

PREPARED FOR THE APCM
SUNDAY 6 APRIL 2025

ANNUAL REVIEW

Review of Year to December 31 2024

**St. Mary with St. Alban
Teddington Parish**

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VICAR'S REPORT

The Revd David Cloake

This report reflects on my first full year as the vicar and incumbent of the parish, and one where two principal factors have been my introduction to Thomas Traherne and the focussed endeavours surrounding Building Anew.

First, it is right to give thought to the statistical outturn of our worshipping life as it serves as one marker (among many) of the health and vitality of the parish and her life before Christ. Overall 'Weekly Attendance' was 267 (-2.9%), this figure reflecting all those who attended any service across all days of the week. Average 'Sunday Attendance' was 171 (-18.57%) partly caused by a reduction in baptisms in 2024 and a fall in attendance numbers at the 9am service (there was a 5% increase in attendance at the 10am service). I was delighted to note that our 'Christmas Attendance' saw an increase of over 21%, a trend reflected in local and national churches. Occasional Offices (baptisms, marriages and funerals) saw a similar pattern of mixed fortune with baptisms down nearly 20% and funerals up over 140% on 2023 figures - this pattern being expected in the first full year after a vacancy.

Statistics can belie the real life and vitality of the parish, which is more often seen in the activity of the community beyond its Sunday worshipping habits. I continue to be delighted by the witness and presence of the work of the Pastoral Group through its Community and Memory Cafes. These remain a significant missional light to the wider community of Teddington, and I am grateful for the teams who enable this work through their time and talent. I know what value these provisions offer to those who use them. I am also particularly grateful for the planning already underway for the provision of a Bereavement Cafe that will come to fruition in 2025. Beyond the Cafes, the parish remains visible in many other ways - through its broad social activities (so often supported by those outside of the worshipping community), the considerable time given by volunteers in so many ways, the courageous opening of the church building each and every day, the care of our grounds, our civic presence, our communicative life (through a dynamic website, emerging social media, the much-loved monthly newsletter among them) and I remain confident that we are regarded as a credible and trusted partner in the wider life of Teddington.

Part of our particular calling as a parish is in the training and development of the next generation of ministers - lay or ordained. It has been my pleasure to offer placement to Sarah Rae as part of her formal training towards ordination and eventual priesthood. The community has welcomed Debby Johnson from the parish of Ss Philip & James, Whitton on her placement as part of her formal training towards her being accredited as a licensed lay minister. In autumn, we were pleased to welcome Orla MacIntosh-Graham (latterly known as Sr Margaret-Thomas following her move into the Benedictine religious life) as an intern under the national Ministry Experience Scheme. They have each brought much to the parish in terms of their fellowship, their personal gifts and skills and through their training and development that has the effect of causing us to reflect on our life as a parish community. During the course of the year we were delighted to learn that we will receive

two Assistant Curates in 2025, and we continue to pray for Sarah and Joy as they conclude their theological training at Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

My personal ministry is, by blessed necessity, supported by a team of priests whose voluntary ministry is a significant blessing to us all. I wish to record my thanks to the Revd Mary Hawes for her tireless devotion to the parish and especially its younger members, and also to her work (on our behalf) as Chair of Governors and Chaplain at St Mary and St Peter Primary School. Thanks are also due to the Revd Rosamond McDowell, the Revd Canon John Shepherd, Bishop Martin Wharton and the Revd David Bell for their share in the whole ministry of our parish and the unique and distinct blessings that they each bring to our worshipping and wider life. I am, and we are, supported ably by the Operations Team based in our Parish Office and it is right to thank Suzanne Parker, Nadia Prince, Emma Castellani and Alex Corlett for their vital part in the life of the wider organisation. Without their talents we would be in considerable difficulty!

It has been a particular pleasure to become more familiar with the rich heritage of our parish which has been a seat of devotion for so many generations. Our various commemorative acts marking the anniversary of the death of Thomas Traherne has reintroduced so many of us to the depth of his writing, as well as reminding us all of our duty to share that heritage (and so much more) with our wider community. It remains the case that our church is ill-equipped for the current and future generations and it is vitally important that we take the opportunity bestowed upon us in our time to improve our church for the better care and hospitality of all. I continue to be firm in my view that the work taking place under Building Anew is far more than the 'vanity project' that we are at times guilty of labelling it, but as an act of necessary ministry to all who visit us. For their sake - and not just ours - we proceed with this project that has been the focus of much effort by its governance group in the last year, and to whom I owe considerable thanks.

As I look forward to a new year, I remain committed to making our worshipping life attractive and accessible to young people, to recognise the considerable time and effort given to the parish by so many volunteers, to ensure that the busy-ness of the parish is met by spiritual space and succour, to continue the work of building and maintaining the bridges into our wider community and of course to give thanks, daily, for the many blessings of our parish, her resources and opportunities. Deo Gratias!

2024 PROCEEDINGS OF THE PCC

Nick de Mattos

There have been 22 members on the PCC who have committed to 6 PCC meetings over the last 12 months. We have continued to offer the option to join meetings via Zoom.

The first meeting, held on 14th May, approved the re-election of Fred Squire as Treasurer, the election of Nick Fenton to the new post of Hon Clerk of Works, Carla Maroussas as Vice Chair of the PCC, and the election of various PCC Representatives whom the Vicar thanked

noting that many had been performing these roles for a number of years. More info from N de M. The meeting adopted Mary Field-Smith's Safeguarding Policy with the Vicar noting that the level of SG awareness in the parish was very high. It also adopted the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Steve Randall joined the meeting on behalf of the Building Anew Governance Team. He said that the faculty for the building had been received from the diocese and all approvals. The focus was now on detailed design and fundraising. Re the latter, it was agreed to employ a special fundraising consultant to help with drafting the major applications for grants. Steve expressed his wish to hand over the management of fundraising.

The Vicar shared his thoughts about the year ahead which included redefining the role of each churchwarden to reflect the two streams of parish life: human and material and augmenting the groups which serve the PCC.

The second meeting on 18th July saw the appointment of the PCC Secretary, Nick de Mattos, followed by the Vicar announcing that the PCC would review the policies one at a time starting with Volunteering (for which there is ever a need; if interested, please see the Vicar).

Steve Randall re Building Anew said that all permissions and faculties were now in place. The tender process to acquire a contractor has begun and an appointment should be in place by the end of August. Ten contractors were approached and six seemed to be suitable. He said the architect, Karen Butti, had already begun work on the project. The Vicar repeated the PCC's heart-felt thanks to Steve and reiterated the need, on his behalf, for him to hand over the fundraising side of the project.

Chris Darling announced the update of the H&S Policy, making sure that all risks were captured – overseeing of rotas, lone working, electrical equipment, food preparation and storage, lifting heavy weights.

The Vicar announced the resignation of Leonelle the cleaner after 15 years. An unrelated accident left her limited in movement. She will be sorely missed. He also announced the offer by the diocese to the parish of two curacies: one self-supporting and one stipendiary. Sarah Rae was suggested for the supporting role with the cost of the full-time position met by reducing the parish's contribution to the Common Fund which the parish has habitually made over and above the minimum. Training priests helps the Church of England and the parish benefits in all sorts of ways.

Mary Field-Smith re Safeguarding outlined the remaining areas to be fulfilled for the Level Three SG Attainment. A motion was passed to adopt the National Safeguarding Guidance. Mary also said that all PCC members needed to complete domestic abuse training online. The Vicar mentioned that the Bishop was particularly pleased with the parish for being so advanced with SG.

The third meeting on the 12th September began with the Vicar's Report in which he announced Sister Margaret-Thomas attending church functions for the academic year. This will help her decide whether to join the priesthood or the Benedictine Order. She is studying at St Mary's University. He announced the PCC Awayday in November during which the PCC would form a Mission Action Plan (MAP) – like a School Development Plan.

The meeting discussed the GDPR Audit Questionnaire designed to find out the extent of data still on personal devices. The Vicar warned that the parish would be liable to a potential £40,000 fine for a data breach. This led to a discussion of cloud storage which is to be continued.

Mary Field-Smith updated the meeting on Safeguarding: Action Plan to be reviewed and approved later in the month; populating the SG Hub; 'Safeguarding Sunday' in November.

Steve Randall sent a message that fundraising consultancy Craigmile had been appointed. He also said that Ford had submitted their detailed design work. A shortlist of 6 contractors will be sent documents for tender. Fred Squire mentioned that a bat survey had found no bats, so that was a potential delay alleviated.

The main business of the 4th Meeting, held on 12th November, was opened by Mary Field-Smith in the light of the upcoming Safeguarding Sunday on which the Vicar was going to address the congregation following the resignation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. She highlighted two main questions: do we provide clear and accessible information for victims and survivors of abuse? How do we deal with disclosure? She supplied an Actions Summary to PCC members outlining a clear path of actions in the event of a disclosure. She said she was confident that our church is a safe place.

The Vicar announced that Adam Woods was temporarily stepping back from his duties as churchwarden and announced the Awayday for the PCC on 16th November.

Regarding Building Anew, Steve Randall said that serious consideration was now being given to applications for grants, particularly the National Lottery, and the fundraising consultant had already highlighted some areas where our draft application was rather vague. In terms of our own, physical fundraising, this was going nicely, and we were encouraged to keep up our efforts.

There was some discussion about the churchyard, particularly the debate over wild vs cultured. This has yet to be resolved as there was strong feeling both within and without the church community, and the Council has a part to play in it as well.

The fifth meeting was held on 16th January. The Vicar opened the main part of the meeting with some statistics. In broad terms, there were 140% more funerals this year but fewer marriages and baptisms. Weekly attendances in all numbered 237. The surprising figure of

all, supplied by Fred Squire, was the 473 subscribers to the online channel, far more than are on the electoral roll. Regarding the latter, the Vicar said that this year was the time for its routine re-establishment. All names will be erased, and folk will need to reapply via a form.

