerals.

We have welcomed four new probationers and sworn in four new choristers, all of whom have proved to be extremely committed and talented musicians. Our talented new choral scholars have already made a highly valuable contribution to the choir. Alan Erdelyi, our organ scholar was recently awarded the highly valued and internationally recognised ARCO. We should be very proud of our choral and organ scholarship programmes and how effective these positions are for providing a rich environment for these talented young musicians to flourish.

In December we once again took part in the joint Christmas concert with Thames Youth Orchestra. This was again, a great success, both musically and commercially and has provided us with some very welcome income help the funding of our new choir robes. This is now an annual fixture, and diaries have already been marked for the next few years.

I am very happy to report that after much hard fundraising work by the whole choir, through come-and-sing events, choir coffee and cake mornings and many other events throughout the year, we finally raised the significant funds needed to buy a new set of robes. These have now been ordered from Watts & Co and we are expecting delivery in the next few weeks. Thank you very much to Kevin Davis who has spearheaded this project and liaised with the robe makers.

I am also very happy to report that we have now completed all the planned work on the organ. This includes a new "capture system" (the computer system which controls the stops) and a new power system. We have also undertaken some tonal restoration to put the organ back to its original 1988 specification. A number of other maintenance tasks were also undertaken and I am very happy to say that the organ is in excellent working condition and an instrument we can be proud of, and enjoy.

The music library has continued to expand. We have acquired many new anthems, canticles, and mass settings as well as four new settings of the preces and responses.

We have started the outreach project which was planned last year. This includes our fantastic junior choir and school visits for music lessons centred around singing, which culminate in a termly concert at church. We have received a small grant to start this project and we are in the process of applying for significantly larger grants to expand the project well beyond where we are now.

I would like to thank each and every member of the music department for their professionalism, dedication and loyalty. In particular, I would like to thank Matthew O'Malley – Organist, Alan Erdelyi –

Organ scholar, Eleanor Condry – Choir matron and Nigel Duffin – choir librarian, for their unwavering hard work in helping to run our music department and without whom the running of the department would be impossible. In addition, I would like to thank our Vicar, Joe, for his help and support and for the choir association committee, without whose help and hard work, we would not be able to run our extra-liturgical endeavours like our come-and-sing days.

YOUTH CAFÉ – Curate, Revd Sarah Williams

One of the four mission priorities in the Mission Action Plan was pioneering new ways to engage with children and young people. Part of our response to this was the establishment of a Youth Café for 11-18 year olds which began in September 2023. The Café, which is a joint mission activity with Kingston URC, runs weekly 4-5pm, in the Café at ASK or at the URC. Leadership of the sessions is shared between the two churches and supported by a team of dedicated volunteers. The majority of the youth are from ASK or the URC but there are other young people who have no prior connection to either church. Numbers fluctuate and we would love to have more youth attend on a regular basis, but we have a core who come every week.

Each session begins with refreshments and board games providing a social space for the youth to chat and relax. This is followed by an activity which varies from week to week but will, more often than not, have a faith element. We aim to tie in the activities to the church year and regularly include Bible study. Other activities have included a talk from Kingston Street Pastors, history detectives at ASK, the Great British Bake Off and a very enthusiastic drumming session! We are also planning our first Youth Café outing.

I would like to thank our team of volunteers who provide fantastic support at the Café and also Sarah Cogger in the ASK Café who generously provides the very popular hot chocolate and delicious cakes.

SCHOOLS – Curate, Revd Sarah Williams

Our Learning and Engagement Officer, Pippa Heasman, moved on to pastures new last summer. We were sorry to see her go and thank her for all her work on heritage and learning activities during her time with us. Even after she had moved on to her new job, Pippa covered those school workshops already in the diary which enabled us to honour the arrangements that were in place.

Going forward, we are committed to continuing the engagement we have with schools and are exploring the possibility of appointing a pool of freelancers to run the workshops. In the meantime, we have put new requests for school workshops on hold so that we can ensure we have the appropriate resources in place. Once this has been done, we will also look to continue our working relationship with Kingston Museum, having previously run joint workshops with them.

In the last few months, we have established a new connection with Kingston Academy. During this academic year classes of Year 7 pupils have visited ASK once per month as part of a heritage project they are undertaking. A huge thank you to John Dewhurst, Joni Timmins and Nigel Duffin who have led these sessions.

COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP – Julian Adams

The Communications Working Group has met six times since the last APCM. In that time we worked with an external consultant to develop a communication strategy for All Saints and developed a road map to improve our communications both within the church and external to it.

As part of this, we have appointed Kate Shrimpton as Communications Manager and conducted a parish-wide survey to seek feedback from the congregation and external stakeholders about what All Saints means to them and how they access news and information about and from the church. We also worked with a brand consultant to rework our external branding and develop templates and platforms to improve the publicity of our events. The new logo was soft launched on Mothering Sunday and the new templates will be rolled out from this point. Another new development is the introduction of a fortnightly e-bulletin to update parishioners and external stakeholders of the activities of All Saints.

We have also made significant progress in appointing a web designer to redesign the church web site and are set to sign a contract to begin this important development work within the next few weeks.

Looking further ahead, the Working Group will now turn its attention to improving the external signage of the church.

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER – Kate Shrimpton

My role as Communications manager began in November and I am grateful for the warm welcome offered by the community of All Saints, particularly Jenny and Joe who have been very generous with their time and knowledge.

The role is a new one, with the intention to raise All Saint's profile and extend our outreach through an engagement strategy with the various communities we are part of. The timing of my start date meant that this engagement was instantly exercised as I was immersed in preparations for the all important Christmas season and the Seven Saxon Kings embroidery project launch night (part of the Epiphany service) which included creating invitations and promotional material and encouraging specific stakeholders to attend, my thanks particularly to Pippa Heasman for her continued leadership of the project and her detailed handover and the encouragement and dedication of the extremely talented embroidery project group who continue to oversee the creation of the embroideries and to promote them through a series of group talks with the aim to raise funding for the creation of the final panels, particularly through our "book of names" appeal. We have successfully bid for funding for a video to be made of the embroideries which will in turn be used to promote the project to gain further funding from individuals and groups and we hope to have the final three embroideries unveiled in 2025, the 1,100th anniversary of the Coronation of Athelstan.

Meeting so many members of the All Saints community, particularly the dedicated band of volunteers in our various groups and projects has been inspiring and I aim to work with all of them to promote each group and activity to the wider community. With the help of the communications group, we have now successfully completed our rebranding exercise with the creation of a brand new logo and in house communications style which received its "soft launch" on mothers day. We have also selected the designer for our new website and look forward to starting work with them soon. This website will be central to our communications vision, as a "shop front" for all that All Saints has to offer the people of Kingston and those further afield.

My role also includes acting as the Choir administrator with particular reference to developing the "Lifting Young Voices" project which runs every Friday afternoon, led by David Condry and a group of highly prized volunteers; Joni Timmins, Eithne Fray, Vernon Fray, Sue Watts, John Watts, Mary Warman, Penny D'Souza, Liz Deller and Ann Cornick. The junior choir began in September and its intention is twofold; to develop choral music in our local schools through whole class group lessons led by David and to also function as a "feeder" stream of talented singers into the main choir. This has been a wonderful success story with around 15-20 children in years 2, 3 & 4 regularly attending and we are seeking funding opportunities to enlarge the project through grants.

The new fortnightly ebuletin, filled with news of the happenings of the church is being well received by regular worshipers and supporters, the aim is for this to be an entertaining read as well as providing updates on our activities and this, together with the increased use of our social media channels has helped bring greater attention to some amazing recent events such as our faith talks and lent sermon series, both of which aim to engage the people of Kingston with our church and our vision. Thank you for accepting me so warmly into All Saints and I look forward to continuing to raise the profile of our church and its work as part of our amazing community.

BEREAVEMENT CAFÉ – Sheila Bryant

The Bereavement Café was created November 2023 in conjunction with Princess Alice Hospice, and after conversations with other community groups in the borough. The hospice chaplain, Steve Nolan led two training days for our volunteer facilitators.

It was decided to offer the café every other Wednesday, starting the week following All Souls' Day. A volunteer rota was created to provide a host and four trained, facilitators for each session. We are grateful to Sarah for providing a welcoming a hot drink and biscuits for everyone attending.

