



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

Administrative information

Holy Trinity Church is situated in Logmore Lane, Westcott. It is part of the Diocese of Guildford within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, St John's, Furlong Road, Westcott, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3PP.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (charity registration number: 1132869).

PCC members who have served from 1 January 2024 until the date this report was approved (unless noted otherwise) are:

<i>Chairman, Ex-officio:</i>	The Rev'd Tim Armstrong, incumbent
<i>Wardens:</i>	Mark Shakespeare: Elected at APCM 23.4.23 and again 19.5.24. Nicola Smetham: Elected at APCM 23.4. 23 and again 19.5.24.

<i>Representatives on the Deanery Synod:</i>	
Glynis Cranefield	Elected for three years at APCM 11.10.20 and again 19.5.24. Stepped down December 2024.

<i>Elected members:</i>	
Kay Meldrum, Treasurer	First elected for three years at 2009 APCM, then for three years every third APCM, up to and including from 19.5.24.
Jan Way, Secretary	Co-opted at PCC meeting 8.5.17. Elected for three years at 2018 APCM, then for three years every third APCM, up to and including from 19.5.24.
Malcolm Bradley	Elected for three years 11.10.20 then for one year 23.4.23 and 19.5.24.
Murray Stephen	Elected for three years 11.10.20, for one year 23.4.23 and for three years 19.5.24.
Richard Packer	Elected for three years 11.10.20 and 23.4.23.
Hannah Mayo	Elected for three years 23.4.23.
Elizabeth Mair	Elected for three years 23.4.23.
Louise Scillitoe-Brown	Elected for three years 23.4.23.
Becky Auton	Elected for three years 19.5.24.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. All Church attendees are encouraged to register on the Electoral Roll and stand for election to the PCC.

Objectives and activities

Holy Trinity's PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the building of St John's, Furlong Road, Westcott.

Church attendance

There are 101 people on the Church Electoral Roll which has just been refreshed (pre-refresh – 181). The average weekly attendance on a “normal Sunday” was 75 – comprising 64 adults and 11 children (2021 figures: 72; 70 adults and 2 children).

The “worshipping community” (ie attend worship at least monthly) is 125 (2021 – 104) - adults, children in congregational worship/activities, plus home communions and services taken at Bramley House and Westcott House.

Review of the year

The full PCC met four times during the year. Committees met between meetings and any matters arising were referred to the PCC as necessary.

SAFEGUARDING – Jan Way, Safeguarding Officer

Jan Way is the Safeguarding Officer and Helen Hughes the DBS Validator for this period.

Activities

a) Safeguarding incidents

There have been no safeguarding incidents during the period from January 2024 to December 2025. There have been some areas of concern in relation to one family which Tim Armstrong has monitored and consulted with the Diocese in connection with. Diocese support is very good in relation to individual matters.

b) Complying with policies, procedures and good practice

The Safeguarding officer continues to monitor the Safeguarding Parish Dashboard - an online platform that outlines what the duties and responsibilities of each Parish regarding safeguarding, covering training, adoption of policies, activities etc. There are numerous levels as you move through the platform. Currently Holy Trinity is on Level 3 which is the top level. The Dashboard

is currently up to date with the exception of training and individual PCC members are completing the necessary training.

We now have a clear Safer Recruitment Process that everyone who is seeking a role with Children and Vulnerable Adults must follow. This involves a formal application, completion of a declaration regarding previous offences, two references and a DBS. Volunteers must also now have a Job Description, undertake basic safeguarding training and sign a declaration agreeing to follow safeguarding policies. Children's activities which come under the responsibility of the church are Cookie Club and Sunday Club. Jan undertakes risk assessment visits to both.

c) *Training*

As above. In general people have engaged with the training offered which is of a high quality.

d) *DBS Validations*

Helen does a sterling job managing the DBS applications which is no easy task. This is a key role in the church and both Tim and I are grateful for Helen's diligence. It is important to note that key roles in the church require an enhanced DBS, specifically when the role involves work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Equally DBS status lasts three years so renewals are required. However there is now an update system, free to volunteers where, once registered the DBS is automatically updated and the status of individuals can be checked. This saves a great deal of time and expense so it is really worth everyone who undertakes a DBS doing this. It is not possible to continue to work with children or vulnerable adults if a DBS has expired.

e) *Safeguarding meetings*

Regular safeguarding meetings are held between Jan and Tim.