The Vicar declared his vision for the Youth going forward – broadly two groups: the Church Mice and an all-age group for whom activities would be created in self-contained chunks rather than part of a single vision. Some discussion was given to a regular service being dedicated to youth involvement.

Chris Darling led the review of the H&S policy which threw up some valid concerns – a healthy effect of an H&S policy! Re churchyard, Robin Field-Smith proposed, with Nick Fenton, liaising with the Council to form a 5-year plan for the churchyard. The cutting regime was not yet quite right but most definitely under review.

Re: Building Anew, Fred Squire said that £323.5K had been pledged which, when added to the £250K pledged by the church brought the total raised to £573.5K = 45% of funds required. Of the £700K still to find, it was estimated that half could be found from grants, meaning that only £350K was now the focus of our efforts.

The PCC Awayday

The Revd David Cloake

In September, members of the PCC gathered at St Columba's Retreat House in Woking to begin the work of discerning a new vision for the life of the parish. The day was partly one of work, but also a time for spiritual retreat and reflection for members as we enjoyed the conducive surroundings, chapel and grounds. The day began with Morning Prayer.

Within our considerations, we looked at the life of the parish in two ways: 'The Journey so Far' and 'The Journey Ahead of Us'. In the first half, we considered the life and ministry of the parish as it currently stands, what may have grown and those things that it may be said that we do well. We considered notable challenges, what could be improved, and the very subjective matters of what made members happy as parishioners at St Mary with St Albans (or, indeed, what they found difficult). Following a generous lunch, and after a scheduled time for personal retreat, we gathered again to begin considering the future, reflecting on such questions as 'what may be God's calling on the parish', how we might answer the broad question "who are SMwSA?", and then to consider short-, mid- and longer term choices from previous discussions.

We concluded the afternoon with a Eucharist in the wonderful setting of the Chapel.

This was the first of two days of reflection, with the second planned for next year. At the second session, members of the PCC, having reflected for some time on the discussions had on the first day, will be encouraged to formulate a 'mission action plan' that will serve and direct the parish in the next five years or so.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Jennifer Paynter

This year we were required to prepare a new church electoral roll. This takes place every six years, when the previous roll is deleted and everyone must re-apply. The last preparation of a new roll was in 2019 and the next will be in 2031.

In the intervening years (2025 through to 2030) the usual annual revision of the electoral roll will take place, where names are added/removed and net gains/losses are reported.

Total number on the new Roll	267
Total number on 2024/2025 Roll	367
Net loss	100

The decrease in names may relate to people who have moved away and not been removed from the Roll during the previous six years.

COMMUNICATIONS

Suzanne Parker

Comms are used in many forms throughout the parish and remain an important part of promoting St Mary with St Alban's mission.

Over 2024 a broad project was undertaken to refresh SMwSA's branding, to enhance communication and engagement with a primary focus on all printed and digital material: website, newsletter, social media, posters, email bulletin (Mailchimp), event flyers and noticeboard displays.

This refresh is a balance of clarity with tradition, featuring:

- A consistent and recognisable visual identity, aligning with SMwSA's already established branding.
- A simple yet effective typography style which is easy to read and complements parish life.
- Additionally, we are ensuring that printed materials are designed to be accessible, considering readability for those with visual impairments and ensuring key details stand out effectively.
- Materials which reflect the parish's Anglican tradition whilst remaining visually inviting and accessible to our diverse congregation, and local community. And which encourage deeper engagement with parish life.

Sister Margaret-Thomas, our Parish Intern, has invested much of her time and talent with the website, posters and social media. We are very grateful to Sister for her invaluable input, knowledge and hard work, based upon using, in her words, "High-quality imagery that highlights both the beauty of the liturgical life of St Mary with St Alban, along with the warmth of the local community."

This project will continue into 2025, and below is a breakdown of the main aspects covered so far:

PRINTED MEDIA

Posters

Posters are produced for all manner of existing regular events, as well as one-offs, ensuring lively, colourful and full noticeboards in Church, the Parish Hall and the Peter & Paul Centre.

Parish Newsletter

A full-colour newsletter is printed each month, thanks to a team of three editors, a well-oiled bundling process and a hardy bunch of volunteer deliverers who carry our news to around 5,000 letterboxes in the parish. Additional flyers are occasionally included, to further promote things like: Christmas Services, Easter Services, the Bazaar and the Village Fair.

Over 2024, we took the opportunity to begin the work to make the newsletter more accessible by removing fonts with flourishes, working more predominantly with the agreed brand colours and increasing the number of photographs included.

The Parish Newsletter continues to be a wonderful vehicle enabling SMwSA to keep in touch with the residents of Teddington, with content providing a good balance of the retrospective, the current and to include what's coming up. Below is a good example of the emails we have been receiving over the past 18-months, showing the effective wider reach and value of this printed newsletter:

Dear Reverend David

I have just caught up with the Vicar's Viewpoint in the February Newsletter and wanted to say what a welcoming, reassuring, and compassionate message you wrote that really resonated with me. It was a lovely reminder that the Church is there for all of us at any time. And offers comfort and support. My husband read it too, a man of few words, but commented too on the uplifting inclusivity of your message.

We haven't met yet, but I love to walk through the churchyard. And you made such a good point in January about the Church being a place where we can just go and be silent if we wish.

The Church is at the heart of Teddington and thank you for reminding us that you are there for us for whatever or whenever we need.

With best wishes and thanks

DIGITAL MEDIA

This rolling refresh is also refining existing social media channels, the parish website, and email communications. QR codes continue to be invaluable for information sharing, events and donations. Sister Margaret-Thomas has been instrumental in further expanding our in-house stock of photographs, taking new photos in and around church, in services and at social events, as well as taking photos/videos suitable for boosting our social media engagement.

Website

Sister continues the ongoing work to simplify the website. The focus of this has been to:

- improve navigation and layout for a more user-friendly experience
- update the look to serve the parish and better promote parish life
- ensure key information is more easily accessible
- remove much of the redundant content
- Weekly updates keep the rotating news stories current, and Fr David adds fresh content regularly on the landing page through a liturgically seasonal bible quote or message along with a new photo/graphic.

Mailchimp: email news bulletin

Once a month, a message is sent out to around 770 subscribers. This continues to be a well-read, colourful and dynamic route to share all that goes on, parish-wide, with a loyal readership, more than double the industry standard. Content contains posters, offers links to the rotating website stories, and includes the current Parish Newsletter. The format has been streamlined for clarity, but continues to feature essential updates, upcoming events, and reflective content.

Social Media

Sister Margert-Thomas reports below on her initial brief for this aspect of the project, along with the latest statistics that her talented endeavours have resulted in:

The focus is on engaging and informative content that reflects the richness of our Anglican tradition without adopting an overly evangelical aesthetic. This includes well-curated visuals, meaningful reflections, and highlights from parish life. We recently launched on TikTok too, and the first of the Ask the Vicar posts saw over 2000 views in just a few hours.

<i>Instagram</i> 31,000 views 78.2% of views from non-followers most engaging content reached up to 2,988 views 816 new accounts engaged	<i>Facebook</i> 21,000 views 53.8% of views from non-followers most engaging content reached up to 2,243 views 325 new accounts engaged
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- Content visibility is increasing across both Facebook and Instagram.
- Engagement rates have significantly improved, with sharp increases in content interactions.
- Video content is performing exceptionally well, driving longer watch times.
- New audiences are discovering content, particularly non-followers, indicating strong organic reach.
- Stories and visual content (photos & videos) are proving to be the most successful formats.

Thanks to the Livestreaming of Sunday's 10am service, as well as other special services throughout the year, our YouTube channel is growing; for example, the February '25 stats show 5 new subscribers, 1,121 total views and 14.7K minutes watched.

We are also posting key events on the Teddington Nub News and Teddington Local websites.

ChurchSuite

The SMwSA ChurchSuite platform continues to grow and develop. This is a GDPR compliant software tool where the individual owns their own data. Over 2024:

- The number of users continued to increase
- Fr David regularly and directly kept in touch through congregation-wide emails
- The calendar contained everything happening within the parish (spiritually and socially)
- Easy access was available to all event bookings and volunteer sign-up
- There was provision of easy online payment for tickets/other items/donations

A good example of how effectively ChurchSuite supports this Ministry was when the need for the new full revision of the Electoral Roll was broadcast by Fr David, with digital ER form attached, over 100 forms were completed within 48 hours.

CHURCH AND HALL BUILDINGS

The reach of this brand refresh extended to the Parish Hall and Church. In the Hall, work began over the summer of 2024 to introduce the new teal colour, replacing the red. The church entrance and noticeboards have been made more accessible, more welcoming and easier to navigate, as well as easier to maintain. The better use of the space at the back of church considered those with young families who bring buggies and scooters to church, and to accommodate better those struggling with their mobility. The improved layout of the noticeboards ensures that key information has become more accessible, as well as remaining current and relevant.

In Summary

By integrating thoughtful design with strong communication principles, this revamp seeks to strengthen our connection with the parish community, ensuring that all members—both long-standing and new—feel informed, welcomed, and encouraged to take part in the life of the parish.

FINANCE

Fred Squire

Treasurer's Report – see separate Annual Report

Charitable Giving - Payments to Charities made throughout 2024 as recorded in the accounts

Building Anew	£91,531
Welcare	£822
ALMA	£3,195.55
RBL Poppy Appeal	£50
Welcome Churches	£150
Bishop of London's Discretionary Fund	£103.75
Christian Aid	£584.83
RNLI	£301
TOTAL	£96,738.13

WORSHIP & NURTURE

Choir & Music

Derek Saunders

With the Mass setting we have alternated between the St Thomas Thorne Mass, Merbecke and more recently Addington. The choir and congregation enjoy the variety and it helps to keep alive the meaning of the words.