The number of guests welcomed so far has fluctuated between 1 and 7. But the facilitators are very supportive and positive about the importance of offering this safe space, even if only one person comes into the church seeking help.

It has been difficult to spread the word that the Bereavement Café is available and to emphasise that we are offering a safe space for anyone, of any faith or none, to come and hopefully find solace by sharing the devastating experience of bereavement. Kate, our Communications Manager is helping us to reach the wider community by promoting the café on social media.

PLAYGROUP - Sue Skrobanski, Director Kingston Welcare

Kingston WelCare and All Saints Church will soon be unveiling an exciting new initiative aimed at creating an enjoyable and supportive play environment for children while supporting parents in building resilience. Staff and volunteers will be available to listen to parents and thus support them with the challenges of parenting. Both Kingston WelCare and All Saints Church have a long history of supporting families.

In collaboration, we will host four preschool family play sessions weekly, along with two after-school family sessions. Additionally, we will jointly organise school holiday activities. All the activities are designed to engage and benefit the entire family. The sessions will spread across the two locations. To oversee these endeavours, a skilled Senior Playworker/ Family Support Worker has been appointed, and we are actively seeking volunteers to bolster our efforts.

Kingston WelCare has been running for over 30 years. It supports parents in addressing parenting challenges, including mental health, emotional well-being, family relationships, and financial stress. It's goal is to empower parents to meet their children's needs.

CHRISTIAN AID – Isabel Isaacson

All Saints Church has continued to support Christian Aid and to join with Kingston Churches to fundraise through 2023. The collection took place as usual and this year we continued with the traditional house-to-house collections. However, more practical and popular options were the delivery of envelopes to roads where a 'safe house' was nominated for the return of envelopes; donations via a QR code on the Christian Aid leaflet and donations via a 'Just Giving' page. The total amount raised during the year, in cash and via direct donations, was £12,805.79. This was around £2,000 less than last year but given the difficult economic situation was a good achievement.

One of the highlights of Christian Aid, 2022, was the Saturday of dancing in Clarence Street. This was repeated in 2023 with two dances: the 'Macarena' and 'Happy': Kingston clergy and members of the congregations of All Saints, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, St Matthew, St Mark, the Methodists and the United Reformed Church and friends again got together to dance in Clarence Street. There was a sponsored Riverside Walk in September and Carol Singing in Clarence Street in December. We are, as always, very grateful to our volunteers for their time and effort in organising and carrying out the collecting and to all the Kingston residents and their friends who, by their generosity, help each year to make this a success.

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL 2023 – Liz Deller

It was a difficult year for the Christmas Tree Festival due to a sponsor pulling out and our chosen charities having difficulty participating due to shortage of staff.

However, we had 16 lovely trees, kindly donated by Maurice Mandry Trees from Ottershaw, and the imaginative decorations were much admired. We raised £1400 which was divided between our 7 charities: Kingston Welcare, Kingston Samaritans, Refugee Action Kingston, Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness, RBKares, Christian Aid and The Children's Society.

Liz has run the Festival for several years and would like to stand down, so all volunteers welcome! Many thanks to all those who helped set up and clear away.

ECO-CHURCH – Graham Nash

Working to become an Eco-Church is one of the four priorities from the Mission Action Plan adopted last May. A Working Group was established in July and has now met four times.

The Diocesan Energy Footprint Tool reveals that we have a high carbon footprint but that this compares favourably with other churches when considered per person, due to our daily opening hours and high footfall. This should further improve next year as our LED lighting is estimated to save 8 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

A key milestone in our early eco-journey was the Caring for Creation service on 24th September 2023. This started with a blessing of the Bug 'Minster' built by Children's Church and included the switch on of the new LED lighting, a Q&A session with Sarah Wiggins, Climate Advocacy Global Programme Lead for Tearfund, prayers by the eco-group and concluded with the congregation committing to support the PCC in fulfilling the eco-pledge. This latter was discussed and agreed at the September meeting, with the PCC pledging to:

- recognise the urgency of the climate and environmental crisis and the threat this poses to God's creation
- commit to tackling these issues in our lives, both individually and collectively, in collaboration with others
- endeavour to reduce the church's carbon footprint and improve its energy efficiency year-on-year

This service was also the launch of our weekly inclusion of eco-tips in the notice sheets.