Conclusion

Safeguarding is now a standing item on the PCC agenda which is as it should be as it remains a key component of the church. At the January 25 meeting we had an interesting and lively discussion in connection with What makes for Healthy and Safe church, examining roles, communication styles and questioning thoughtfully how response to new members and to safeguarding overall.

The Dashboard is a helpful tool to ensure that as a church we are both compliant and cognisant of our duties and responsibilities. In the current climate within the Church of England it is really important that those of us 'at the coal face' demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding.

GENERAL REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2024 – Nicola Smetham & Mark Shakespeare, Churchwardens

The year got off to a tremendous start with the **Archdeacon's visitation** on Jan 8th! All HTW estate maintenance paperwork was in good order, with the only outstanding item a Public Safety Gas Certificate, which was soon acquired. More importantly was the heart-warming feedback from the Diocese of a strong feeling of excitement that God was at work in Westcott, and their assurance of support for all our endeavours. Short and long term initiatives were discussed and encouraged.

2024 has been a year of encouragement – Tim and his family moved into the heart of the village in May, after focused prayer for their quick settlement in Westcott. As promised last year, we have continued to engage with the wider community, repeating successful events such as the **Pancake Party**, when we welcomed young families from the village school to come and share pancakes with sensational toppings! Events such as these provide invaluable contact with young families, with the chance to start conversations and hear their needs. **Forest Church**, our periodical outdoors service for all ages, has seen new families join us, come rain or shine, and engage with this alternative service format. Young and old come together to respond to God's creation and reflect on how we can all care for our planet.

Community events have taken place in our now more versatile church building, and it is lovely to see HTW becoming known as a concert venue. The final floor reconfiguration works were completed just in time for **Dorking Rock Choir** on 7th June, who in their inimitable style rocked the audience. Classical concerts have also filled the space – **The Kings Men** and **Maiastra**, both with good attendance and much acclaim following their performances. Once again, such events are bringing old and new audiences through the doors of HTW. The final crescendo of the church's 2024 event calendar has to be '**Westfestivity**', the village Christmas Fayre held on 16th November. This was a well-attended event with a steady flow of visitors throughout the day, and clearly one held in much affection now. There were many comments on how welcoming the church was and how the event nurtured 'community', with all areas of the village represented. In addition, much needed funds were raised for charity.

However, it isn't all 'razzmatazz' at HTW, as there have also been many significant community services and school-related activities throughout the year: Surrey Hills All Saints School's **Harvest Festival and Christmas services** held in church; '**Open the Book**' assemblies; TLG (**Transforming Lives for Good**) mentoring and support. These keep the church known to young families and are clearly a contributing factor to the record attendance at the **Nativity Crib Service**. Meanwhile, our '**Sunday Club**' for children, wonderfully led by Julie Badman and Jenny Armstrong, continues to grow and has regular attendees who gleefully skip into it each week.

Looking to the wider community, we have continued to hold the **Service of Remembering** (3rd Nov) for all those in the village who are grieving and living with loss. This service of compassion has been much appreciated. We have also launched occasional **Baked Potato lunches** after the Sunday morning service, providing hospitality for the church family and beyond. These make use

of our new kitchen facilities and allow time for people to share food and 'life' conversations. **'Maundy Thursday Supper'** was another time of gathering, this time with a shared meal and communion around the table. There have also been evenings of praise and worship in all styles – some charismatic, some reflective, all of which provided a welcome mid-week pause to focus and centre on God. The local pub, meanwhile, has been the venue for a new life group, led by Tim Armstrong, with studies and discussion around the book of Romans.

We have also looked outward to our charity collaborations and hosted the **Papua Partners 'Walk for Papua'** supper on 14th September. HTW provided a central venue for the charity's trustees to meet and share valuable time together. We are always left inspired by the tremendous drive and energy of this 'small' charity and how it illuminates our perspective and understanding of the impact of climate change.

As your churchwardens, we are responsible for the stewardship not only of the estate buildings, but also of the church's finances, ensuring current provision and security for the future. The decline in **gifting** became a more pressing issue in 2024, with a myriad of good reasons to explain why, but nevertheless a trend that needed to be reversed. Our target shortfall was £17K and we are very happy to report that this has been significantly reduced. We emerge into 2025 in a much stronger financial position and have much to be thankful for in God's provision. Our special thanks to Simon Mabley who continues to keep a watchful eye over HTW and St John's.

