

## Parish of Capel and Ockley

### Reports to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting

for the year 2024/25

#### The Context

The PCC of the Parish of Capel and Ockley has the responsibility to promote the mission of the Churches throughout the parish in all its forms, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenically. The past year has seen a continuation of this work and also a care for the physical structure of both its churches and churchyards. An important duty of the PCC is to be aware of the concerns of the congregation and to provide a place of discussion on all aspects of the Churches work in the villages and beyond through regular meetings. The PCC has met in full 6 times from April 2024 to March 2025. The Standing Committee has met 4 times in the same period.

#### Membership of the PCC

All membership of the PCC is elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. Up to nine members can be elected along with the Churchwardens, Deanery Synod members and the Vicar who are ex-officio. The tenure is for three years after which members need to be re-elected. The Churchwardens are elected annually.

During April 2024 to April 2025 the following served as members of the PCC:-

|                              |                                 |                                  |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Vicar and Chair              | Revd Liz Richardson             | (ex-officio)                     |
| Churchwardens                | Joy Harman                      | (ex-officio) St John the Baptist |
|                              | Norman Ede                      | (ex-officio) St John the Baptist |
|                              | James Lee-Steere                | (ex-officio) St Margaret's       |
| Deanery Synod:               | Andy Carr                       | (ex-officio) St John the Baptist |
|                              | Shirley Dean Webster            | (ex-officio) St Margaret's       |
| Elected members:             | Helen Burt                      | (Hon Treasurer) (2021)           |
|                              | Gordon Lee Steere               | (2021)                           |
|                              | Wendy Goddard                   | (2021)                           |
|                              | Suzanne Cole                    | (2022)                           |
|                              | Gillian Christie                | (2022)                           |
|                              | Sarah Pusey                     | (2021)                           |
|                              | David Silliman                  | (2021)                           |
|                              | Jessie Sutcliffe                | (2021)                           |
|                              | Leigh Smith (Safeguarding Lead) | (2023)                           |
| Hon Secretary:               | Sir Richard Winter- Stanbridge, | (2024)                           |
| Electoral Roll Officer:      | Rosemary Relf                   |                                  |
| Parish Safeguarding Officer: | Leigh Smith                     |                                  |

## **Vicar's report April 2024/25**

The PCC has worked hard throughout the year to serve you our wonderful congregations of St Margaret's Ockley and St John the Baptist Capel, under the overarching membership of the Surrey Weald Team led by our team rector Reverend Andrew Coe.

We have tried to meet the challenges that running a parish of two churches requires. We have looked for ways to make improvements and come up with new ideas knowing that each of our churches is unique in its own needs and expectations. We are so fortunate to have so many committed volunteers, both church members and from our local communities, to help us in our task of maintaining and promoting the mission of the Church in all its different ways.

I commend this Annual Report to you as a record of our activities and hope that you will appreciate the time and commitment of all who work to make sure our Parish of Capel and Ockley retains and advances its missional presence in these beautiful places of worship

### **Ministry**

In May 2024 I was able to take one month's study leave or sabbatical following the cancellation of a full sabbatical just as the pandemic hit in 2020. I took the time to study art and theology which included a wonderful trip to Florence. On my return I was invited to consider becoming an Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands ADDO, who is someone who prepares candidates for selection to train for ordained ministry. I have been asked to assist with The Caleb Scheme is a one year training and discernment pathway toward ordination for mature lay leaders. The scheme is named after Caleb who in the book of Joshua, chapter 14 'was strong and vigorous in exercising his ministry well into this mature years'! The age of eighty-five in Caleb's case! So although a very steep learning curve it has been an immense privilege to work with 2 candidates who will be attending a Selection Panel in June this year. If their calling is affirmed they will be ordained Deacon at Michaelmas. So, you are never too old!

Our own Gill Christie, who has been training for ordained ministry with the Local Ministry Programme (LMP) for the past three years will be ordained Deacon at Guildford Cathedral on Sunday 29th June. This will be a wonderful occasion, and we look forward to celebrating with Gill on that special day. Gill will then serve her curacy here in the parish as well as being ordained as Priest in 2026. It has been again an immense privilege to be able to support Gill throughout her discernment and training process and we look forward to the commencement of her ordained ministry in July. Gill has just completed a three-month placement at St Saviour's Church Guildford and now has the final pieces of work to submit. The written work has been academically rigorous, and Gill has worked so hard throughout the whole process and achieved so much. Please continue to pray for Gill and her family as her training for ordination comes to an end and her training post ordination begins! I will be her training incumbent and will shortly be going on a training conference to learn how to do this. We never stop training!! A highlight for Gill and myself was attending the annual Festival of Preaching held this year based at St John's College Cambridge. Apart from excellent speakers it was a real thrill to walk back and forth daily over the Bridge of Sighs to my room!