Fr David continues to take on the mantle of selecting hymns.

With standard services through the year, the choir has been on average about 13/14 in size. This is a small increase on last year. This allows for a good repertoire and DS has made a point of introducing new pieces since September. David and Katherine Matthews have become more regular and this has swelled numbers.

Rehearsals continue to take place Fridays 630 – 730. The choir also meets regularly at 930 before the 10 am service - this has proved invaluable for tightening up in certain areas. Members of the congregation have spoken how they enjoy hearing the rehearsal; before the service begins.

An organ roster of some regularity and consistency has been established. Dean Ryan, Rachel Pickering and Edward Buxton. They are covering most services and are establishing a good relationship with the musical director and choir.

Music Library

DS is extremely grateful for the help of Susan Jacobs and Chris Miller for their help with organising this. The regular use of the black anthem book has meant we have done less photocopying and indeed there is now scope for reducing some of the music we have. There is also scope for digitalising what we have - a project for the future. Looking ahead we are extremely grateful for the care and consideration given to music and the new extension. We can now see that there will be a larger space to rehearse in, more accessible music shelving and a larger robing wardrobe. The choir has now started doing regular evensongs - the third Sunday of every month. This will challenge our commitment and ability to produce a good body of music with which we are not overly familiar with.

The carol service saw the return of Janet Smith's orchestra – huge thanks to JS for the amazing way in which she books all the instrumentalists and then cares for them so brilliantly.

Whilst expanding the work of the choir and music, DS is always keen to point out the importance of music serving to enhance the message and words of the Church services. This is the main function of the music provided at St Marys with St Albans. DS is extremely grateful for the support of the team of clergy – this harmonious and good working relationship is key to the evolution of music at the Church.

Other Extra events

On April 26th, 2024 we managed another Lenten concert by Teddington Churches Choir and Teddington Consort led by Janet Smith. The theme was Music for the Lenten Season and we performed admirably in Father David's old church in Whitton. Music featured the Faure Requiem and some challenging 8 part music and a world premiere of a piece by DS. . Debra Fenley was instrumental in organising all this – huge thanks to her.

The choir also did much to celebrate the 350th anniversary of Thomas Traherne. There were 2 services and a talk in which the choir played a large part. Then in November we put together a concert of music and readings that celebrated the writings and music of TT and his 17th C contemporaries. Janet's orchestra came to the fore yet again and we were able to produce a memorable evening for all. Special thanks to Nick de Mattos and Jonathan Williams who did much to help with the programme. Added to which nearly £1000 pounds was raised to the building fund.

Points for the future :

- The bringing back of wearing robes.
- Advertising for an organ scholar and choir scholars.
- A regular children's choir.
- Evensongs in cathedrals

Final thanks

My thanks also go out to all of the choir and our organists – most especially our regular choir members , but also to some notable irregulars. They have been a source of tremendous strength. Their love, friendship and good humour make them wonderful musical companions. This comradeship has helped us all to continue on with the work of the church amidst an ever changing and oft troubled world. Thankfully the Spirit in our music community rises up and makes it a nourishing and worthwhile endeavour.

Children's Ministry

Ruth Chaperlin

Our well-established children's ministry activities continue to be firmly embedded and a cherished part of parish life. Despite this, there are challenges which need to be overcome if children's ministry is to grow and flourish in our church. It's a perennial cry but the scarcity of volunteers puts immense pressure on those that put themselves forward to serve in all aspects of children's ministry.

Our regular children's activities remain Church Mice (a midweek service for pre-school-aged children and their parents and carers), the gam family service on Sundays followed by coffee and craft in the parish hall, and the children's group during the 10am service on Sundays. We also have several young people acting as servers under the guidance and care of Mary-Field Smith, and there are numerous services and other activities throughout the year aimed at, or appealing to, children including crib services at Christmas, Christingle, and all-age parade services.

The gam family service on Sunday mornings regularly welcomes new faces into the church. The relaxed and inclusive atmosphere created by our clergy gives us a family service that appeals to many parishioners with young families. Many of those who attend make their way over to the parish hall afterwards to enjoy coffee and craft and fellowship with one another. It is always a joy to see new friendships being made and existing ones strengthened by the opportunity to spend time together in this way. The small but remarkable band of volunteers who make this happen every week continue to amaze me with their service. It is now most often just one volunteer each week appearing on the rota and keeping this valuable and wonderful ministry going. Thank you all. Anyone wishing to join this rota as a way of connecting more with the gam congregation would be very welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sidonie Kennan for all her wonderful work providing such amazing crafts up until last year when she took a step back from this to pursue her teacher training. She has made such a mark on this aspect of children's ministry and helped it grow into the joy and success that it is. Thank you for your hard work and creativity. A heartfelt thank you too to Rev Mary Hawes who has stepped in to fill the gap in recent months, providing brilliantly themed colouring sheets for the children to do.

The children's group during the 10am service continues to be a valued part of Sunday morning worship, with around 6-8 children attending each week, although at times much fewer. We meet in church for the first hymn and then cross the road to the Mina Hogan room for our own worship. We have had a handful of new attendees in the last 12 months but mostly the group comprises a loyal band of regulars. Sophie Edginton and I lead the sessions, ably supported by parents and clergy as necessary. Overall, numbers of school-age children at the 10am service remain low. However, those that do attend are committed members of the children's group and participate enthusiastically each week as we explore the Scriptures with stories, discussion, games and craft. It is never clear what thoughts and reflections the children will bring back to church with them and deliver to the vicar at the end of the service. We hope, however, that it brings a different perspective and occasionally some spiritual insight! I would like once again to record my heartfelt thanks to Sophie whose creativity and drive is instrumental in sustaining children's church. Thanks also go to the parents, especially Gareth and Rachel, who regularly step in to support children's church.

Children's worship is often held up as an important aspect of church life as it represents the future of the Church. With all our activities, however, I am reminded how pivotal children are in the present life of any church community, offering opportunities to connect people across the varied age-groups and congregations. I would urge us all to do all we can to support children's ministry to thrive.

Church Mice

Cathy Randall

Church Mice, our regular Wednesday toddler service, continues to provide an opportunity for parents and their very young children to worship together in a lively, active service, and then enjoy relaxed play and refreshments afterwards. The services include action songs, Bible stories told with the help of our growing array of props, prayers and marching with instruments.

Numbers always fluctuate in Church Mice because most children only stay a couple of years before moving on, so we are continually saying goodbye to old friends and making new ones. This year has been no exception. However, we always have a regular core of families who really appreciate what we offer and who also enjoy getting to know and support one another. For some families, Church Mice is the gateway to further involvement in the wider church community.

We've had a wonderful, stable team of leaders this year, which has enabled us to continue running Church Mice every single week throughout the year, with the exception of August, and the two Wednesdays following Christmas and Easter. This means that we are often running when other children's activities are closed for the holidays. I'm very grateful to all our leaders, as well as to Susan Wilmington from our congregation who now comes most weeks to help with the refreshments and chat to the parents and children.

Last summer we were delighted and grateful to receive a very generous donation of brand-new toys for the Church Mice toy box from the Salvation Army. Emily and Joel Watson, the Lieutenants of the Salvation Army in Teddington, are regulars at the service with their children. Joel, handing over the toys, commented, 'We really value the expression of mission and ministry that Church Mice expresses, and the warmth of those that facilitate it from week to week. We are pleased that we can support you in this practical way.' The Church Mice children have since made excellent use of these wonderful toys.

We always welcome new families, so please do spread the word. Our Mice range from newborns to preschoolers, with older siblings very welcome in the school holidays. We love to see grandparents and carers as well as parents. No need to book, just turn up. There is no fixed fee – voluntary donations only.

Nurture Courses

The Advent Course

Revd David Cloake

It is the practice of many parishes to engage in courses of spiritual development and learning during the 'preparatory' seasons, Advent and Lent, and this year we were delighted to receive a course of sessions prepared by our placement students, Sarah Rae (ordinand), Debby Johnson (LLM in-training) and Sr Margaret-Thomas (Ministry Scheme intern). As a fitting conclusion to a year celebrating the life and ministry of Thomas Traherne, a course of independent reflections was prepared using Thomas' words in conjunction with biblical material - under the title "Insights into the Extraordinary Mind of the Mystic". Members gathered over the three Wednesdays in Advent for what was a well-received Advent Course.

Morning and Evening Prayer

Margaret Squire

Morning and Evening Prayer on Zoom has become one of the good things that has evolved from all the problems of lockdown. Most mornings, a group of us join together to follow the app provided by Church House for prayer in the contemporary setting. A similar service is available for the evening. The service takes about half an hour, with Psalms, 2 readings and prayers. There are about a dozen of us who participate on an irregular basis, usually six most days; one person leads, another responds and while two people do the old and new testament readings, others listen. It is an uplifting way to start or end the day and the group has become a very supportive one, both for each other and our community. There is also a WhatsApp group to enable us to stay in touch. New participants would be welcome.

Servers

Mary Field-Smith

I would like to thank all those who participate in worship as servers, not only at the 10am service on Sunday where they have a more visible presence, but also at the 8am on Sunday and the 9.30am service on Wednesday as well as the various festival services.

One of the serving team also calls into the church on Saturday afternoon in order to ensure that everything is ready for the next day – important but unseen work!

With the number in the team at present, it is sometimes challenging to find three servers for the main service, and we would be delighted to welcome some new faces to spread the load. It is a good opportunity to find out what goes on behind the scenes and to get to know some of our younger servers. Please speak to me (or come and try it out!) to see if this is a form of service you could offer on an occasional basis.

