

## **Aims, Purpose, Objectives & Activities**

The general functions of the PCC are stated within section 2 of the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) measure 1956.

St John the Evangelist Church PCC has the responsibility of cooperating with the incumbent, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is also responsible for the maintenance of St John's Church building and the Sir Ken Dodd Happiness Hall.

When planning our objectives for the year the PCC gave consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our church and to become part of our parish community at St John's Knotty Ash. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve the many groups that live within our parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament.

When planning our activities for the year, we have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit. In particular we try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through

- Worship and prayer: learning about the Gospel and developing their knowledge and trust in Jesus.
- Provision of pastoral care for those living in the Parish.

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the Church of St John's Knotty Ash and the Happiness Hall.

## **PCC (Trustees) Annual Report 2023**

2023 began a year of mixed blessings for St Johns church.

January- Rev. Tom Langdon Smith continued to lead the church in weekly worship, whilst also offering Knotty Ash school collective worship sessions together with the West Derby Deanery assemblies' team, alongside beginning to develop a relationship with Clifford Holroyd school.

The remaining sessions of "Cultivate" the Deanery Fit for Mission course took place in the early part of the year, concluding in St Johns in March. A "Family church" was introduced by Rev. Langdon Smith, taking place at 9am on a Sunday morning finishing prior to the main service.

May- As part of the Fit for Mission process a Diocesan FFM coach, conducted a Pyramid review with the PCC, to help identify what was needed to move forward with mission and outreach for the church.

July- A small grant from “Together Liverpool feast of fun” enabled the church to reach out to the community and provide a food and play session for families, while the Praise & Play group offered weekly free play sessions for families which was well received.

August-The PCC began to consider issues appertaining to FFM. Meetings were held to look at what this might mean for the church moving forward. This proved to be a difficult period for the PCC, and much time, prayer and thought went into this.

September saw the PCC agree to completely withdraw from the FFM process. The Diocese were informed of the decision and consequently Rev Langdon Smith resigned as incumbent.

However, September also did see Celebration as Phil Wells was licensed as a reader to St Johns. “Family church” concluded and families were integrated back into the main worship, which was very well received by the congregation who had missed them. The number of families attending continued to grow, with many Baptisms taking place.

October- In order to facilitate worship a Ministry team was formed, consisting of six church members, who together with visiting retired clergy planned and led worship throughout the remainder of the year.

November onwards, a variety of services were offered which included Stir up Sunday, café church, an all-age nativity, Carols by Candlelight with the Red Rose Band and a Christingle service. Throughout the year a wide variety of social events which included Open Mic nights, a visit from the Liverpool Phoenix Choir, who, accompanied by the Red Rose Band, gave us a wonderful evening of Christmas music, family film sessions and a New Year’s Eve party have all taken place in church and in the Sir Ken Dodd Happiness Hall. Hall users have continued to grow in number.

Although the latter part of 2023 proved challenging for the church, the end of the year saw real blessing, as church members worked together to keep St Johns a healthy, mission focussed viable church. Moving forward we should look to the words of Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. As a church family we each have our own part to play by letting our “Light shine “and helping our church not only to grow but become a vital part of the local community.

Sue Mitchell on behalf of St John’s PCC

## **Churchwarden's, Maintenance and Fabric and Safeguarding Report**

This year has been an eventful year in the life of St. John's and it's fair to say we have had some challenges but with a lot of prayer and support from each other we are moving forward with God. The PCC (Parochial Church Council) met once a month to discuss church issues and two PCC members also attended monthly Deanery Synod meetings in order to feed back to us issues happening in our deanery.

Just like in a family, our church has to deal with everyday issues – finance, housekeeping, caring for each other, planning ahead and we are grateful for all those who volunteer their time and energy to maintain the smooth running of St. John's.

### **Maintenance**

The Quinquennial inspection (a church building inspection that must be carried out every five years) was done in September by our architect, Robin Wolley. His conclusions were that our church is in a generally fair condition and well maintained, although the report identified some urgent work on the fabric of the church. There were eight recommendations in total including

- Replacing the flat roof to the vestry
- Clearing leaves and debris from the gutters
- Overhauling and painting rainwater goods
- Cutting back trees and vegetation affecting the Lych Gate
- General examination of all roofs.

We have been able to carry out some of these tasks ourselves but are in the process of accessing grants to help with some of the work. The Quinquennial inspection was followed up in December with a meeting with Tom Beesley, the Diocesan Building Advisor, where we planned the way forward.