As a parish we have continued to follow the aims we identified through the Parish Needs Process. One of these aims was to develop our children's work through the running of a weekly after school Church Club for 5-7 years olds at Scott Broadwood School. We began in September with 14 children and very quickly this increased to a very full 30 children at the current time. A song, dramatised bible story and prayer, followed by tea with crustless sandwiches and other goodies, followed by a craft activity based on the bible story. All this in an hour! We have been thrilled with the way the club has grown and been received by the children and parents. Parents report that the children tell them the story at home and are amazed at how much they know. This is due to first of all Gill Christie for leading us in her own indomitable way of storytelling, so that the most gruesome Old Testament story can become child friendly without losing any integrity plus the most wonderful team of dedicated helpers - a team of 10 altogether. Teas are provided by our own Joy Harman and Joy is now a firm favourite with the children, greeting her out in the Capel streets! Between us all we manage to have a regular team of at least 6 volunteers each week. We are known as the most popular club in the school!

We have always had strong connections with our local schools and through the present leadership at Scott Broadwood and The Weald - Mr James Baguley is Headteacher for both schools, we are continuing to work closely with both. Revd Jane Schofield, Vicar of St Mary Magdalene, The Holmwood, and I are working together to plan a schools family fun day with our Cafe Church team at Pentecost this year. Last Christmas we invited Scott Broadwood children and staff to join us for our Christmas 9 Lessons and Carols service at an earlier start time. This was a huge success resulting in a full church with beautiful singing and readings from the children, alongside the choir and adult readings.

During this last year we received news that the Good Shepherd Academy Trust (GST) were looking to explore the possibilities of bringing Scott Broadwood and The Weald School together on one site. This brought forward a consultation process which put forward various possibilities for the school and local community to consider. This will mean potentially Capel will lose its village school which will no doubt cause knock-on effects, aside from the school and the sound of happy children being at the centre of our village. The PCC had to respond to the consultation and after much discussion we did not support the movement of Scott Broadwood to The Weald site, although we were not against the amalgamation of the two schools. As I write we are still awaiting a decision from the Department of Education as to the future of the school site. This is an important ongoing situation for which there has been and continues to be strong feeling. We are also concerned about the position of Capel Pre School which celebrates its 50th years since its founding.

Once again, we have as a parish held weekly services in our two churches. A small group of us meet to plan the services each quarter so that they will align with our quarterly rotas. Where would we be without our sidespeople, readers, intercessors and servers who contribute so much to our services. Also, a huge thank you to Dik Hoogmoed who plans the quarterly rotas for St John's and operates our parish website and to Dineke who runs the online calendar of church services and events as well as publishing our weekly notes online.

Additionally a huge thank you to Wendy Goddard, Margaret Zandona and Shirley Dean Webster who are part of the Ockley Church Wardening Team, responsible for keeping things running smoothly at St Margaret's.

Thank you too to those who clean and polish our wonderful ancient buildings, to those who maintain the churchyards, 3 in all, and cut the grass. This vital work means that visitors and congregation members alike are ensured a warm welcome.

Several things stand out as we review the year. First of all, the building and completion of the new toilet block at St Margarets with huge thanks to Ray Gibbs for project managing and doing much if not all of the building work! Words are not enough for Ray's contribution, wisdom and experience in the building industry. Secondly at St Margaret's there was the installation of the new stained-glass window in memory of the Lee-Steere and Prideaux families. This beautiful window was designed by Amanda Blair of Abinger Stained Glass, and we are very thankful to the families for their inspirational memorial gift. When the sun shines through it is truly glorious. Please see individual reports for more information on both projects.

For St John the Baptist at Capel we have been working hard to obtain a faculty to begin work on the new Garden of Remembrance in the top left corner of our churchyard. Designs were approved by the PCC, the DAC and the Diocesan Registry for which we are thankful. Thanks to Norman Ede and David Silliman for their support and hard work with this project. Also thank you in advance for the funding from The John Ede Fund, The Friends of Capel Church, and generous donations in memory of John Jaques, Wendy Birch, 444Kendon Barnes and Betty Mitchell over the past year. The fund is still open. If anyone wishes to make a donation, please do let me know.

We have also been working on improving our sound system at Capel and are currently applying for a faculty to install something more robust so that as we welcome large numbers of people to our church for important occasions such as weddings and funerals, we are not hampered by unprompted feedback, mobile phones, and general squeaks and whistles! We will also have a small sound desk so that recorded or downloaded music can be played without a problem. The Friends of Capel Church are supporting this project for us, for which again we are very thankful!

Service wise, week by week we worship our Lord by the services of Holy Communion, both Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and Common Worship (CW). Morning Worship, Matins and a more informal monthly service at Capel - Cafe Church. The latter led by Bob Cranham and his brilliant band of musicians is something I am very proud of. During the winter we hold Cafe Church in church but come the Springtime and through the summer we are welcomed by Capel's Crown pub where we worship in their lovely garden. It is always such a lovely thoughtful time of informal worship and if you have never been you should give it a go! We had our second 'local churches' get together with the congregations of Okewood and Forest Green in the Okewood Flower Show marquee. It was once more a wonderful occasion and we look forward to holding it again this August. Do see the Cafe Church report further on.