Churches Together

Malcolm Eady

For over 57 years the different Christian churches and denominations in Teddington have worked together and supported each other under the framework of Churches Together in Teddington (CTT). They all have the same basic calling - to worship God, to share the good news about Jesus Christ and to work for the good of all people.

The Chairperson this year is The Revd David Cloake from St. Mary with St. Alban, Teddington.

The CTT Council is made up of representatives of the Churches in Teddington, Hampton Wick and Fulwell - Methodist, Baptist, Salvation Army, Catholic and Church of England. It meets four times per year and organises a number of joint services and events. Co-operation between the churches is good and attendance at the special services held in each other's churches is high. The website is <http://www.teddingtonchurches.org.uk>

We are allocated four representatives on the council. Your representatives are Fr David Cloake and Malcolm Eady. We require two volunteers to join us on the committee.

Activities

Each year CCT organise joint services at Easter and in the summer. At Christmas they organise the Christmas day lunch at Elleray Hall, carol singing in the High Street as part of the “Teddington Lights Up” event and arrange for the distribution of a CTT Christmas card for the whole of Teddington. They also organise Lent courses, prayer walks and a street collection for Christian Aid.

Christmas Day Lunch: the main event each year is the Christmas Day Lunch at Elleray Hall which is provided for the local elderly and those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.

This year it was the responsibility of Sacred Heart Church Teddington to organise the lunch. As well as our main funder, the Hampton Fund, this year we also received a donation from the Waitrose Community Fund. There were, in addition, many in-kind donations of small gifts for the goodie bags which were given to each guest as they left.

A substantial contribution was made by the staff and children of Sacred Heart Primary School who made welcome cards (sent to all guests with the programme for the day), hand-decorated Christmas crackers, name badges and gift tags, and provided 100 home-made mince pies. The school also loaned its sound system to provide a microphone, background music and a phone link to The King’s Christmas Message.

There were about 50 volunteers throughout the day, including those who drove the guests. Those helping in the hall arrived from 10.30am. (Many volunteers would have qualified as guests but preferred to contribute by helping to run the event). Volunteers assembled and laid 15 trestle tables on the afternoon of Christmas Eve and, as well as the existing Christmas decorations, the hall was made to look very festive with the addition of bright red tablecloths, seasonal napkins and the Christmas crackers ready for the guests the following day.

Work began at 7.30am on Christmas Day when the cook and his team arrived at the hall. Over half the guests were brought by volunteers in their own cars. All guests were welcomed, shown to their tables and introduced to their volunteer table “hosts”. Other volunteers brought them tea, coffee and biscuits. Guests had been asked beforehand who they would like to sit with and a table plan was drawn up to accommodate their choices, with flexibility if any guest was unhappy. Before lunch there was carol singing led by John and Bernadette Francis from the Sacred Heart Church. Quizzes and conversation followed.

Numbers were slightly down this year. 50 guests booked for lunch and many of the volunteers also stayed for lunch. The MP Munira Wilson visited after lunch and spent time talking to guests and volunteers at each table, which was much appreciated. The feedback from the guests was very positive.

A small team of volunteers returned on Boxing Day to clean up, remove all the rubbish and make sure the hall was left as we found it.

Good Friday Service: last Easter (2024) the Good Friday Processions and Service on the green, by the Methodist church, were able to take place as normal. One procession started

at St Mary with St Alban and then walked down High street and Broad Street. The second procession came from St Francis de Sales, which was joined at Wilcox Road by those from St Michael's to walk down Stanley Road. There was then a short service to which representatives of various local congregations contributed. This was followed by a Vigil by the Cross, with each church taking a half-hour period. The service and processions this year were well attended (about 160) and the weather was fine.

General Election Hustings Meeting: on June 28th the CTT organised a Hustings meeting at the Baptist Church, which was chaired by Revd David Cloake. The meeting was very successful and was attended by most of the candidates.

Teddington Lights Up – Nov 28th : at the “Teddington Lights Up” evening, members from various churches joined the Salvation Army band for carol singing at the end of Cambridge Road. They were joined by many passers-by. There was a larger footfall than previous years as the organisers had placed other attractions nearby and there was no musical competition as there had been before.

Christmas cards/leaflets: these are in the form of a good quality A6 colour Christmas card and provide information about the Christmas services at all the member churches. Over 8,000 cards are delivered. The cards are distributed by most of the member Churches and there was very positive feedback from residents. The reduced content made it much clearer which were the key services in each church.

Week of Prayer for Church Unity: for the week of Prayer for Church Unity in January there were short services held each day at one of the member churches, and this year the main Sunday service was held at St Mary's with St Albans.

Christian Aid Week Collection: the main activity for Christian Aid week is the door-to-door 'collection', which for the past few years has been an “envelope delivery only” collection. A few CTT churches helped with this effort and about 4000 envelopes were delivered to selected roads in Teddington and Hampton Wick. There were instructions on the envelopes about how to return them to the local church which had delivered them. There was also a “Big Brunch” on the Saturday morning at the Baptist Church to raise money for Christian Aid. There was a smaller attendance this year but there was good cooperative on the venture between St Mark and TBC. The audited total for the 2024 collection was £1934.52 plus £200 tax reclaim. This total takes account of online giving by QR Code printed on each envelope. In recent financial years, Christian Aid Week has raised in total £12m nationally which is about 13% of the total income of Christian Aid worldwide.

Safeguarding

Mary Field-Smith

“The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.”

This has been a turbulent year in terms of safeguarding in the wider Church of England, with more historic abuse cases coming to light and the subsequent fall-out affecting

leadership at the highest level. At Parish level however, much has been put in place to ensure that our churches are now as safe as they can be and the efforts of Church Safeguarding Officers has been acknowledged and recognised by our Diocese. Our own Diocesan team provide excellent support and advice.

All our volunteers are safely recruited, have to undergo the appropriate level of checks and complete the required safeguarding training. This has become an easier task as there is more awareness of the need for safeguarding and I thank all our volunteers for complying with our policies.

We are working at Level Three of the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard and are also using the Safeguarding Hub to keep a record of all volunteers and their safeguarding status. The dashboard is able to generate a Safeguarding Action Plan which is then agreed at PCC meetings where Safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda.

Thanks are due to Kay Cassidy our Lead Recruiter who carries out all the DBS check administration. Kay is able to obtain certificates very quickly if the correct procedures are carried out in a timely fashion.

If anybody has any concerns about anything they see or hear in church, please speak to me or to one of the clergy if I am not available. Safeguarding is part of our Christian duty – it is not an optional extra: safeguarding@teddingtonparish.org

PASTORAL CARE

Community Café

Clare Rider and Sarah Rae

The Teddington Community Café, held weekly on Monday afternoons at the Peter and Paul Centre, continues to flourish. Since its inception four years ago, it has been lovely to see local people come, meet others and develop lasting friendships. Our customers range in age from nonagenarians to new-borns and include parents and carers who come with their children for refreshments after school. The Café offers a welcoming space with a friendly, calm and positive atmosphere, with many volunteers on hand to chat over coffee, tea and homemade cake. From the outset we wanted the Café to be more than just another coffee shop, being there for anyone seeking warmth and company, particularly those feeling socially isolated and anxious. The Café also signposts local community services, provides information about events and activities in the area and hosts a book swap scheme.

On 28 November, at the request of local organisers, the Community Café opened for an additional evening session for the Teddington Lights Up ceremony. The Café offered a meeting place and hospitality to children taking part in the lantern procession and their families and provided refreshments for those attending the event. Among our 69 visitors were the Mayor and Mayoress of Richmond, who were particularly impressed by the array of delicious homemade cakes. We are immensely proud that our contribution to the community was appreciated in this way, and we continue to be extremely grateful to our volunteers and cake bakers for making the Café such a success.

Memory Café

Trish Raffeto

Established in 2017, the Memory Café is a welcoming, social space for those living with dementia, their carers and those who enjoy companionship. We meet twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays at the Peter and Paul Centre. We have a light-hearted quiz at each café and, once a month, we alternate between a sing-along and bingo. We have repeat guests at every session who tell us they really appreciate the warm, relaxed and friendly atmosphere where they can enjoy a good chat and refreshments. (One of our regular visitors with dementia recently commented “I’m feeling very happy because I am here”!) We continue to be well served by a very committed group of volunteers from SMwSA as well as other churches and the local community.

FELLOWSHIP

Parish Socials: Lunch & Coffee

Trish Raffeto

This is a purely social coffee/lunch group to provide an opportunity to enjoy spending time together. We continue to have three events a month - a lunch in a local restaurant, a coffee meet-up in a local café, and, for those who are home-bound and want to meet up with the group, we have a coffee zoom. The support and camaraderie of all these get-togethers are much enjoyed and appreciated. We have also been delighted to welcome a number of newcomers during the past year. All are welcome and we look forward to continuing this fellowship during the coming year.

Parish Plod

Katherine Matthews

The Thames Path -North Bank and St Alban’s Way: The Parish Plodders succeeded in completing 2 walks during 2024!

The 1st half of the year was dedicated to walking the North bank of the Thames starting from East India Dock in January and finishing in Teddington in May – in total 5 walks of around 12-15 km. Although we are familiar with the Thames, we continued to discover new sights and learn more about its history and the stories of those who have worked or lived on or near its banks. This walk was clearly easy to navigate!

The second walk of the year however threw up some challenges taking us out of London, from St Paul’s cathedral to St Albans cathedral, again in 5 stages. We started our walk in true Pilgrim fashion with prayers in St Paul’s led by the duty chaplain and off we went. However, the walk is unmarked, so we were all reliant in following our leader, Robin (who dutifully carried out reconnaissance walks before each stage followed up with detailed written notes) through the busy streets of London through Regent’s Park and Primrose Hill towards Hampstead. At least that was on generally familiar ground! As we headed further North onto more unfamiliar territory some of us who walked the stages on “catch-up” days (having been unable to walk with the main group for one reason or another) came up against some hazards – narrow, tree covered and uneven countryside paths, very deep

mud and admittedly just getting lost – as I was told on one stage - Scotland was one way, London the other! Very helpful!