Other activities include a widening of our recycling, liaison with other churches and local green organisations, participation in the 'No Faith in Fossil Fuels' Vigil of Parliament, the suggestion of options for a Carbon Fast over Lent and work with the Youth Café, including organising an afternoon environmental workshop planned to take place at a local nature reserve in May. Other exciting activities are planned for the year ahead, including an environment-focused arts exhibition.

While not organised by the eco-group it was inspiring to see such a great turn out and stimulating debate at the first Faith Talk on whether the climate crisis justifies civil disobedience. This event also saw the launch of our Eco-Church noticeboard.

We are well on track to achieve our initial objective of Bronze Eco-Church award by Summer. This requires the church to achieve bronze level status across all five elements of the eco-church survey. This level has already been achieved in 'Worship/Teaching' and 'Buildings' and is imminent on 'Community & Local Engagement' and 'Land'. The latter will be further enhanced if we secure a Green Grant from Kingston Council. Finally, to bring us to bronze level in the 'Lifestyle' element, we are encouraging members of the church to participate in the Creation Care online environmental lifestyle survey. Like Eco-Church, Creation Care has bronze, silver and gold award levels and aims to encourage households and individuals to make changes to care for God's earth, recognising the progress they've made and providing ideas for their next steps. As such it helps us all to respond to God's call to care for his wonderful creation.

The Eco-Church Group applied for and have been successful in securing a £5,000 Green Grant from Kingston Council. The funding will help to enhance the biodiversity of the churchyard for the benefit of current and future generations. It is intended to appoint an ecologist to provide expert advice and initial training. The local community and the children and young people from church will be involved as much as possible. Measures will include nature-attracting meadow and planting, bird boxes, a mini-wetland and a nature trail. Surveys will be undertaken to monitor how successful the measures are and to input into national citizen science initiatives like the Big Butterfly Count.

GARDENING TEAM – Carys Griffiths

It has been another successful year for an enthusiastic and dedicated team of gardeners. Since it has been an unseasonably mild winter, we have not taken a break as usual, and it has been a joy to see

nature reawakening earlier in the year with snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils and primroses adding colour to a rather dull brown landscape.

During these winter months we have been very busy maintaining the grounds, bushes and trees, and clearing the grounds generally, especially behind the tombstones. We have always tried to have plants which are colourful and attract bees and various insects. However, due to the heightened awareness in the media and by the public of how we should take care of nature, a BUG MINSTER has been installed in the garden thanks to young church members who helped build it. A wood pile has also been introduced as has a small hanging bee / insect house. Later on in the spring we hope to make another attempt at introducing a no-mow wild plant area.

The dedicated team consists of Chris Ault, Sheila Bryant, Jon Taylor Susumu Jacquier-Yamada, Heather Esswood, myself with a few other occasional volunteers. As well as thanking them I would like to thank Geoff Warman for keeping the southside hedge under control and Caroline and John Ayles for their work in keeping the suckers at the base of the trees in check.

Although we have signs to discourage feeding the pigeons and squirrels, we inevitably still have a few people who do so. During the year a couple of our large pots by the south door had to be replaced as the former ones were vandalised, which luckily does not happen very often.

However, it is very rewarding when members of the public say how much they appreciate and enjoy the gardens as a beautiful pocket of greenery in the centre of town to sit, contemplate the world around them and perhaps enjoy a picnic.

KINGSTON UPON THAMES BELL RINGERS - Paul Flavell (Tower Captain)

We are enjoying good attendances on Sundays and Wednesdays with attendance at some practice nights being excellent. We mostly ring 10-12 bells on a Sunday. Wednesday practices are run by different people to give them the opportunity to run a practice and to ensure we do different ringing things to keep everybody interested. It's quite a challenge when there is such a wide range of abilities, but we try and please everybody!

We are delighted to welcome Charlotte Mafi and Anne Porter, both Ring for the King learners, and we're also delighted to welcome Pip Piggott and Mary Gledhill, lapsed ringers who have returned to ringing. All are now valued members of the team. Three youngsters, Ed, Max M and Max C, are learning to ring for Duke of Edinburgh Bronze medal and all are making very good progress.