We are a very busy parish with 2 churches and communities. We are very blessed to have ministerial assistance in Revd Jo Elvidge PTO and Graham Everness (LLM). Personally, I am very grateful indeed for their support in taking services once or twice a month throughout the year and it has been good to have welcomed Paul Middleton to preach as part of his participation as a Lay Assistant Minister (LAM). Paul comes to us from St Peter's Newdigate and is in his second year of lay training with Guildford's Local Ministry Programme. Pastorally our Pastoral Assistant Sylvie Beckett has continued to visit several parishioners throughout the year as well as attending the Ockley Pavilion Cafe on a regular basis. I know

her visits are very much appreciated so thank you Sylvie for your pastoral ministry and other roles you play in church life! Our staff team will be even more enhanced when Gill begins her ordained ministry, so we are much blessed. It is a demanding task to hold all the different threads of our parish life together so a special thank you to Suzanne Cole who does just this through InSpire magazine. InSpire gives us much spiritual and creative inspiration every month. Thank you to all our sponsors - we couldn't do it without you!

As part of our parish needs process, we also wanted to give opportunities for further bible study and prayer. A couple of us have participated in Revd Jo's Benedictine Group over the last year. It has been very inspiring and proved a wonderful opportunity to learn about St Benedict and his Rule of Life. Study wise we began a course last Autumn which centred around a book 'Women of the Nativity'. Written by Paula Gooder (theologian, lay preacher and author) we looked at the lives of 9 women from Old Testament times to the New Testament, whose story led up and surrounded the birth of Jesus. We enjoyed it so much that we have just finished Paula's earlier book 'Women of Holy Week'! Simple narratives based on scripture which brought these events into the everyday. We are very grateful for Mairi Inglis Jone's hospitality each week we have met.

Music wise, aside from our contemporary musicians led by Bob we are surely blessed by our organists Anthea Smallwood at Capel and Andrew Collings at Ockley. Anthea is also our choir mistress at Capel, who inspires us to sing ever more beautiful music at Christmas and Easter. It has been a joy too when we combine forces with the choir from St Peter's Newdigate for special services. We look forward to many more collaborations in the future. I personally love being part of the choir and would encourage you to come and join us. Singing is so good for you! Thank you to both Andrew and Anthea for their faithfulness and patience with us all!

During the last year our parish has been working towards steps which will help our churches to reduce their Carbon footprint, following the Church of England's target of Carbon Net Zero by 2030. Dineke van den Bogerd has been encouraging and supporting our parish to take on the challenge and she writes her own report later in this document. The PCC has agreed their own Net Zero Statement which appears on our parish website. Currently we hold a bronze award but we need to work harder to fulfil the new requirements the bronze award requests.

Once again this year, not only have you as parishioners given financially regularly to our parish but also donated much needed funds and foodstuffs to various organisations for which you have our grateful thanks. Other groups have also joined us in these donations at Harvest time, in particular Capel WI and Scott Broadwood School children. We manage to send a bumper harvest of foodstuff to the Dorking Foodbank and Leatherhead Start each year and this year was no exception! All through the year as well, regular donations of food pour into our Capel church which are so gratefully received by the foodbank. Thank you so much!

Each Christmas we have provided hampers for our village school families who are struggling. Twelve bags of Christmas goodies along with supermarket vouchers to spend on food were given to Scott Broadwood as well as one or two others that we knew would appreciate it. Thank you to everyone who donated such an amazing amount of Christmas food. We could hardly move in the vestry at one point!! We also once again this year gave the children of Scott Broadwood School, Fairtrade Chocolate Advent Calendars and Easter.

eggs, all with story books telling the stories of Christmas and Easter. These were very much appreciated as you can imagine!

Fundraising for our parish continues constantly of course, in order to pay our annual Parish Share. This is what every parish contributes to resource mission and ministry across our diocese. Because the diocese of Guildford doesn't get any income from the government, and contributes money to the wider Church of England, we have to raise everything ourselves. Guildford Diocese has no historic reserves and investments; this means people today have to pay for today's church thereby helping to lay strong foundations for the future. 59% is spent on clergy stipend and housing, 17% goes towards training ordinands and curates, 9% is allocated towards parish and area support, 5% spent on schools and safeguarding, 6% on central diocesan support and 4% on national church support.

In order to meet this, we rely on your giving as well as specific fund raising events. You will find more information in the Treasurer's report. Every bit of money raised is so important to us as are specific donations for things. In order to meet our Parish Share we have to top the giving up by specific fundraising events. Our fundraising year began with our refreshment stall at the Capel Military Show over 3 days in early July. Rotas were displayed asking for general help and especially cake bakers. All of this was masterminded by Norman Ede, Leigh Smith and Helen Burt. Thank you to all our cake bakers and volunteers over the three days. At the annual Capel Show we had for the first time a Burger Stall which sold out quickly - more supplies needed for this year.

The next big event was our Murder Mystery play and Supper which ran over two evenings - Ockley and then Capel. The play and the performance were directed by Sylvie Becket and each community provides a delicious supper. It was once again a great success, and we look forward to entertaining you again this October. Finally in November we had the Capel Christmas Fair, organised by Suzanne Cole and her team. A massive achievement where carefully chosen stalls fill our village halls. We are so grateful to Suzanne who along with her wish to raise much needed funds for Motor Neurone Disease also very generously splits the proceeds donating to parish funds. Do read Suzanne's report later in this document.