The final stage to St Alban's cathedral in November was, however, truly inspirational and again we were greeted by a member of the clergy to mark the end of this wonderful walk – which we also celebrated by enjoying dinner together in the city before heading home later in the evening.

The group – no matter what the weather and the number of plodders – walks in faith and friendship. There is camaraderie, conversation, maybe a few grumbles (if it is muddy, there is nowhere pretty to stop for lunch and in particular if there are no loos!) but, undaunted, on we go, negotiating the intricacies of the London transport system (which may seek to frustrate us with strikes, leaves on the line or whatever else gets in the way) to arrive at the start in good time and see us back to Teddington at the end but we always return tired but happy and ready to start planning for the next stage. All are welcome to join us in 2025 – with days out planned to follow the Green Link Walk and the Middlesex Greenway. All you need are comfortable shoes and a packed lunch.

Pints of View

Gareth Miller

Pints of View has now been running for many months with a rag-bag collection of a number of us from both St Mary with St Alban and our local community and has been a wonderful opportunity to meet over a drink or two each month and spend time with some of those people whom you never get more than a chance to say hello to each Sunday morning as well as having the chance to connect and chat with members of our local community too.

We meet in the Tide End Pub near to the river with Fr David pretty much always first at the bar if you want to come and join us too! Whether discussing the ongoing repairs to the footbridge, local sporting events, America and Russia or the process for selecting a new archbishop the conversation is eclectic and wide-ranging, and the open welcome is always warm and friendly.

Handbell Team

Sheila Insley

It has been a year of mixed fortunes for the handbell team. During the summer, our Musical Director had to leave the team because he had started a new job further from Teddington. We miss him and his expertise, and so we do need a new person who could help us with our musicality.

But we have been busy, and members of the team have attended rallies in Sunningdale, Weybridge and Sanderstead (twice). We also rang at the last ever SE Region annual service in Guildford Cathedral. One ringer played in the SE Region Handbell Orchestra (SERBO), attended the national rally in Derbyshire and took part in UK Bronze, a 4-day international residential experience for advanced ringers.

We also made contact with Brinsworth House, a care home run by the Royal Variety Club in Twickenham. We entertained them in September, and again in December with Christmas carols. The run up to Christmas was, as usual, busy with us performing at our Church Bazaar, Hanworth Over 50s Club, Fullerton Court, Twickenham Townswomen's Guild and Teddington Memory Café.

Handbell ringing is a very enjoyable way of making music with others and we always hope to have new ringers. The ability to read music is not essential, but helpful. Our main aim is to have fun and give pleasure in the community.

We continue to be grateful to St Mary's Church for the use of the bells and the safe space in the parish hall for practice and storage.

The First Wednesday Group

Susan Jacobs

The First Wednesday group continued to meet on the first Wednesday of most months during 2024 at lunchtime in the Mina Hogan Room of the Parish Hall. Participants are encouraged to bring their own packed lunch and a friend. Each month's topic is agreed on in advance and advertised on the church website, e-bulletin, the weekly pew sheet and individual blind copy emails (where known), to facilitate informed debate and questions. The subject usually reflects church involvement and a possible degree of controversy. Numbers attending vary from between single figures to high teens with an average of 12 depending on the topic and people's availability. The atmosphere is informal and open to all.

Topics discussed during 2024:

- January Fairness
- February Assisted Dying
- March Lent – no meeting
- April Parish Communications: how to keep in touch
- May Churchyards
- June How “ethically conscious” are we when shopping for clothes?
- July Has universal suffrage resulted in true democracy?
- August No meeting
- September Same sex marriage service – where do we stand?
- October As an urban church, how and why do we celebrate harvest?
- November What, and who, is a funeral for?
- December Advent – no meeting.

Plain & Pearl

Suzanne Strachan

Plain and Pearl is a friendly social all-inclusive group of people drawn together through love of knitting and crafting. We meet bi-monthly on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at St Mary's Parish Hall, Teddington except for January at which time we meet once a week.

At Plain & Pearl, this year (2024-2025) proved to be another busy and successful year as our membership continues to grow and as we offer more exciting workshops. Some of the new workshops we held were: Tunisian crochet, polymer jewellery workshop, visible mending, felt decorations. In addition to workshops, we organised a trip to IVO Textiles for a special tour of the factory for printing high end upholstery fabrics, a very interesting and informational tour indeed.

It has become somewhat of a tradition for January to be "the knitting month". During that month we meet weekly to progress with knitting projects. This year we held a Knit-along (KAL) of cabled fingerless mittens using the circular magic loop technique. At the same time, for beginner knitters, we had a KAL for a basic hat.

Every year we participate in the pre-Christmas bazaar at the parish hall. 2024 was no exception. We raised a whopping £1600 selling our hand-crafted makes. That included raffle tickets to a lovely felt advent calendar handmade by the P&P members. The proceeds went to the Church.

In addition, in the summer we participate in Teddington Fair where our stall sold craft materials and offered workshops to make cards with buttons and bunnies from knitted square. We raised and donated £200 to MiD (Hampton) mediation & counselling for children.

Anyone interested in joining Plain & Pearl please contact: mailplainandpearl@gmail.com

Traherne Reading Group

Gerry Gregory

The group continues to flourish. Two new members have joined recently.

We continue to discuss the prose and poetry of Thomas Traherne, and of other writers (mostly approximate contemporaries) on church and religion issues.

Members are invited to share their views on such issues, their memoir items - and their own Traherne pastiches.

FABRIC

Building Anew

Steven Randall

The Building Anew project continued at full steam throughout 2024, with the focus on fundraising and preparation of the detailed design.

Building Anew is the project to add vital new facilities for the community to our historic parish church. These consist of accessible toilet and baby changing facilities, a kitchenette to serve drinks and simple refreshments, and a multi-purpose room with a new step-free entrance from the churchyard where people can come together for a range of church and community activities. These additions will focus on supporting the most vulnerable in the local community, and also on sharing, celebrating and deepening the understanding of Teddington's rich heritage, much of which is centred around the church.

Having been granted planning permission for the proposed scheme by Richmond Council in December 2022, the project's focus in 2023 had been the launch of a fundraising appeal and the appointment of an architect and engineering consultant team to undertake the detailed design work needed for the construction phase.

Fundraising

Throughout 2024, the fundraising appeal made great strides towards its £1 million target, thanks to generous donations from large numbers of people in the congregation and local community, and a wide range of fabulous fundraising events. The appeal target reflects the amount needed to bridge the gap between the estimated £1.25 million cost of the scheme, based on detailed costings by the project's Quantity Surveyor, and the £250,000 of church funds committed at the outset of the project.

Fundraising initiatives in 2024 by an incredible team of volunteers included a 'buy-a-brick' campaign, a left-over currency collection scheme and a Christmas appeal, together with a wide range of fun community fundraising events. These included tea parties, music concerts, sponsored runs, local history suppers, cake and jam sales, a disco evening, art parties, quiz and tango evenings, to mention just a few. The Project Team is extremely grateful to all those who contributed their time and energy to running these events.

By the autumn, the funds raised had reached a sufficient level to enable the fundraising team to launch the second strand of the campaign – namely approaching trusts and funds for grants. This could not start sooner as most trusts and funds require a significant proportion of the total cost of a project to have been raised before accepting applications.

In September, the PCC appointed Craigmyle fundraising consultants to support this strand, recognising the value of experience and expertise in preparing grant applications. In the initial phase of work the consultant assessed independently that, provided a strong 'case for support' for the project can be prepared, a realistic target for grants is around £350,000. This aligned reassuringly close to the fundraising team's estimate of £325,000 at the outset. By early 2025, the total funds raised and pledged had grown to over £575,000, equivalent to 45% of the total project cost. Work continues now on the preparation of a compelling case for support with the consultant, ahead of submitting the first grant applications. Once this case has been developed, the fundraising team will also use this to approach local

businesses in search of their support, which forms the third and final strand of the fundraising campaign.

While this figure is extremely impressive, there is clearly still some way to go. If the targeted grants are secured, this leaves a further £325,000 to be raised through donations.

Fundraising will therefore remain a key focus in 2025. Look out for the many fundraising activities already in the pipeline for the coming year and we look forward to everyone's continuing support and generosity to help raise the rest of the money needed as quickly as possible.

Detailed Design Work

Meanwhile, in April 2024, the Diocese of London granted the necessary faculty to undertake the work, completing receipt of all the necessary permissions needed.

Preparation of the detailed design drawings by the architect Thomas Ford & Partners, supported by the engineering consultant team and under the guidance of the Building Anew Governance Group, has progressed steadily throughout the year. This work has also addressed the planning conditions set by Richmond Council in its approval.

The detailed design work is expected to be completed in the first part of 2025. Once finalised, along with the necessary input from the Quantity Surveyor, the Project Team will be in a position to compile a complete tender package for the process of selecting a main contractor. Five recommended contractors have been identified as suitable candidates. Subject to PCC approval, the aim is to launch this tender process by early summer, to enable a main contractor to be appointed in the autumn and construction to begin shortly after that.

Enormous thanks go once again to everyone involved in the Project Team and Governance Group for the immense amount of time and work they have put in during the past year, especially to John Ramsay, the Project Manager. Without their commitment, expertise and incredible stamina, none of this would have been possible. In addition, on behalf of the Governance Group, I would like to thank the churchwardens, PCC and congregation for their guidance and support.

For more information on the proposed scheme and fundraising campaign, please visit the 'Building Project' pages on the parish website (www.teddingtonparish.org).