We were very sorry to say goodbye to Gavin and Jacob. They were both regular ringers and great fun so we will miss them both very much. Junnan and Hongli Lusha have moved to the Catholic Church in Kingston. Geoff and Andrew have both sadly had to stop ringing for health reasons and we wish them well.

We're grateful to Chris Ridley for agreeing to become our new Treasurer, Janet Edwards our new Independent Examiner and Kate Corney for running the social side.

We are a popular tower with visitors - ringing visitors were from towers including Exeter, Wells, Melbourne and Sydney. Non-ringing visitors who signed the visitors book were from Richmond (Virginia), Brazil, Iran, Austria, Texas, Inner Mongolia, Hawaii and Russia! We were also visited by Architect Ptolomy Dean when he was carrying out the Quinquennial inspection.

We make our visitors very welcome and try and include ringing for everybody to make progress so that they will want to come again.

Key ringing events in 2023 included ringing for the Coronation of King Charles on 6 May and the dedication of the new carillon on 23rd April at a wonderful choral evensong service attended by the mayor and other dignitaries and former Kingston ringers and Tower Captains. The service also celebrated 50 years since the augmentation of the bells to 12.

Kingston won the local Association eight bell competition. Surrey won the Inter-Association Essex Trophy in September, and the impressive Essex Trophy is currently in the Kingston ringing chamber with the eight-bell trophy.

We continue to have dinners and barbeques together and coffee after ringing so we can have a catch up. We had an excellent weekend to the Wirral with the highlight of ringing at Chester Cathedral on Sunday morning.

The new electronic carillon and hour strike works well. Nicholsons did some work in the tower in the early part of 2023 including a new wheel on the 10th bell. There was a big spring clean in the tower in April 2023 and again in January 2024.

Finally, I would like to thank all the ringers for their ongoing contribution to the tower, and especially to So-Shan who does a brilliant job with our social media pages, demonstrating we are an active and vibrant set of ringers.

SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS – Sian Adams

The opportunity to enjoy refreshments after the 9.30 Sunday morning service is made possible by a team of 15, in various groupings, whose turn to serve comes round every 4 to 5 weeks. If you haven't as yet stayed on for a cuppa, you might like to know that we offer freshly brewed coffee, tea, some decaffeinated options and biscuits - of course! On various occasions we have enjoyed the culinary contribution of the Choir, who have taken charge of refreshments, and treated us to a fine selection of home - baked goodies, to raise money for their Choir Robe Fund and, more-recently, for the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Appeal. Also, during Lent, when we hosted visiting speakers at our Sunday Choral Evensong services, the refreshments offered afterwards enabled folk to stay on and continue the conversation.

All of this offers an important means of bringing people together, building our community and welcoming newcomers. So, whether you help on a regular basis, or just now - and -again, whether you have baked, bought, or helped with the washing - up, your contribution is very much appreciated. Do feel free to get in touch, if you would like to get involved or find out more.

VERGERS – Sheila Cheek and Patsy Porter

Vergers Rota - It was decided in October 2023 that when Vonnie was no longer going to continue in the Lead Vergers Role, that the role should be split into two parts. One person would have the responsibility of putting together the Vergers rota and the other person would liaise with the new Communications Officer to initiate/induct prospective volunteer vergers.

I, Sheila, took on the role of compiling the rota for vergers in November 2023. Also, to save confusion, I became the main contact person for vergers. When Vonnie was in the role, she devised a system for compiling the rota and I have more or less stuck to the same system as it seems to work very well. Many thanks to Vonnie for so efficiently carrying out the role especially when she was suffering ill health.

In the four or five months that I have been compiling the rota, I have realised how committed the vergers are to their volunteer work and I am very grateful for all the support given both by staff and helpers in the church and by the vergers themselves.

There are currently 39 volunteer vergers on the rota. This consists of 15 people who have a regular weekly slot, 8 people who have a regular monthly slot, 7 people who fill in gaps where needed on a fairly regular basis and 9 people who are currently not active for personal reasons. Generally, the rota has stayed very well attended with usually 90% or more of the slots being filled each month.