With all these big events many people are involved working hard to make each event a success. There is much preparation and planning which starts well before all these events. I wish to thank everyone involved in setting up, baking, cooking, acting, serving, lighting and sound (especially our friends from Ockley Dramatic Society), box office, cash till, raffles, feeding the urns, clearing up, washing up, worrying, and so much more and too many to mention. Thank you all!!

Sadly, one regular annual event that has been missing for the last few years has been the Vicarage Fete. Other fundraising events have to take priority, and we simply do not have capacity to organise anything else. I am hoping that in my final year of ministry here perhaps we might squeeze in one more Vicarage Fete, albeit at a different time of year.

Our Churchwardens Joy Harman, Norman Ede and James Lee Steere have worked tirelessly throughout the year to keep the churches and surrounding lands well maintained as well as all their regular Church Wardens duties. Church Wardens are vital to our existence as worshipping communities and I wish to thank them for all that they do to ensure our churches run smoothly. Joy and her team continue to provide Capel Teas once or twice a month, which are amazing. Thank you to Helen Berry who has assisted Joy very much over the last year with these and the flowers in church. In addition, I wish to thank the Churchwardening team headed by Shirley Dean Webster at St Margaret's who assist James Lee Steere in his role.

Sadly all good things come to an end as we wish Norman Ede every blessing as he steps down as Churchwarden at this APCM following a tenure of at least ten years! Norman has played an integral role in our parish and plans to remain actively involved in his different areas of expertise. We have been truly blessed by all that he has contributed to St John the Baptist Church and our wider parish over many years and look forward to all that the future holds for him and the family. We look forward to thanking him formally at the APCM.

We also received the news that our Team Rector Revd Andrew Coe is retiring just after Easter and it was a joy to have him with us for our Mothering Sunday service recently, when he preached and was able to say farewell to many of us. Andrew has been Team Rector of the Surrey Weald Team since 2002, but we are happy he is not moving too far afield. We wish he and Noelle and their family every blessing as they settle into their new home in Little Bookham. Thank you to our wonderful bell-ringers at both towers and for all they do to keep those bells ringing out for us. At both churches we have beautifully arranged flowers and other beautiful artistic creations reflecting the seasons. Thank you to all of you for all you do because each thing however small, creates the beautiful sacred spaces we so enjoy. Outdoors in our churchyards there is of course regular maintenance with grass cutting and cutting back and someone who has been helping us with this for many years hung up his strimmer and we thank Chris Coke for the years of assistance he has given our Capel Church as well as so much more over the years. Thank you everyone for your help with this essential work and conservation of our churchyards. All of our churchyards are wonderful ecosystems in themselves, but we had something of a thrilling surprise last Autumn when a local fungi enthusiast found at least 31 different species of fungi in our Capel churchyard. Many when looked at closely were so colourful and beautiful. We have been told the churchyard may be a site of special scientific interest! What incredible places we have stewardship of to pass on to future generations.

Sadly, we have had to say a final goodbye to many friends and loved ones over the year. Every November we hold our Annual Service for the Bereaved on All Soul's Day. This is a service of comfort and remembrance for the bereaved to remember those they have loved but who have died.

***We remember with love:***

David Ansell, Kendall (Kenny) Barnes, Ruby Sawyers, Betty Mitchell,  
Christopher Cobb, Norman Myall, Yvette Lago, Ian Crook,  
Patricia White and Graham Webster.

We wish those who grieve their loss, God's comfort and healing love as they travel through the difficult and often surprising terrain of grief.

Personally for me, I consider myself to be very privileged to have been your parish priest for nearly 14 years! Both Doug and I love living in this wonderful community and are treasuring every moment as we prepare for our retirement in October 2026. Thank you to the PCC for their support and counsel and especially thanks to Richard Winter-Stanbridge for hosting our PCC meetings at his home for much of last year. I am sure in summing up I have left vital information out in this overview but hopefully it has given you something of a taster in what we are about as church family in Capel and Ockley. Thank you everyone for your help and support and most especially to my husband Doug who without him and his love, fortitude and patience I would be far lesser.

Revd Liz Richardson

## **Safeguarding Report 2025**

There has been 1 safeguarding concern in the past year in Capel and Ockley. This has been reported to Social Services.

We must be vigilant promoting a safer church especially in our current climate and outside scrutiny. We must always be aware of domestic abuse, child abuse including child self-harm, eating disorders and trafficking in our community. Regular mandatory training for all PCC members ensures and imbeds a culture where people feel safe and where abuse can be spotted and dealt with in a timely fashion.

Recently our Synod voted on next steps for independent safeguarding in the Church of England.