Church Building & Grounds

Nick Fenton and Robin Field-Smith

A much-valued feature is that the church remains open every day, welcoming people of all faiths and none to come in to pray, light a candle, sit, or enjoy its wonderful features. To enable this to happen, we are indebted to three groups of volunteers:

- The 'Holy Bunch of Keys' - those who, in conjunction with the vicar, provide a rota to open and close the church each day and keep an eye out for any issues, as well as ensuring the votive candle stand is well stocked

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- The Holy Dusters, led by Ursula Midgley and Christine Casemore, continue to clean and care for the church on Thursday mornings (they would welcome new members)
 - The Church Maintenance group, run by Nick Fenton, the Hon Clerk of Works and Deputy Churchwarden, has a rota to check the building every month. Minor faults are either dealt with by members of the group themselves or reported for professional advice or attention.

We also depend on the commitment and devotion of our team of Altar Servers, including Mary Field-Smith as Head Server and Jean Blanc as our Sacristan and Verger, who ensure the church is set up for services and that all necessary hangings, vestments, vessels and provisions are provided for the clergy.

To all these contributing their talents in God's service we say a big thank you.

We continue to take care to minimise our energy use and costs. Lighting levels during the day are kept low compatible with church usage but our principal cost is gas for the central heating boiler. To help conserve energy and reduce our CO₂ footprint, when the church is used formally the set temperature is a modest 15C whilst, outside these times, the heating is set to about 6C. The programmable thermostat, fitted last year, has in the main proven to be easy to use, being more intuitive, and should help ensure that these settings are maintained and our usage kept to the minimum practicable. Our elderly but dependable gas boiler passed all tests when it was serviced in the autumn, enabling it to continue for at least one more winter.

The lower priority recommendations of the 2023 Quinquennial Report in the main have not been implemented. They are predominantly associated with external decoration, particularly rainwater goods, localised pointing, including gulley kerbs, and checks on gutters and gulleys. None of the lower priority items which have not been implemented will have a deleterious effect on the building's fabric or incur additional costs if delayed until later in the quinquennial period. Nevertheless, it is recommended that a works programme should be prepared for implementation at an appropriate time.

Hundreds of people use the footpath through the churchyard everyday as an alternative to the narrow footway alongside the busy Ferry Road. Many comment favourably on the appearance of the churchyard especially in the spring when there is an abundance of crocuses in flower. We are fortunate to have a good relationship with Richmond Council who maintain the fences and walls, cut the grass and remove vegetative waste. The main effort to maintain, develop and enhance our graveyard is down to two groups: The Holy Gardeners, who meet regularly twice a month, led by Tony Swan and Sally Stones, some of whom bring their green fingers to bear more often. Others undertake litter picks to remove the endless supply of rubbish which anti-social members of the public discard.

The Adopt-A-Grave volunteers, led by Alexander Ruffer, are progressively making the graves more attractive by weeding and planting them with appropriate flowers and bulbs. The Sensory Area, created in 2022, has matured and, with its adjoining seating, is appreciated by the many people who pass through or pause in the churchyard. During the year the churchyard continues to be used for outdoor services, social events, school visits and Love your Burial Ground week.

The churchyard continues to benefit from a generous annual financial bequest from a local family for the purposes of enhancing the churchyard. This last year, it has been used to purchase additional plants as well as more bulbs which will enhance the churchyard during the spring and early summer. What is particularly encouraging is that many of the bulbs have started to naturalise, the process by which they spread by themselves.

Representatives from the Estate Group and Holy Gardeners are liaising with Richmond Council to discuss any changes needed to the Churchyard Plan. This will include the scope to lift the crowns of some trees with the objective of creating more light so that a bigger range of plants can thrive.

We had a meeting with a representative from the Council to discuss improvements to the footpath which starts in Twickenham Road and provides the most direct access to the church. For the first few metres, the path is steep and exceeds recommended guidance. Realigning the path to create a slacker gradient would be difficult and expensive. Options to mitigate the risk of slipping such as high grip surfacing and an additional handrail were proposed to the council but to date no response has been received. However, minor repairs to the footpath between the Church and Ferry Road have been carried out to reduce trip hazards due to unevenness in the surfacing.

Church openers check the condition of the surface of steep section of the path each morning and, if slippery, put out grit and/or put in place a warning cone surmounted with a warning sign.

The regular monthly maintenance checks, done by our much-appreciated volunteer inspectors, also help us ensure that health and safety issues related to the Church Building are identified early, so that remedial actions can be taken.

Parish Hall

Jo O'Hagan

Most people will have noticed one of the biggest changes to our Parish Hall in more than 25 years. The decision to change the colour of paintwork from red to teal was not taken lightly and was made in consultation with the vicar and the PCC. The pressing need for the outside of the hall to be redecorated was one of the driving factors in agreeing such a change at this time.

We are extremely fortunate that our caretaker, Alex, has once again offered his decorating skills to undertake the work on our behalf. His ability to tackle small areas at a time, to fit in with the busy hall schedule, along with dedicating time to the main hall when it has not been occupied, has made it possible for the work to be done without impacting on the regular hall users. We are most appreciative of his work, which will continue into the coming months.

The Hall Committee meets three times a year and the team of parish volunteers and our support staff, Suzanne, Nadia and Alex, work together to ensure that this vital community asset is run and maintained to the highest possible standard. The regular cleaning and maintenance programme is vital to keep in line with current Health and Safety and fire regulations and a close eye is kept on running costs and letting fees. To this end we have to review the charges made to our regular and occasional users and appreciate their understanding and loyalty. We continue to try to keep costs down by taking steps to introduce energy saving measures e.g. additional thermostatic controls on the radiators and to highlight the need to avoid wastage on many other fronts.

Nadia has been tireless in her efforts to find new users to fill available slots in the busy weekly calendar and, as Operations Manager, Suzanne has continued to ensure that regular maintenance and emergency repairs are carried out so efficiently. My thanks go to them and to the volunteers, Elizabeth Leydon, Fred Squire, Nick Fenton and Will Power, who bring their wisdom and knowledge to the committee.

My final thanks go to Terry Brown who, after well over 25 years dedicated involvement with the Hall, has decided it is time to step back. He, like his predecessors, John and June Demont and Jim Carthew will be greatly missed.

Recording St Mary's

Sue Stevens and Robin Field-Smith

The very final stages of the project have now been reached with the last checks on details in one or two sections. Plans are now made for printing and binding of the hard copies, which can be considered as historic documents, one of which will be kept safely and securely. The second copy will be available here for people to use, to research or investigate the church and its furnishings. Electronic copies are lodged with the V&A Art Library, the London Metropolitan Archive (alongside other archives of ours), ChurchCare (the CofE's national support service for the church estate), and the Church Recording Society.

We will be setting a date for the formal presentation of the record to the vicar, churchwardens and PCC, which will give us a chance both to promote it to the wider community, and importantly congratulate and give thanks to the team of volunteers who have made it possible, and the Arts Society Richmond for their support. However, as well as having both local and national importance the document is going to have great benefits for the parish, for example in updating and properly constructing the

church inventory or answering any queries about our church's history or artefacts. It, together with other documents and recorded history we now have, such as the West Middlesex Family History Society's graveyard survey, Percy Towell's transcriptions and biographies of priests at St. Mary's through the ages written in 1929, and the history of St. Alban's, will help to ensure that our history and heritage is valued, understood, and available to all. It also may be of use when applying for grants for Building Anew.

WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Diversity & Inclusion Group

Chris Darling

The Diversity & Inclusion (D & I) Group met as a group for over 3 years to July 2024 and achieved some significant results in the course of its activities. Its members - Cathy Randall, Anna Michel, Malcolm Eady and Chris Darling (Leader of the Group) - have sought to promote awareness and be role models for greater equality, diversity and inclusion within our Church. As well as organising a number of D & I events for the Church, we have also kept a complete record of all our resources, meetings, minutes and actions, links and documents for future reference on the Church's Microsoft Teams site.

Due to their increasing involvement in other church commitments, including the Building Anew project, the D & I Group members decided that we would no longer hold regular D & I Group meetings, but we would each keep a watching brief on D & I related topics.

In 2023, the D & I Group created the PCC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. The EDI Policy is a guidance document for the PCC and a way of keeping things on track. We have raised the question as to whether the PCC wishes to appoint an EDI Champion to continue the work of the D & I Group. While in 2023, the Group's main focus was on anti-racism and disability (visible and invisible), in 2024 we moved our focus more to disability access in our church and how we could better support those in our community with dementia.

During 2024, Chris Darling reviewed the Disability Access Audit produced in 2019 for the Church and discussed it with Nick Fenton, Adam Woods and Robin Field-Smith to help prioritise D & I related property actions. He discussed disability access with reference to the parish hall as well (not in the scope of the 2019 report) with Jo O' Hagan and Suzanne Parker, where the Audio Induction Loop was highlighted as a priority for those with hearing loss. Through the efforts of the Hall Committee, a Portable Hearing Loop has been delivered and tested, and has been available to any booking that requests it since January 2025.

In 2024, the Group also looked at the approach to dementia and how the Church can make a difference, and considered how materials from the Alzheimer's Society might be useful to building greater understanding and awareness within the congregation.

We discussed with Anne O'Neil her initiatives such as visiting Deer Park View and the materials for worship that she has been using, involving the carers, staff and families. We considered whether there could be an opportunity to mix Church Mice with those suffering from dementia in our own Church services. We also reviewed with Anne O'Neil and Fr David some of the services offered to local care homes and via the Peter & Paul Centre Cafés.

The Group also discussed with Fr David how closer links could be built with St John's House in Teddington.