We have attended various training and 'replenishment' services for church wardens throughout the year, a highlight being the **Bishop's Garden Party** in June. This was a welcome opportunity to meet fellow church wardens from across the Diocese, sharing experiences and encouraging one another. The benefit of this event was two-fold: it is always nice to be 'thanked', but it also highlighted the rich blessing we enjoy at HTW, when many parishes are struggling. We were reminded once again of the faithful community that have gone before us and how thankful we are for their commitment and careful stewardship. Later in the year, the Leadership Team attended a workshop on handling 'Tricky Questions'. Informative and gentle in its approach, this was well received by all.

As we look ahead to the year to come, we have outlined a few initiatives - the upper room re-organisation continues; a new bin store is needed to relocate them away from the back of the church building. No doubt there will be more, but we march on, confident in God's provision and with the blessing of sufficient resources and the many gifted volunteers who give of their time and counsel. We are reassured by the steady congregation numbers and indeed the number of regular 'new faces' attending across the month's services.

We remain mindful of the **Quinquennial** that will take place in May 2026 under the supervision of Louise Scillitoe-Brown, who continues to oversee buildings and maintenance with such great diligence. We have now been successful in filling the volunteer position of Grant Writer/Researcher and, as this report is being written, we are seeing the first early fruits of this initiative to secure public funds.

Much as we are churchwardens of HTW, we also have involvement with St John's Chapel. **The Village Hub** continues to gain momentum and is rightfully establishing itself as an active part of the village community and calendar. More on that from Jon, but we are prayerful for the work started here and filled with optimism that 2025 will be a year of growth and fruitfulness for this initiative.

We conclude with the church health check goals, as a reminder of the direction we continue to journey in as a church:

- ☐ Healthy church attendance.
- ☐ Involve a broader range of people in leading and supporting worship.
- ☐ Encourage people to join the "Electoral roll" – membership of the Church.
- ☐ Church engagement with the village school, and in village life generally.
- ☐ Volunteer posts filled.
- ☐ Clear evidence of discipleship – people growing in Christian faith – including ordinands.
- ☐ Activities organised by church members.
- ☐ Pastoral care offered through the village.
- ☐ Engagement with (inter) national issues e.g. through "Eco Church" – Forest church initiated
- ☐ Engagement with the wider Church, including, for example the great support for Papua Partners.
- ☐ Meeting the costs of running the Church in Westcott

Both Mark and I would like to extend our thanks to all who continue to answer our queries and respond to our many requests. Thank you!

A REVIEW OF THE YEAR – Tim Armstrong, Vicar

Part of the challenge of writing a review for this report is that 2024 already feels a long time ago. I want to begin by thanking the church wardens for their detailed review of the year, and all the other contributors to this document who have so thoughtfully recalled what happened over the course of the year. Speaking personally, I have found it deeply encouraging to pause for a few moments to remember and reflect on all that God has been doing in our community.

Rather than a chronological review, which has so brilliantly been done by Nicki and Mark, I will review the past year through the lens of our church vision which is the guiding force for where we prayerfully put our energies and resources: We are a church of all ages, a church of deep disciples, and a church rooted in and reaching out into our community.

A Church of All Ages

We have seen new faces of all ages join and visit our community over the course of 2024. We also saw a continued deepening of the relationship between our school and church. The church was present in the school community through Open the Book, TLG, the Local Committee (which replaced School Governors under the new Multi-Academy Trust system) and Collective Worship. The School was present in the Church through our three annual school services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas; the pancake party on Shrove Tuesday, and through more families from the school coming along to services during the year – and especially during Advent and Christmas. Sunday club has grown under the leadership of Julie and Jenny and is a place of meaningful discipleship. Revd Virginia Smith continued to energetically lead services and offer pastoral support in our two village care homes – along with the many other amazing things she does. There is so much to celebrate here! There is also a reality that to keep reaching families with the hope of the Gospel may create challenges over the coming years – being an intergenerational community of all ages doing our best to follow Jesus together is not always straightforward – but when we get glimpses of it working it is worth seeking after. We will continue to prioritise mission and ministry to families and seek to develop collaborative youth and children's discipleship over the coming years.