The improved motion includes:-

1. Setting up an external scrutiny body which is likely to be on a statutory basis and so would require legislation.
2. Transfer of most functions currently delivered by the National Safeguarding Team (NST) to an external employer, eventually and after all development, consultation and legislative processes complete.
3. Further work to determine the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4 which would involve the transfer of safeguarding teams in dioceses and cathedrals to the same external employer as the NST.
4. Lament and repent of the failure of the Church to be welcoming to victims and survivors and the harm they have experienced and continue to experience in the life of the Church.

The future of Church Safeguarding paper (67pgs) can be accessed on the Church of England website.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team and members of the Bishop's Leadership Team will be hosting monthly safeguarding surgeries from 2nd April (7-7.45 pm). The online meetings are for incumbents, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO's), churchwardens and PCC's. They will include short, practical presentations and Q&A sessions covering a wide range of topics, including how to create a healthy safeguarding culture and how to ensure safer recruiting. This is not a forum to discuss confidential individual cases. The dates will be added to the Guildford Diocese website calendar.

Michaela Berry has been appointed as a new Church of England Regional Safeguarding Lead and will cover the Diocese of Guildford. Her background is in Social Work having worked for a number of county councils. Her role is new and will provide additional independent scrutiny and quality assurance of safeguarding practice.

There is now access online to the latest Parish safeguarding and information welcome pack. The pack contains up-to-date information for PSO's, incumbents and PCC's. (Parish Brief 18.2.2025)

Leigh Smith - Parish Safeguarding Officer

## **Church Choir Report**

The start of the year is one of our two busiest seasons, Easter and the other being Christmas. We begin rehearsing in mid-January working for our Good Friday service. As in previous years our friends from St. Peter's Newdigate choir joined us. It was lovely to have our choir stalls full on both sides. The music sung was Stainer's Crucifixion which was interspersed with readings, reflections and prayers. We all felt it was a really moving service and the music spurred the choir to give a really moving performance.

We continue to lead the singing in our services and are regularly joined by two friends from St. Peter's choir when they are not singing in Newdigate, and have also joined Liz at Ockey when the Parish service was held there. However, as the saying goes 'the times they are a changing' and this is notable in our services. For example, there are now very few weddings.

After the summer break we were looking at anthems for the services for the Bereaved, Remembrance and Christmas. For the 'nine lessons and carols' we departed from our usual service and held the service in the late afternoon where we were joined by students and staff from Scott Broadwood School. It was such a wonderful, happy celebration of Christmas which left everyone feeling uplifted. After Joy's mince pies and Norman's mulled wine we all left church walking down through the twinkling Christmas trees. Christmas had begun.

A short break after Christmas and then we start again. Please do consider joining us. All we ask is the commitment for regular attendance. We sing at three services a month and rehearse on a Thursday evening between 7pm and 8pm. As they all keep telling us we know making music is good for us in so many ways. Join us and prove it!

Anthea Smallwood

## **Building Committee Report**

### **Repairs to the roof and spire**

In 2021 the Architect carried out a survey and submitted the required Quinquennial Report. It highlighted the need to carry out repairs to the main stone roof of the church and parts of the wooden shingle covering of the spire. Those works are recommended to be carried out sooner rather than later in order to prohibit deterioration of the roofs and their supporting structures. The Architect has subsequently carried out a more detail survey of the area and has provided a specification of works to be submitted to the Diocese for approval and then to specialists for competitive tendering. During the past year, we have been unsuccessful in locating specialist roofing companies to carry out these works. However, within the past month, the Architect has given us the contact details of three such companies and we have contacted them and are awaiting responses.

### **Remembrance Garden**

A Garden of Remembrance has been planned for the burial of loved one's ashes. It will be located in the southwest corner of the church yard and will include a secluded garden area. A plan has been prepared and agreed. At the time of writing, it has been submitted to the DAC for faculty approval and a public notice period is about to come to an end. The PCC have also approved the scheme. Five competitive quotes have been obtained from suitably qualified landscape gardeners, and one has been chosen. It is likely that the scheme will be funded by bequest funds, the restricted John Ede fund and the Capel Parish Council. Subject to approval, it is hoped that the works may commence in the near future.

### **Redecoration of the organ lobby and toilet**

A quote has been obtained for this work, which is technically acceptable to the Architect. The DAC have given faculty approval with conditions. It will be submitted for approval at the next PCC meeting. The works will hopefully be funded by the Friends of Capel Church.

### **New sound system**

The current sound system has been presenting problems for some time. Two competitive quotes have been obtained for its replacement and discussions are taking place to hopefully reduce the cost prior to submitting it for PCC and DAC approval.

### **Minor Works**

A new Radar lock has been installed to the toilet door in order to eliminate misuse by some members of the public. This has been financed by the Friends of Capel Church.

### **Repairs to the boundary wall**

Following the completion of the west and north walls, the Stonemason has completed approximately half of the south wall, which includes the area next to the proposed Remembrance Garden. No further action has taken place pending further applications for funding.

### **Repairs to the church paths**

Discussions have taken place between the Architect and specialist installers regarding changes to the main path in order to make it less slippery. There has been no satisfactory conclusion to the proposals.

D Silliman

## **Friends of St Margaret's Report 2024**

The Trustees met 3 times during the calendar year 2024.