Building from the three successful events organised by the Group in the past 3 years, as individuals we will continue to contribute to ideas for future D & I related Parish Events such as film nights, theatre visits, educational walks or other parish outings. Following on from Clare Rider's lunchtime talk and discussion "Dementia in the Spotlight" we will be looking to see how we can support some of the ideas which came out of the discussion session of the event.

Sustainability

Carla Maroussas and James Morris

The Church of England believes that responding to the climate crisis is an essential part of our responsibility to safeguard God's creation and achieve a just world. Climate change hits hardest the poorest countries, communities and people of the world, and during these times of political uncertainty, as governments impose greater barriers to support, and aid programmes are cut, the impacts of climate change will only hit poorer communities harder. As such, we believe that sustainability is more important than ever.

We ran a few events in 2024 as the Parish Sustainability Group and continued to share important information on sustainability through newsletters and our social media platforms to engage with the local community. In November and December, we focused on celebrating a Sustainable Christmas with a supper talk in the parish hall in November on "How to have a Sustainable Christmas" while in January 2025 we organised another successful Recycle and Reuse event that saw many donations and a number of visitors from the parish and local community.

On a local level, Richmond Council's new Climate and Nature Strategy (2025 to 2030) is open for public consultation until 5 May 2025. The new strategy addresses the ecological challenges our borough faces, aiming to accelerate our pathway towards becoming a Net Zero borough by 2043. It also focuses on enhancing our local adaptation and resilience towards the effects of climate change.

The Sustainability Group continues to make further plans for 2025 and looks forward to engaging through the Parish and the Church community. We will be running further Recycle and Reuse events in the parish hall and are also hoping to achieve our Silver Level Eco-church Award this year.

More than anything else, though, we need volunteers and ideas to support our ambition of delivering a regular programme of sustainability events throughout the parish. If you are driven to volunteer your time, please do contact us: sustainability@teddingtonparish.org

PARISH LINKS

St Mary's & St Peter's CofE Primary School

Steven Alford

SMSP is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School, sponsored equally by the two Teddington parishes. It was set up by the local vestry committee in 1832 and is one of the oldest schools in the borough. 25 years ago, it expanded from a one to a two-form entry school, and then in 2011, it expanded again to produce a three-form entry school. The school is near capacity with 626 pupils (630 capacity) with expected strong number applications for the upcoming school year.

It is now a larger than average primary school (in the top 20% for size); free school meals numbers are below average (16% compared with 24.6%) as are the number of children requiring Special Educational Needs (7.67% compared to 14.1% nationally). The percentage of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans is 2.56%, which is below the national average of 4.8%. 87 children (14%) speak English as an additional language with 33 languages spoken in the school.

The school was graded as "Outstanding" at its last Ofsted inspection (Dec '22) and by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report (June '18), with the next SIAMS report due next year. Rev. Mary Hawes, Rev. David Cloak, and Rev. Simon Pedley have been working closely with the school in preparation for the upcoming inspection.

The church and school are closely linked, with the clergy regularly conducting Collective Worship, and the school visiting the church for Harvest, Christmas, and Pentecost services. Rev. David also leads Religious Education sessions in the school since his appointment to St Mary with St Alban's Church.

The aims and values of the school can be found here: <http://www.smsponline.co.uk/>

It is well supported by the two local parishes and the London Diocesan board (LBDS) for schools.

School Report for 2024/25

Financially Stable

Almost all maintained schools in the UK face significant financial pressures alongside the challenges of delivering the standard of education expected. There are also financial/funding challenges on the horizon for local councils, with overspend allowance on

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) due to end in April '26, the deficit between spending and funding of c.£5bn will need to be resolved. SMSP has worked extremely hard to deliver its Ofsted-rated “Outstanding” standard of education within the parameters of funding challenges and credit is due to school for this achievement. Continued focus from the school will be required to maintain this financial stability, especially whilst costs remain high in the operational running of the school.

Governor Roles

The Rev. Mary Hawes is the chair of Governors alongside Rev. David Cloake and Rev. Simon Pedley from St Michael's, Fulwell. The Governing Body is well represented by the church, teachers, parents of the school, and members of the local community.

Regular meetings take place with the Governing Body with sub-committees overseeing important aspects with the school including the finances (resources), as well as curriculum and standards. The Governing Body's Diocesan representative stepped down in the summer, and another Governor will be stepping down in April. We are grateful that several people have offered to serve as Governors, and we will be back to having a full governing body by Easter.

Absence Rates

Schools in the UK have reported an upward trend in persistent absenteeism over the last few years, since Covid-19, and this is an issue that the school monitors closely. SMSP has a lower-than-average absence rate, with attendance currently tracking at 96.66% with efforts to maintain and improve attendance in the school.

New Headteacher

After four years, we say a huge, heartfelt, thank you and goodbye to our outgoing Headteacher, Helen Swain, as she embarks on her well-earned retirement. As a result, we are currently in the process of appointing a new Headteacher whose appointment we will announce in due course. We are expecting that the new Headteacher will take the school forward in its Christian beliefs and the next phase of its strategic development.

ALMA

Sadly, I have very little good news to report from Alma this year. The news from Pemba where we have our link church is not good and they suffered very badly from Cyclone Chido in December. They did have 19 churches and this has been reduced to 2! Many people died and particularly the elderly.

Suzie Gordon

Other sad news is that the school at Chimoio for which we raised funds has suffered badly from attacks by insurgents and from the weather. As well as this some of the things we have sent out to them have been stolen. It is very unfortunate that we cannot make a visit at this time as the Foreign Office recommendation is that this is not a safe area! We keep

hoping that things will change and that we can go and see for ourselves what help is needed!

We have had various WhatsApp conversations with Father Bulaki in Pemba but have not spoken with him this year. Our group has only met once but a meeting is planned in March. However Father David attended the Alma Day service at St Pauls in July and he also attended a meeting of churches within Alma in November. Alma meet in London about twice a year.

Alma Sunday is 20th July this year and everyone is welcome to attend the evensong at St Paul's Cathedral.

Welcare

Margaret Squire

Welcare is a family support charity working with families and children up to the age of 13 in south London and East Surrey.

As the needs of children and families in London have changed, so has the work they do. Welcare now focuses on preventative work, life skills development and helping to keep families together. They offer individual, one-to-one work and group work programmes alongside parents and carers, helping them to nurture their children and cope with disadvantages they face.

Welcare is a Christian-based charity, though the families they help are from all religions and none. St Mary with St Alban Church has supported them with two annual fund-raising events for many years. There is a Lent lunch, a simple meal for which participants are asked to make a donation, and a Sing-along Carol evening at Christmas at the Anglers. In 2024, we made over £600 for Welcare.

Hampton Deanery Synod

Nicholas de Mattos

Hampton Deanery Synod comprises 16 churches in our local area: St Michael and St George, Fulwell; St Mary's, Hampton; All Saints, Hampton; St James, Hampton Hill; St John, Hampton Wick; St Richard, Hanworth; St Mary with St Alban, Teddington; St Mark, Teddington; Holy Trinity, Twickenham; St Mary, Twickenham, All Saints, Twickenham; St Stephen, Twickenham; All Hallows, Twickenham; St Augustine, Whitton; SS Philip and James, Whitton; SS Peter and Paul, Teddington (now Peter and Paul Centre).

Each meeting comprises an opening welcome by the Area Dean (in 2024 Reverend Ben Lovell from St Mary's, Hampton), worship and an introduction to the host church, usually led by a minister of that church. Apologies for absence are noted along with the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting with any matters arising dealt with. Every meeting has a theme, on which the guest speaker will make a presentation. The meeting concludes with prayer.

St Augustine of Canterbury Church, Whitton. May 22nd 2024

Revd. Ben Lovell, Area Dean, and incumbent of St Mary's Hampton, led the meeting. He welcomed all, including the new members of the HDS: Rev Margaret Buckley (St John, Hampton Wick), Roger Hutchins and Jacqui Knowles (St Mary, Twickenham) and Joyce Chadwick (All Saints, Twickenham). Rev Canon John Kafwanka led the opening worship and gave an introduction to St Augustine's. He arrived during the pandemic in January 2021 and steered the church back to normal. He commented that he would be moving on from June 30th 2024 to become Bishop of Northern Zambia. Rev Ben Lovell then gave the deanery news: that Rev Tom Simpson had moved to St Mark's Teddington; that a new Multi-Academy Trust was being formed with St Mary's Hampton CE Primary and Bishop Wand School' It was hoped that other schools might join.

He announced that there was one nomination for the Deanery Lay Chair, Tom Dixon, who was duly elected.

Alison Tsang, Diocesan Head of Passionate Communities, was the guest speaker. PC is a small team, partly funded by the Common Fund and by parishes, which supported the London Diocese 2030 Vision: for every Londoner to encounter the love of God in Christ via 3 'Cs' – Confident disciples, Compassionate communities, Creative growth. Please see N de M for fuller account.

St Mary with St Alban, Shepperton 7th November 2024

Fr David Cloake opened the meeting with a prayer and silence. He gave a short insight into what life was like in the parish and mentioned, in particular the 'Building Anew' project which was taking a lot of the attention of the parish at present. The new Lay Chairman, Tony Dixon, was introduced by the Area Dean, Rev Ben Lovell, and conducted the meeting thereon. The deanery news was: a new incumbent for SS Philip and James, Whitton – to be identified on ratification; Rev Donna McDowell was the new assistant priest for St Mary, Twickenham, whom he welcomed to the meeting; still vacancies for governors at various church schools in the deanery; common fund - positive response but there needed to be 8% increase to cover £5m deficit; useful Finance Resource Day at St Mellitus College from which it was advised to apply for grants early as processing takes time and to be careful of letting property on consecrated ground as it needs a faculty.