A Church of Deep Disciples

Over the course of the year we sought to create spaces where those who are new to the possibility of faith, and those who have been Christians for a long time, can gather to go deeper together. Women's Group continues to be a base of discipleship, community and mission. Discussion groups on Sermon Series were helped in the Pub during Lent looking at Covenant and at the Hub at St John's in Autumn exploring the Romans. Worship nights alternating between traditional Compline and more informal contemporary worship took place throughout the year. A group of us went away to the New Wine festival – some for the first time. A prayer gathering was held and many in the congregation share a sense that regular prayer meetings need to be a priority in 2025.

A Church Rooted in and Reaching out into the Community

We want to serve and support our community. This happens in all sorts of ways which, by their nature, go unseen, but there are also all sorts of partnerships and projects in 2024 which are worth celebrating. At St John's Chapel Jon and Mum's began the process of becoming the Westcott Village Hub Community Interest Company which has slowly transformed from being a pop up veg shop to a community space hosting crafts, the community fridge, and a space with good coffee available where people can meet, mingle and find out about the village. This transition to a Community Interest Company will be ongoing in 2025. Baby Meals – which involves so many cooks from the wider community as well as many from the church -has continued to provide meals to families with newborns and others in need. The Village Magazine – brilliantly edited by Cath Friend – is a source of information and interest for everyone in the Parish. Our trained TLG coaches have worked through the school to offer targeted support to children and their families. Members of our congregation serve the village in all sorts of different ways, from offering debt support, to sitting on various committees and as trustees. We have

aimed to hold more events in the Pub, at St John's, and in other community spaces to be a present and visible part of Westcott Community. As is always the risk when one begins making a list, there are many things, people, and projects that I will have missed – but I am so thankful for the many ways you, as members of Westcott Church, seek to serve and reach out into the community. Looking ahead, two things that have come out of times of prayer in 2024 are a sense that we have an ongoing role to play in bringing people from different parts of the community together, and the idea that the time may be ripe in 2025 to offer people in the village a course to explore the Christian faith as it has been a few years since this was last done and there seems to be genuine interest.

ORDINATION TRAINING - Hannah Mayo

After 3 years of study on the diocesan Local Ministry Programme, I'm finally going to be ordained on 29th June at Guildford Cathedral!

For those that don't know, the pathway I'm on means that I'll be staying at Holy Trinity after ordination, officially as Curate. I'll be a part-time (continuing my paid work alongside), financially self-supporting, additional ordained person in the parish (deacon for the first year, then ordained priest in a year's time), with much to learn as I go, but hopefully able to be a support to Tim in his leadership.

If you've been occasionally realising you haven't seen me for a while, it's because I've been on placement at St Martins, East Horsley since January - another village church but one that does things in different ways, so it's broadened my experience, and I've learnt lots, some of which will I hope be of use in Westcott too. I've enjoyed it hugely but am looking forward to being back with you after Easter.

The last 3 years have been incredibly enriching, hugely stretching in all kinds of ways, very (very) hard going at times, and an absolute joy and privilege. I am humbled and amazed by this road God's nudging me down: I can't quite believe I'm nearly there (and still have what feels like a mountain of written work to do before the day itself), but I also know that June 29th is really just the start of this journey. I'm so grateful for the support, encouragement and prayers of all at Holy Trinity over the past few years (and especially my Parish Support Group - thank you Tim, Shakespeares, Staceys and Brenda), and ask for your continuing prayers over the next few months as I plough through the academic work and prepare for 29th June and beyond.

SUNDAY CLUB – Julie Badman, co-ordinator

Sunday Club has had another wonderful year. We continue to have a regular core attendance of around 8 children between the ages of 2 and 8 years old with many Sundays seeing attendance increase up to 12. The group has been led principally by Julie Badman and Jenny Armstrong with the support of multiple church members to ensure that we have the appropriate number of

DBS adults present. A special thank you to Karen Ratzke for providing an energetic musical segment at the start of each session. Thanks must also go to Jan Way and Helen Hughes for their help in ensuring that our Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. In addition, we are very lucky to have a fantastic Duke of Edinburgh student, Sophia, who comes to volunteer as part of her Gold award. We couldn't run Sunday Club without all these valuable contributions. Thank you everyone!

One of the challenges continues to be providing appropriate material and opportunity to learn across a very wide age range in a single venue. Throughout the year we have experimented with different resources and the best sessions have been when the school aged children have been led in a separate activity which allows them to go more deeply into the story we are exploring. Of course, this level of provision requires additional resource and preparation, but is something that we would like to do more of.

One of the most rewarding things we have seen in the past year is the increasing acceptance of the children as an integral part of our church congregation. The children are learning so much from the adults they mix with in the main congregation both before, during and after the service. Thank you to everyone for helping our young people to have such a positive experience being a central part of our church community.