During the year, the new loos had been completed, the new stained glass memorial window installed and a leak in the roof above the altar repaired. Thanks are expressed to Ray Gibbs who had done a magnificent job building the loos (with some contractors) and Helen and James Burt who had painted them.

MVDC had eventually signed the completion certificate for the Emergency Exit door.

A watching brief was being maintained on the plaster falling at the rear of the nave thought to be due to subsidence with the walls moving outwards, as reported last year.

New projects discussed included a sound system and alterations to the kitchen now storage space was available in the new loos.

The Friends financial year runs to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The income for to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 was £20,482 and expenditure of £19,021 a surplus of £1,461. The Funds carried forward were £10,769.

GEL-S

### **Café Church Report - 2024/5**



Things have moved on quite a bit since Liz first asked if I would like to “come and play your guitar” for a Café Church service not long after we moved to Capel in 2017. We are now in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Liz handing over the reins to me to lead the service on the second Sunday of each month.

It’s always difficult to give an appraisal of our own work but the past year has been full of many amazing highlights. Firstly, the incredible team that has grown as a result of Café Church have been a constant encouragement and support. The Lovely Claire, Dik the Dutchman and Dr. Lisa Glenn have been joined by Mike the Mechanic (Michael Jay). Their input and enthusiasm are a major part of the success of the services. The music is, I am told, always a highlight of the services, and the bond that has developed between us means that there is a seamless flow in the worship and a real sensitivity to the mood and direction of the service.

Topics covered during the year have ranged from D-Day, the Olympics, Back to School (including an exam paper!) and The Beatitudes through to annual themes of Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas. In January of this year, I asked Gail Lawther, a long-standing friend, to come and preach.

Her presentation, Face to Face with Jesus, was wonderful and resulted in more than one invitation to speak at other events in the area.

The team now lead an annual Café Church service on the Okweood Hill showground in August which brings together members of many different local churches and in June this year we will be taking our unique style of church to The Weald School for an outdoor Family Funday and Pentecost Picnic! From May to September we meet, weather permitting, in the garden of The Crown.

What has become increasingly apparent during the past year is that God is at work. On more than one occasion Liz has commented on the presence of the Holy Spirit during Café Church. My prayer is always that people will see less of me and the team and more of Jesus as we lead the worship and preach. God has been truly gracious in using the little that we bring and turning it into a blessing to all of us, whether we stand at the front or sit in the pews. We worship an awesome God who loves us beyond measure and I want to give all thanks and praise to Him for guiding, directing and inspiring all that Café Church has become.

Bob Cranham

## **Memorial Window in St Margaret's**

A modern memorial window has replaced the plain glass Victorian window in the North Aisle next to the Emergency Door. In memory of Charles and Patience Lee Steere and John and Joan Prideaux (Patience and Joan were sisters). Paid for by the families with donations to the Friends in aid of the loos!

The stained-glass window was designed by Amanda Blair of Abinger Stained Glass and has Leith Hill in the background with a quotation from the Gospel of St John, ch. 11 v. 25. A service of dedication was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024.

GLS

## **Report of Electoral Roll Officer**

**2025**

Every six years we are obliged to prepare a new roll for the Parish of Capel and Ockley. I, as Electoral Roll officer, have contacted every person whose name was on the previous Roll and with the help of Rev. Liz, friends and family, have hand delivered or posted forms to as many as possible. Forms have also been available in both Churches for the whole of March. The deadline for submissions and returns to me was 28<sup>th</sup> March.

At the time of compilation of the Roll, the total stood at 92. Sadly on 29<sup>th</sup> March our dear friend Graham Webster died so our Electoral Roll now stands at 91.

I therefore declare that the Electoral Roll for the Parish of Capel and Ockley stands at 91.



Rosemary L. Relf  
Electoral Roll Officer  
1st April 2025

## **Capel bell ringing report**

Bell ringing at St John the Baptist continues with a committed and steady band of ringers. We practice once a month, on the first Wednesday, with our Ockley counterparts. These regular practices allow us to maintain our skills and strengthen teamwork within the band.

We have recently held a taster experience for our local Beavers and those who live close to the church will have heard their lovely attempts at chiming. It was a fantastic experience and one they hope to repeat next year.

While we have not rung for many weddings recently, this is primarily due to the limited number of weddings being held at the church. We remain ready and enthusiastic to ring for any future occasions.

Last year, we welcomed a regular group of ringers learning Rope Sight, their donations to the bell tower have enabled a little pot of money to grow. This money will be used to freshen the appearance of the ringing chamber and also maintenance of the bells themselves - this will begin over Easter.

We're pleased to share that we have recently begun lessons with two ladies who have shown interest in learning the art of bell ringing. It's been encouraging to see new faces, and we hope to continue building on this momentum.

Looking ahead, we would love to increase our numbers and welcome anyone interested in joining us. Bell ringing is a rewarding and sociable activity, and we encourage anyone curious to come along and give it a try.