We have gained one new volunteer since October, and she has taken on a regular weekly slot as well as filling other gaps in the rota. We're currently looking into ways in which we could attract more volunteers. Weekends and in particular on Saturdays when people are busy, it's sometimes difficult to fill gaps. Patsy and I met with Kate, the Communications Officer, to discuss the process for attracting and then inducting new volunteer vergers and we hope to have further discussion in the future.

Vergers remain happy to take payment either by cash or card for purchases from the shop but find it much easier now that they no longer have to keep a record of the items bought. This is due to Liz's careful organisation and diligence in keeping track of stock taking etc. Vergers also seem to enjoy learning about the history of All Saints and it was pleasing to see how many vergers attended the training given by Sandy on the Seven Saxon Kings Embroidery Project.

Both Patsy and I look forward to meeting more vergers in the months ahead and to discover any training requirements as we get to know more people. We're both enjoying our new roles very much and hope to continue for some time.

LISTENING SERVICE – Revd Sandy Cragg

The listeners continue to be available in Church for anyone who needs to talk six mornings a week. The team has faced some challenges this year with a number of listeners having health issues, so it has not been easy to cover every day but so far we have managed.

We have several new volunteers waiting for training when we have a group large enough and hope to combine this with training the volunteers for the new planned parents' and children's activities later in spring/early summer. New volunteers are always welcome, please contact Sandy Cragg for more information on sandycragg26@gmail.com.

We also need a temporary administrator while Hilary is out of action - it's not necessary to be a listener to do the rota - so if you're someone with a talent for spreadsheets that you'd like to put to the service of the church, again please contact Sandy.

BOOK GROUP – Anne Nicholson

The Book Group has continued to meet on the fourth Sunday of each month.

We continue to read the Church Times monthly choice which includes an article about the book and a list of questions to focus our discussions. The choice of books is very varied, and we have interesting and lively discussions.

We have lost some longstanding members who are no longer able to get to the Church but have also welcomed two new members. We have six members at the moment but would like to have more, as not everyone can come each month.

COFFEE GROUP - Carys Griffiths

With the assistance of my co-hosts Beryl Walker and Janet Nevill we have had an interesting year. The group consists of church as well as non-church members with the attendance number fluctuating from about six to fourteen or more. It's a happy relaxed gathering with lots of laughter, chatting over a cup of coffee/tea usually interspersed with a Quiz, or some other table entertainment. These are not meant to be competitive, but rather a time to discuss, learn from each other and help our memories in a fun way. They are so popular that we have other café patrons come to find out what the quiz of the week is! We are also there to support each other in times of need, such an illness or bereavement.

When the church is used for other events, we have found alternative venues nearby to enjoy a coffee and chat. Earlier this year we also went on a short walk to the Kingston Museum followed by an impromptu lunch in the Apple Market on the way back. Although most are women it is wonderful to have a few men amongst us. Everyone is very welcome to join, if only for a quick cup of tea /coffee. It is always a pleasure when someone new joins this open and friendly group.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION – Revd William Allberry

Our monthly informal sessions continue, offering conversation practice to refugees and any others who need help with their spoken English. We meet in the church on the last Friday of each month between 12 and 2pm. We are a core of three 'teachers' but have others ready to help if required; we are always in touch with other agencies who are happy to publicise our services, but usually only half a dozen or so 'students'. Please encourage anyone who might benefit to come along and join us!

KNIT FOR THE NEEDY - Catherine Fennemore

We have had another enjoyable year with new members joining us bringing in new skills and ideas. We have also received many generous donations of wool. All these are much appreciated.

We continue to produce a wide range of items - 22 large blankets, 48 medium, 60 small & cot blankets, 17 large and 97 small jumpers, 219 "fish & chip" sets along with 167 hats of various sizes, 9 scarves, 2 toddler pinafore dresses, 11 pairs of booties, 2 pairs of mittens and 12 delightful animals from crocodile to mouse. The "fish & chip" sets are so named because families were so poor the babies had to be wrapped in newspaper.

We are hoping a consignment will go Malawi soon. It costs a lot to send a container and much effort goes in to fund-raising for this by the organisation and their supporters. If you wish to assist with this and find out more about their work you will find details on africanvision.org.uk.

We have continued to donate many items to Ukraine where they are much appreciated.

We meet in All Saints Church on Tuesday mornings from 10 am to just before noon and all are welcome to join us.

The financial accounts report is separate to this report.