OPEN THE BOOK – Liz Bradley, co-ordinator

Open the Book (OtB) is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. The OtB team take a weekly Assembly in Surrey Hills All Saints on Wednesday afternoons. The stories are scripted and the children (from a different year group each week) enjoy dressing up as the characters alongside the adults. After the storytelling there is a structured time of Reflection with prayer. Please consider joining the team! Training is available.

TRANSFORMING LIVES FOR GOOD (TLG) – Libby Witt, co-ordinator

In the past year, Holy Trinity has continued partnering successfully with 'Transforming Lives for Good' (TLG) and Surrey Hills All Saints School to run an Early Intervention programme with children from the school. TLG is a Christian charity which partners with local churches to give emotional support to vulnerable children and young people through a year-long coaching programme, designed to help the child make the very best of their time in education.

In 2024, our volunteer coach team grew to 5 (Karen Ratzke, Lisa Brady, Grant Smetham, Murray Stephen and Libby Witt) which means that 5 children received coaching under the programme in the year. We were sad that Murray had to step back in the summer term for personal reasons. We wish him all the very best and hope that he might be able to return at a later date. Karen

stepped into his shoes and continued coaching Murray's coached child, after her own coached child completed his year.

We are blessed in having great support from the Senior Leadership Team at Surrey Hills and continue to have a good working relationship with our School Key Contact, which has helped with the smooth running of the project. Our annual review in March 2024 with our TLG Regional Coordinator, meant we were able to hear from the school of the positive change they have seen in the coached children. TLG continue to be a huge support to our coaching team: providing resources, training and encouragement through termly online regional forum meetings, and contact with our Regional Coordinator.

We are delighted that Liz Cronshey has volunteered to be a coach, is going through the application process and will do her training in the next few weeks, with a view to starting as a coach after that. We still have space for another coach in the team so if anyone is interested in joining the team and would like to know more about what coaching involves, I'd love to hear from you!

COOKIE CLUB – Ali Mabley, co-ordinator

Cookie Club meets on Thursday mornings between 9 and 11am at St Johns Chapel. It is a thriving little community! We have a wonderful team of volunteers to help put out toys, do coffee and biscuits, provide fantastic craft activities and get to know the young families in the village. We now have between 8 and 15 families coming regularly each week. The families are meeting with each other outside of Cookie Club which is wonderful to see. The baby meals link up with Cookie Club - Liz Bradley takes a meal and tells families with newborns about Cookie Club - again providing support and friendship.

In the Autumn term we had a visit from Kath Webster and Richard Packer from St Johns Ambulance to give first aid training for little ones. This was very much appreciated by the group. We also had a visit from Father Christmas at the end of term - no first aid, just presents!

Sadly, we have lost two team members as they have moved to be nearer family. Audrey Chitty, washed up for us each week, and Ian Chappell helped us set up the Chapel before Cookie Club. They are both greatly missed. I am very grateful to Peter Yates for stepping into Ian's shoes.

I am also very grateful to Natalie Akenzua for taking on the lead whilst I have been out of action for the last two terms. And the wonderful volunteers who are so dedicated and make a great team - Cookie club wouldn't take place without them! Thank you all!

RESOURCES TEAM

Financial Review – Kay Meldrum, Treasurer

Holy Trinity's finances had a very shaky start to the year, but, thanks to the generosity of parishioners, have improved, with an increase in income greater than the increase in expenditure.

Total receipts on ordinary Unrestricted Funds were £143,936 and are detailed in the Financial Statements. This represents an increase in Unrestricted income of approx. 20%. This includes an increase in covenanted donations of 9% (2023 decrease 2%), a significant increase in associated tax credits, partly due to backdating, and an increase in investment and other income.

The field next to the churchyard was let on an annual basis, and gross income of £1,000 from it is included in these accounts. Rental was also received in respect of a mobile telephone mast on church premises, and gross income of £12,041 from it is shown in these accounts. This is unusually high as the result of accountancy adjustments following the change in the contract during the year. In future only £4,000 p.a. will be received, plus a contribution towards electricity costs

£151,040 was spent to provide the Christian ministry from Holy Trinity Church, an increase of approx. 12%. The main item, 56% of total expenditure, (last year 61%), is the contribution to the Diocesan Parish Share, which largely provides the stipends and housing for the clergy.