Rev Mary Hawes was the invited speaker. She spoke mainly about the 'Love Matters' conference and recommended the book 'Reimagining Britain' by Justin Welby. Please see N de M (or Mary!) for a fuller account. It was announced at the end of the meeting that Anne-Marie Philips, the hard-working HDS Secretary, was moving on so candidates were requested to fill that important position.

St Mary's Twickenham 11th February 2025

Jeff Hopkin Williams, vicar of St Mary's, directed the opening worship with a hymn and a prayer. He went on to speak a little about the recent refurbishment of the church which

had entailed removing the old pews and installing new, movable ones and removing the choir stalls entirely. This has enabled the church to be used so much more for the benefit of the community. The deanery news was: The Rev Ben Lovell, Area Dean, welcomed Kate as the new vicar of Ss Philip and James, Whitton. A deadline for applications for incumbent of St Augustine's, Whitton had been set for 25th February 2025.

Tony Dixon, Lay Chair, then talked about the Common Fund and finance in general. He said that all contributions were in for 2024 but the outlook for 2025 was that the Deanery and Diocese were 15% short of the total running costs. Dawn Baker was the area finance manager.

The invited speaker was Mr Kevin Rogers, Diocesan Director of Parish Property and Fundraising. He gave some startling statistics about church property in London and said the main question was: how do we use our buildings most effectively for the mission? He said that clarity of mission was key and spoke for the rest of the time mainly about the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) which was on hand and very active in the service of parishes. AOB: Robin Field-Smith said that he had written a report of the meeting of the Diocesan Synod and that any queries should be addressed to him. He reported that the meeting was definitely a two-way conversation but that the Synod was heavily weighted towards the London centre churches. The Diocesan Fund amounted to £95m. Please see N de M for a fuller report.

Diocesan Synod

Robin Field-Smith

30th November 2024: the Homily at the opening eucharist was given by Doreen Tang, the Children's and Youth minister at St John's Hoxton, explaining the programme of activities and events which were gradually involving greater numbers of pre-teens, teenagers and young professionals.

Bishop Sarah in her presidential address used the context of the Scolding review into Soul Survivor and the Makin review into John Smyth, for which the Diocese now had a Task and Finish Group to formulate a response. She emphasised the need to focus on survivors, to strive hard for a healthy culture and to challenge privilege. She said we should go into Advent with hope, not least knowing that there had been an increase in congregations across the diocese in 2022/23 and much to value from the Walk of Prayer in September, as well as recognising the gifts of difference in London. She said that we should be open to the movement of the Spirit, which we cannot control, to show love for every Londoner and gather round the living God, finding the face of Christ in each other, with grace, restraint, reflection and thoughtfulness.

The General Secretary, Oliver Home, gave a factual brief on the Diocese, the role of the Diocesan Synod, which was to advise and be consulted by the Bishop on matters concerning the CofE, religion and public interest in London. and the role of the Bishop's Council as Trustees of the London Diocesan Fund (LDF), acting as the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee, as well as being the Standing Committee of Synod.

A session on Vision 2030 (based on Acts 2: 42-47) with the three strands of:

- Confident Disciples
 - Compassionate Communities (Acts 2: 45)
 - Creative Growth (Acts 2: 37)
- and there were also short “pitches” on:
- GROWING YOUNGER*(Acts 2:17) by Bishop Lusa of Willesden
 - SAFER CHURCHES by Bishop Joanne of Stepney
 - RACIAL JUSTICE (Acts 2:5) by Bishop Anderson of Edmonton

Synod was then invited by the Director of Finance, Chris Harris, after highlighting key points from the briefing paper, to vote to accept the 2025 budget, which resulted in a significant majority in favour.

Supplementary Questions submitted by members included the following subjects:

- Law Commission consultation on Burial and Cremation, particularly in respect of the re-opening of closed Burial Grounds - responses could be submitted up to 9 January 2025
- The future of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS).
- The status of those commissioned as “Alternative Spiritual Overseers” or for “Word Ministry”; they have none either canonically or legally.
- The diocesan strategy and resources for reaching Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2030.
- The vacancy rate in clerical posts.
- Diocesan policy on deployment of curates in training, in relation to payment of the Common Fund/Parish Share.
- Stipend and pension rates for clergy.
- Concern that the Archbishop’s Commission for Racial Justice stated that liberal/progressive churches were the only ones where UKME/GMH people are welcomed and accepted at all levels, including for leadership.

* Sam Donoghue spoke on the diocesan priority of Growing Younger, where outcomes were more important than outputs. He showed the statistics about parishes with under 17 year olds in their worshipping community – 70 parishes had NIL. 25 was seen as a good measure of health, and the diocesan aim was by 2030:

- 300 churches with 25+, 100 churches with 50+, 50 churches with 100+

There were thus five linked objectives for parishes:

- (1) Every parish to have a SMART plan – using the SG dashboard – and with the topic a standing item on PCC agendas
- (2) Clergy to understand ministry to young people – “Launchpad” courses provided
- (3) Paid youth workers in parishes – the strongest correlation in growth after 10+ number reached
- (4) Volunteers recruited – with right attitude and numbers
- (5) Use of Youth Minister models, either for single churches or networks

There were four questions for churches to consider:

Q1 – is there a plan for Growing Younger in your MAP?

Q2 – what training do clergy undertake?

Q3 – what is possible to enable the church to benefit from a youth worker?

Q4 – how are volunteers recruited and used?

2ndA Teddington Guiding Groups

Kathy Gold

Rainbows

2024 was another busy year in Rainbows; we started the year learning about ourselves and exploring our feelings and beliefs. We worked on our animal lover badge and a vet showed us how to look after animals. We participated in the national bird watch.

In the summer term, we learned how to express ourselves, to be inspired and be creative. Together with 4th Teddington Rainbows, we worked on our drawing badge. We were lucky enough to have two artists come into two of our sessions to teach us to draw.

In the autumn, we learned how to make a difference to help our community and the wider world. Richmond Foodbank came to teach us about what they do to help others and we brought our donations at Harvest Festival. We learned about recycling and helped the Teddington Society with a local litter pick. We undertook our usual sponsored Children in Need walk and collectively raised £700 to help others less fortunate than ourselves. Another great year!

Brownies

Over the past year the Brownies have continued to tend our adopted graves at regular intervals. There is nothing they enjoy more than wielding trowels, rakes and watering cans in the churchyard!

A number of the activities undertaken during the Summer Term contributed to their Take Action/Make Change theme award. They carried out a very successful litter pick led by Geoff Howland, in the car park behind Marks & Spencer and along the High Street. They also helped on our soft toy tombola at Teddington Fair and later brought in a selection of books, toys and games to donate to Fara, and spent an evening sorting through jigsaw puzzles for the charity, to ensure there were no pieces missing.

In the Autumn the girls decorated and filled boxes for Harvest Festival, produced designs for a Girlguiding festive cards competition and went on a night hike along the Thames towpath to Kingston. The term ended with a District craft evening and a trip to the cinema to see Moana 2.

Guides

The Guides began the year by making bird feeders and learning about British birds to be able to take part in the Big Garden Bird watch as part of their Growing up wild badge. We then went on to complete the Turtly-tastic challenge badge, learning about the plight of turtles and what we can do to help. Our environmental theme continued when we had a visit from the Kier Building Company's Environmental team to hear about what they do to conserve the environment around their building projects.

We began the summer term with a district quiz for Guides. We had a cookout and learnt to sew our badges on our camp blankets. With several Guides receiving Jack Petchey awards we were able to get out and about with an interesting evening in the Escape rooms at Kingston and an evening of trampolining in Esher. We helped out at Playwam Summer Fair and with the district guides ran the games arena for the Village fair. Everyone took part in the NSPCC Move a Mile which we did as a three-legged race from Bushy Park back to the hall and raised £180. The end of term saw us at Walton Firs for Boro camp alongside Guide and Scout groups from across Richmond. Our final evening of the term was a lovely Gold Award party for our four Gold Award guides before they moved up to Rangers.

The Autumn term saw us looking at leadership skills and how to work as a team. We contributed to the Harvest festival at the church, took part in Remembrance activities and Teddington Remembrance Parade and helped at the Church Bazaar.

We had a lovely evening at Hampton Court ice skating, joined with the other units in the district for a Christmas crafting evening and completed 2024 with a Christmas trip to see Moana 2, bowling and a pizza lunch.

Rangers

The beginning of the year saw the Rangers working on their Express Yourself Award with some discussions and drama activities. They enjoyed making pancakes and mug cakes and running games for the Guides. Katie D achieved her young leaders award for working with 4th Rainbows and 2nd A Brownies.

In the summer term they took part in the cookout, NSPCC Move a Mile and enjoyed an evening at the Kingston escape rooms.

Several Rangers came along to Boro camp enjoying the activities as well as being some youthful helpers for the Guides.

The Autumn term saw the Rangers working on their Know Yourself award. They joined in with guide craft activities, Remembrance parade, the ice skating at Hampton Court, had a lovely evening at the cinema to see Wicked and joined the Guides for the Christmas trip to Moana, bowling and pizza.

Fairtrade

Susan Jacobs

As reported in last year's APCM, Traidcraft went into liquidation at the end of 2022 so there was no possibility of continuing to hold regular Fairtrade stalls after Sunday worship. However, Advent Calendars, with the Christmas Story book included, and "Real Easter Eggs", with the Christian story of the Passion and Eastertide, were available and several dozen of each were sold to parishioners at the relevant season.

Parishioners are encouraged to seek out the Fairtrade logo when shopping - most supermarkets supply some goods; the Co-op has a large range, and ethically fairly traded

goods of all kinds (not just foodstuffs) are available by mail order on several sites: ethicalsuperstore.com; wearefairtrade.com; jts.co.uk, are all recommended.

Those booking the Parish Hall are encouraged to use fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar, as are the Community/Memory Cafés and the Parish Hall.