### **Ockley St Margaret Tower Report**

Recruitment seems to get more and more difficult, but we did gain one learner last April who has proved to be very keen and is making good progress, so we now have a full band for service ringing most weeks. All our ringers have completed their Basic Awareness Training.

We have had a few visiting groups and seem to be more popular now that there is a toilet available.

There are no known maintenance issues.

The fifth bell has been notoriously difficult to ring partly because it is so deep set at Hand. This has been corrected by reducing the distance it leans back when up, making it very light set: some might say too light so it may need further adjustment, but it is certainly easier to ring than before.

### **Churchwardens Report for St Margaret's Ockley 2024**

This report summarises the activities of St Margarets' during the year 2024 and is structured as follows: church services, rotas and support, building works, outreach, international links and a thank you to all the St Margaret's team.

#### **St Margaret's Church Services**

The congregation numbers have remained consistent throughout the year and joint service with St John's Chapel are much enjoyed.

Weddings / Baptisms / Funerals: There were two weddings during the year: Chloe Wheeler to Daniel Killick on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May and Jennifer Fletcher to Ben Chiswell on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. There were also two funerals: Toby George Edward Webster on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April and David Christopher Ansell on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May and a burial of ashes at St Margaret's, Terence Bennett Tucker on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July.

Rev. Jo Elvidge took the Easter Service. Gill Christie organised an Easter egg hunt in the church and churchyard. We had a large congregation and a record number of children.

A Dedication Service was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June for the splendid new stained-glass window donated by the Lee-Steere and Prideaux families.

The marquee at the Okewoodhill showground was again used for an Intra Parish Service which also included members of the Ewhurst, Okewood and Forest Green churches. It was extremely well attended. Sincere thanks to Bob Cranham and team for leading such a lovely service. It is hoped that we will be able to make this an annual event.

The Harvest Festival Service was taken by Rev. Jo Elvidge. Again, a large number of gifts were received which we were able to distribute throughout the community.

A Pet Service was held in the Village Hall. Anthea came and kindly played. There were several dogs present! Remembrance Sunday was well attended. There was tea and biscuits in the Village Hall afterwards, prepared by Iris and Michael Spruce.

The Christingle service took place in the Ockley Pavilion. It was most enjoyable and well attended with new attendees and there were more adults than children. A bonus was that Father Christmas made a special appearance at the end! The Christmas Day Service was led by Rev Jo Elvidge and was a great success. It is suggested that additional services should take place in the Pavilion and / or Village Hall to make the gospel message accessible to those who find attending church difficult for whatever reason.

### **St Margaret's Rotas**

Everyone is willing and able to chip in to help with everything. Rosemary leads the flowers, Wendy the brass cleaning and Pat and Margaret the general cleaning.

### **Outreach**

Mums and Toddlers Group takes place in the Ockley Village Hall every Thursday. It was begun by Gill Christie in 2018. It continues to thrive with help of Bea Milne, Margaret Smith and others in the village. There are at least 15-20 adults and many, many more children.

Village Teas has now become Village Lunches and takes place in the Ockley Village Hall on the third Monday of each month. It is run by a team of local ladies who also put on a Christmas lunch which attracted 50 members of the local community.

The Pavilion Café continued to be a great source of outreach, with Rev. Liz and Sylvie Beckett attending most Wednesday mornings. We also have a bonus of the Community Fridge coming from Dorking which attracts many more villagers.

Gill, Helen, Clare and Margaret help Rev Liz as part of a small team of volunteers from Capel and Okewood churches to run an after-school Church Club at Capel School every Wednesday afternoon. This includes a bible story, craft and a wonderful tea provided by Joy. This is Church for our youngest members. As part of the wider Mission of the Church and in keeping with the gospel message St Margaret's is open 24/7 and has supported homeless overnight visitors during the year.

### **International Links**

Our transatlantic links with the Baptist church in Guildford Connecticut continue to thrive. The links first began in 1639 when our then vicar, the Reverend Henry Whitfield, travelled with several members of his congregation and founded the church in Guilford Connecticut. Lots of visitors have written very complimentary comments in the Visitor's book during the year, and there were some visitors over from America as per usual.

### **Thank you**

I think this report needs to conclude with yet another expression of my sincere thanks and gratitude to the whole St Margaret's team who have helped and supported me during 2024.

James Lee-Steere  
Church Warden, St Margaret's Church, 2025

## **Churchwardens report for St John the Baptist, Capel**

Much of what we might report on during the past year will have been covered in the Building Committee report, for which we are very grateful to David for all his expertise. Lent soup lunches have proved popular again this year as have our famous Sunday afternoon teas.

St John's now has a weekly cleaner, whose work is evident from the moment you set foot inside the church. Thank you, Anita, and we hope this relationship will continue long into the future.

After periodic research spanning at least the last 2 years, the 'Miss Marples' (otherwise known as The Church Recording Society) were able to publish their book on the history of our church and all its fixtures and fittings. They have given us a copy of their book which extends to 2 volumes!

Gratitude and thanks to Helen Berry for all her help and support with flowers, teas and soup lunches as well as grateful thanks to all the volunteers who have made all our church events possible.