The PCC continues to own the former St John's church, which was used by various organisations and individuals. The net deficit on the premises was £3,351, compared with net surplus of £1,601 in 2023. The deficit is largely due to increased electricity costs.

The net result for the year on Unrestricted Funds was an excess of expenditure over income of £7,104. (2023 deficit £14,959). This was largely due to a significant amount spent on work on the building following the Quinquennial review, and the deficit on St John's.

The work on improvements to the Church fabric using Designated Funds was finished during the year, and the assets and small bank balance of this Fund, £33,149 was transferred to the Unrestricted Fund. The surplus on the Restricted Magazine account, £5,806, was also transferred to the Unrestricted Fund. The balances carried forward at 31st December for Unrestricted funds totalled £106,912 (2023 £80,095).

Looking forward, more work is needed on the building following the Quinquennial review, our contribution to Diocesan Parish Share has increased, income from the telephone mast will be significantly reduced, and work is needed on the heating in St John's. The increase in Parish Share does not take account of the recent increase in National Insurance, which Diocese are initially absorbing but which will impact in future years. 2025 will be another challenging year.

Reserves policy

It is PCC policy to accumulate a balance on Unrestricted Funds of £50,000, to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. The balance of £106,912 on Unrestricted Funds at the year-end exceeds this target. Cash reserves of £73,570 also exceed this target.

The balance of £257,591 in the Restricted Funds represents £4,640 in the General Support Fund, £8,069 for Youth Work, £217,224 net cost of St John's, £1,840 grant for the churchyard at St John's, £3,629 for work on St John's building, £1,221 for the Peace Garden, £3,644 relating to the Touche Fund, and £12,804 in the Magazine Fund.

It is our policy to invest our Restricted and Unrestricted Funds balances with the CBF Church of England Deposit Fund. Permanent Endowment funds are invested primarily in income generating Funds.

BUILDINGS AND MAINTENANCE

Maintenance Report - Louise Scillitoe-Brown



Stonework

Quinquennial

Stonework repairs formed a key component of the list of urgent repairs in the 2022's Quinquennial Report. Chris Anstey was booked to complete this work, and extra repairs identified since the Quinquennial, in autumn 2023, but due to unexpected additional work in the projects scheduled before ours, this did not start until the autumn 2024. Most of the work was completed before Christmas, with hessian wrapped lime mortar left to cure through the winter.

Climate Change

Additional stone repairs had become apparent during 2024. Stonework surrounding the Chancel window near the altar had badly deteriorated because the existing gutters are not designed to cope with the excessive rain that now falls. Also, during the exterior stonework

repairs it became apparent that the inadequate surface water drainage, plus rainwater pouring through the BT cable conduit, were causing flooding around the south side of the church.

A series of quotes were gathered and funding of £5k was secured through the Diocese of Guildford towards the costs of the £11k project to clear moss from the roofs, installed wider and deeper gutters, run a CCTV through the surface water drains c/w a pc amount for repairs. The chancel window has now been repaired, and we are seeking further funds to complete the remaining work.

Over Hanging Trees

The church stonework is very porous and the south and east sides shaded by the trees on the Heath. The Head Forester of Wotton Estate was contacted, and he and his team have removed some of the large, overhanging limbs and one precariously overhanging tree. The work helps to improve airflow, thereby aiding drying of the stone and prevent storm damage

Cesspit Cover

The cesspit cover was broken by a tractor when cutting John's Meadow. Chris Dale kindly agreed to purchase the necessary parts and repair the lid. The plan is to install bollards adjacent to this to help prevent the problem occurring again.

Electrical Inspection Updates

Following the regular inspection of the electrical installations in the church various upgrades were recommended. The work was carried out in November 2024 by Carbon Electrical and the cost net of VAT of £875 was paid by a donation from a local benefactor. HMRC agreed to refund the VAT element.

PAT Test

The annual PAT revealed that the electronic keyboard and other items stored in the room above the Old Vestry were showing signs of damp. A dehumidifier was purchased on behalf of the church and set to run continuously, draining into the sink in that room. The power usage is low, much less than heating the room. With the increased airflow around the south and east side of the church, the damp atmosphere may improve.

Boiler

Cowley's serviced and tested the boiler and provided a gas certificate. They returned when the main control panel failed. Through their efforts the circuit board was supplied by the manufacturer free of charge, but it was still necessary to pay for the labour because the relatively new boiler is out of warranty.

ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE – Jon Mears, Manager

Initiatives

Westcott Community Larder:

In partnership with Mid Surrey Community Fridges, the weekly van stop on Tuesdays has now been complemented with a more permanent offering at the Village Hub next door. The larder diverts food waste and gets used by 50-70 people each week with the help of dedicated volunteers.

Jon and Mum Groceries / Westcott Village Hub Community Interest Company:

This transitioning not-for-profit enterprise is developing well. The cafe prepares home cooked meals, summer BBQs, and support for various community groups indicate the shop's evolving role as a community centre. The Hub has also provided an outlet for goods made by start-up village businesses including a Pottery, an Artist, a Beekeeper, wonderful jewellery, a local candle maker and even a Pyrographer! Fundraising for the Westcott Village Hub saw the successful application for a new kitchen at the Hub which is wonderful news.

Chapel Bookings:

The chapel is now home to a number of regular users providing steady income. Alongside the well-established Cookie Club, Yoga, Creative Writing and Art Club there are numerous recovery groups, Shakti Dance, Craft Fayres, Open Mic Evenings and ad hoc birthday celebrations filling the chapel.

Unfortunately maintenance continues to be a challenge with the Heating, Carpet and Electrics all causing an uplift in expenditure in 2024 and/or also a downturn in rental income, this combined with the end of energy contracts (seeing an uplift in energy prices circa 35%) meant that cost for keeping the Chapel operational at around £3k. However, the new heating is now up and running, the electrics have been improved and despite still needing a new carpet the outlook is positive.

WESTCOTT COMMUNITY GARDEN – Jakki Phillips

The community garden, in the churchyard at St John's, went from strength-to-strength last year, with plentiful harvests of beans, courgettes, radishes, carrots, potatoes, raspberries and a variety of squashes in the autumn. Harvests are shared amongst volunteers and excess available from Westcott Community Hub. Our ornamental flowerbed filled with roses, lavender and cosmos has proved popular with the local bee and butterfly population, whilst the unmown area continues to provide much needed habitat for wildlife. There is a good camaraderie amongst volunteers at the Saturday session and we hope to have regular weekday sessions in the summer, to enable more people to come along and share in the fun! This year, alongside growing fruit and vegetables, we are planning to grow more flowers for cutting, to build on an

initiative started earlier this year, for giving bunches of flowers to brighten the day of anyone in the village who may be feeling under the weather. We are also planning to add sensory features to the garden and are looking forward to being part of the Westcott Open Gardens on Sunday, 15th June, when we hope to promote B-Lines - a Buglife pollinators project - by having bee-friendly flowering plants available for anyone who wants to help form a network of wildlife-friendly habitats within the village and beyond!

WESTCOTT VILLAGE MAGAZINE – Cath Friend, Editor

The Westcott Village Magazine has continued to be a high-quality colour magazine. We have kept it to 64pp, as this is the most cost-effective number of pages to print. The magazine is distributed free of charge to each household 11 times a year and edited by Cath Friend. The content is provided by local contributors who are encouraged to send in interesting local information with photographs where possible.

Advertising pays for all magazine costs of which printing is by far the biggest factor. Our advertising year runs from 1st November and will end on 31st October 2025. Our advertising income for 24/25 as at March 2025 is very similar to the previous year and stands at £14,105 for 24/25 vs £14,151 in 23/24. Print costs are dependent on the size of each issue and inflationary print costs, the second of which particularly is out of our control.

We have been advised of an increase in print yet this year, but that may change. If the issue sizes remain at 64pp and print costs don't rise, then a similar surplus to last year of over £5,000 is possible. Danny and Sally Clark continue to be the advertising co-ordinators (with occasional support from Hugh Parry). Moira Fenwick is the delivery coordinator, with the help of Jane Holford, organising a team of 43 distributors who deliver to every household in the village. If anyone is interested in helping to distribute magazines, please contact Moira on distribution@westcottmag.com as there is sometimes a turnover of people and it would be good to have willing names on a list she could call on.

MISSION & SOCIAL JUSTICE

The following was donated by way of Outward Giving in 2024 for outside agencies in direct giving to Holy Trinity or from general funds:

Royal British Legion £257.97

Children's Society £118.53

CMS £360

Crisis at Christmas £54.07 (balance of 2023 donation)

PAPUA PARTNERS – Naomi Sosa

Papua Partners remains a key mission partner, and we raised a few thousand pounds to support their vital work through fundraisers and initiatives in 2024. Several members of the congregation took part in the annual Walk With West Papua in September to raise awareness and funds.

Some of the highlights of 2024

Responding to the crisis of internally displaced communities (IDP): During 2023/24 we continued support to communities displaced by conflict, resource extraction and natural disasters in Sorong, Wamena and Sentani. We supported the livelihoods of 3 IDP communities through the establishment of green business, savings groups and improved management of the environment. This included the establishment and expansion of catfish breeding and selling businesses in Sorong, small pig business and agriculture in Wamena and tree planting in Sentani.

Speaking Out: Equipping 30 youth and women leaders as Change Agents and network leaders to monitor, map, and document causes of displacement, raise awareness on climate change and the environment and advocate for change.

Small Business Development: We provided support to our partner Eruwok to strengthen their various micro- business projects with women from 10 communities including a baking cooperative and a basic goods cooperative and a coffee business. The groups have been going from strength to strength providing an amazing example of women leading change and being the engine of growth in their communities. These businesses are supporting at least 20 family networks, funding children in education, and healthcare costs. The bread and basic goods businesses give a percentage of their profits to the Eruwok community clinic.

This year saw the continuation of the **ending violence against women and girls programme** in the town of Wamena in partnership with Yasumat and various church networks. This programme provides training of trainers for youth facilitators, churches and women leaders in how to **prevent Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promote equality** as well as how to equip churches to become safe spaces for victims of violence and a promoter of healthy families and communities.

In early 2024 we partnered with Elsham, Bentalar Rakyat, Parapara Buku and Lao Lao Papua to host a **Women's School in Sentani** over a number of weeks with the theme of 'Inspire Inclusion - Take, Seize, Create and Defend Space for Women in the Land of Papua'. The school aimed to build awareness and critical thinking skills, learning media and creating a safe space for women to understand women's issues.

Peacebuilding: Our partner iWaTaLi has been growing their important peacebuilding work and are active behind the scenes training activists in conflict areas, building connections and consensus, helping Papuan groups build a nonviolent movement for peace and justice. We have supported several small grants for activists to travel internationally to carry out advocacy on the ongoing situation in Papua.

Paralegal and Documentation Training: This year iWaTaLi in partnership with the Papuan Legal Aid Foundation (LBH) trained 15 young activists to attain their paralegal qualification and build their capacity in the documenting of human rights and environmental crimes.

Church and Community Transformation (CCT): The CCT programme continues to grow and is the core approach used by Yapelin, Yasumat and iWaTaLi to build the capacity and resilience of local communities to bring about positive lasting change. In 2023/2024 we started a new training of trainers programmes to build capacity of regional leaders in delivering the CCT programme.

Rural Education: This year with support from Papua Partners and other donors Yasumat was able to start a model primary school in the District of Lolat, Yahukimo. The school is working together with parents and community leaders and aims to develop a quality, contextual curriculum that provides an opportunity for children from one of the remotest communities in Papua with a good education.

We continue to support and facilitate the advocacy work of the West Papuan Council of Churches (WPCC) and the West Papuan Christian Youth Forum internationally. One of our team works as part of the Secretariat of the WPCC and the work of iWaTaLi in documentation of conflict related incidents and abuses that feeds the advocacy work of the Council and supports the advocacy work of European advocacy groups to advocate for change at the UN and with national Governments.

All of this work would not be possible without the generosity of our regular long-term supporters who enable us and our partners to mobilise transformative change, one person at a time.

SURREY HILLS GROUP – Tim Armstrong

(Group of Churches formed 1.1.15:

Abinger & Coldharbour with Holmbury & Wotton; Westcott)

The Surrey Hills Group is an informal partnership between Westcott Parish and the Churches of the Leith Hill Benefice. In 2024 we continued to work together and share mission and ministry where possible. I personally have benefitted greatly from working alongside Revd Kia Pakenham who continues to offer encouragement, ideas, creativity and insight as we meet together regularly to talk and pray. Revd David Grundy, who oversaw Wotton and Holmbury St Mary, retired in January and the Benefice have been looking to appoint a new House for Duty Priest but as yet there have been no successful applicants. One of the great joys of our collaboration has been Open the Book, which involves volunteers from our Parishes working together to creatively tell Bible stories in our shared school – Surrey Hills All Saints. There are ongoing conversations about how we can further collaborate, especially around youth and children's ministry in the years ahead.