Finally I, Joy, wish to offer thanks and gratitude to Norman for his help and support over our many years of church wardening together and as always we offer immense thanks and gratitude to Liz and Doug for their love and care to us all.

Joy Harman and Norman Ede

## **The Pavilion Cafe Ockley**

In the twelve years since The Pavilion Café in Ockley first opened, it has raised and donated more than £20,000 supporting local and national charities and Ockley groups, all thanks to its loyal customers and volunteers! We have around 30 regular local customers, several who come from further afield and a few who discover us while out walking!

It was originally the brainchild of Jenny Reed: "I was at Spring Harvest and attended a seminar about Christians serving the community. The next morning, I woke up and said to Belinda Kerry, 'God thinks we should start a café!' So, we formed a group of local ladies called Kindred Spirits, and we were off!"

Village Greens has always generously supported the café and donates the delicious coffee, and our volunteers bake the lovely cakes, scones and quiches. Residents from Amber also regularly help us out as part of their rehabilitation.

It's impossible to mention all the many worthy causes that have benefitted over the years from the generous donations, but they include: Christian Aid, Crisis at Christmas, Disaster Emergency Committee, Dementia UK, Finlay's Touch, Kidney Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, Stroke Association.

Local charities and groups who are supported include: Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance, Amber Foundation, Ockley Mothers and Toddlers, Young at Heart, Village Teas, Lent Lunches, Ockley Society, the local parish churches and hardship cases.

A recent welcome addition is the Mid Surrey Community Fridges, who set up outside the café at around 10.15. Their aim is to reduce food waste and support local people. They collect unsold food from local businesses which is destined to go to landfill and make it available to local communities for a small donation.

The Pavilion Café is open every Wednesday between 9.00 – 12.00, with bacon butties available on the last Wednesday of the month. Transport can be arranged.

Liz Thorne on behalf of Kindred Spirits

## **Financial Report 2024**

While the Accounts show an overall surplus of £3,422, this is entirely attributed to increases in the restricted funds. Specifically, donations and grants of £25,030 were received to fund the construction of a new external toilet facility, £1,575 for repairs to ridge and £2,634 from the Listed Places of Worship Grant scheme towards new lighting at St. Margaret's Church. Donations of £2,127 were received towards the new memorial garden at St John the Baptist. Net income for the school flat was £6,840.

However, there was a deficit in unrestricted income over expenditure of £5,822. This decline is primarily due to a £2,800 reduction in planned giving and a reduction of £4,200 in unrestricted donations. These losses were partially offset by a £1,700 increase in open plate collections, although this included £850 designated for outward giving. Our operational costs remain relatively stable. The Parish Share remains our largest cost at £81,350 in 2024. While this represents a £3,400 increase on 2023, it was partially mitigated by a £2,800 reduction in utility costs. The PCC is, nevertheless, increasingly reliant on fundraising activities to cover day to day expenses.

For the third year running, we operated a successful tea and cake stall at the Military Show over the first weekend in July. Despite adverse weather conditions, the event generated £6,115. While slightly below the previous year and our budget, this is still a very positive result. Again, a huge thank you to all those who baked cakes in advance and to all those volunteers who helped over the very wet weekend. Our burger stall at the Capel Show in August also proved profitable, yielding just under £2,000. Additionally, the Murder Mystery Play, "Where there's a will there's a way", with a performance in each village in the Autumn was again well supported and raised £1,800. We thank all those who participated whether on stage, with catering or assisting with the event. Special thanks are due to Sylvie for her direction and members of the Ockley Dramatic Society for their support. Finally, we express our deep appreciation to Suzanne Cole and her team for organizing another successful 'Capel Christmas Fair' where 50% (£1,700) of the profits were donated to the PCC.

We value every single donation, regardless of size, and remain committed to achieving financial sustainability through our voluntary income. Expanding our regular donor base is crucial to covering our ongoing church activities and costs. We are grateful to those who contribute regularly. If you currently only donate during services, please consider becoming a 'regular donor'. A commitment to a monthly, quarterly or even yearly amount enables us to plan effectively. This can be done by a standing order or, more conveniently, via the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) - a National Church recognised system that we have utilised for some years now.

Acknowledging the decline in collections at services which is, at least in part, due to the fact that we are moving towards a cashless society, we have been exploring digital giving options. In March, we purchased a CollecTin More donation unit. Our intention was to make this available at baptisms, weddings and funerals in our two churches and at other church fundraising events. Unfortunately, we have experienced network connectivity issues in both churches which have hindered full implementation of this device.

Another avenue for supporting the churches is through legacy giving. A bequest in a will can be seen as an 'expression of thankfulness for a lifetime worth of living'. Something you choose to do whilst you are alive which is activated when you die. While prioritising family provision is understandable, you may wish to consider leaving a small percentage of your estate to your 'church family'.

Finally, I should like to thank Nick Ward for his service as the independent examiner of our accounts for this year. We are seeking a new individual to assume this vital oversight role for 2025. If you think you (or someone you know) might be able to help, please get in touch.

Helen Burt BCom ACA