Regular checks were also carried out on church amenities including the boiler, clock and lightening conductor. There were some problems with the sound system so plans are in place to improve it. The organ was tuned twice during the year and we are grateful to Brian Jones who continues to look after it.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding and safer recruiting has taken up a lot of time. The PCC has complied with their duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 and all PCC members and group leaders hold a current DBS certificate and have attended safeguarding training to Basic Level. All volunteers are safely recruited by completing a Safeguarding form. Safeguarding is a mandatory item on every PCC agenda as it is important that we look after each other as a family.

Many thanks to you, the congregation, for your generosity, support, prayers, love and friendship in all we do to grow our church family and in the wider community. Whilst

we still have our challenges, it's wonderful how we are pulling together across the parish. Through all this we have demonstrated God's love for one another and that we can spread His message whatever challenges we face.

Sue Farley & Val Gavin Church Wardens

### **Presentation of Accounts**

Gill Southern Hon Treasurer

### **Deanery Synod Report 2023/2**

During this period, your representatives Sue Mitchell & Alan Malthouse attended meetings on behalf of St Johns Knotty Ash P.C.C. The main discussion point throughout all meetings was "Fit for Mission" and the newly branded "Christ our Hope" diocese and the Deanery plan to place before the Church Commissioners for the Finances to move forward. Most of the congregation will know that we as a church opted out of F.F.M last year and consequently therefore we no longer have a Team Vicar.

Another discussion point was Patronage a long-standing C of E protocol, as our patron is St Marys West Derby and whoever the incumbent is at the time (currently the Rector Rev Stephen Boyd). A proposal was put to synod to vote for an alternative patronage board which would exclude the Rector of West Derby and just the Bishop of Liverpool and the Team Rector making all consequent decisions on appointments of Vicars within our Diocese. The vote was in favour of the proposal however St Johns voted against as did several other churches and the Rev Boyd will be writing to the Church Commissioners outlining his objections.

The West Derby Synod do not currently have a Lay Chair from the elected members and the Area Dean has been chairing meetings.

Alan Malthouse. Deanery Synod Rep

### **Electoral Roll**

The Electoral Roll is a list of members of St John's congregation who are allowed to vote on church matters and to stand for election to the Parochial Church Council. At this year's revision of the roll, we have 103 members. 3 members came during 2023, 3 were added and 1 member died. Next year will see the legally required rewriting of the whole roll when everyone will need to reapply to be readmitted to it.

Geoff Bagnall Electoral Roll Officer

## **The Sir Ken Dodd Happiness Hall for Church and Community.**

Our hall continues to be used regularly both by church groups and events, our regular user groups, and by individuals booking for parties and other events. Our current regular bookings are as follows:

### **Monday**

Praise and Play

Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers

### **Tuesday**

Surestart intervention groups

Ellen Crawford Dance and Fitness

### **Wednesday**

Red Rose Band Rehearsals

Breathwork and Sound Relaxation (fortnightly)

John Kelly Ballroom and Sequence Dancing

### **Thursday**

Labour Party Councillor Surgery

Zumba

WI (monthly)

### **Friday**

Little Movers

Open Mic night (monthly)

### **Saturday**

Didi Dance

Many thanks need to go to the team who open and close and clean the hall and to the Hall Committee for all their hard work in ensuring that the life of the hall runs smoothly.

Jane Owen Bookings Coordinator.

## **Reports From Groups**

### **Bible Book Club**

BBC continues to run on a Monday evening in church with a steady attendance that averages between 10-12 weekly.

We have covered a variety of books this year, focussing on two publications by author John Pritchard whose books have provided us with thought provoking questions and conversation, and plenty of personal discovery into our life in faith.

Each week we use the Pray as you Go App to close our session in contemplative prayer and this year the app provided us with our Lent course, The Jerusalem Journey, used weekly throughout the season.

During the summer weeks we took advantage of the light evenings to take up a number of Prayer Walks, visiting the local community and praying specifically at our local hospitals and schools. This was a new activity for our group and we were all surprised at how much we actually got out of it on a spiritual level. We definitely plan to do this again.

Another new activity introduced to the group was an art session where we took inspiration from the works of Ben and Hannah Dunnett. We played inspirational music and painted and drew our own personal versions of our favourite pieces of theirs, another great session enjoyed by all.

A very important thing to know about BBC is that they take the needs of others into serious consideration and where a need is identified, always jump into action. This year we mounted a Christmas appeal throughout the group and the main body of the church, to collect items of personal hygiene in order to make Christmas gift sets for the children and young men at Clifford Holroyde School. This resulted in each and every one of them receiving one gift each. A very successful appeal indeed.

Tina Johnson

### **Cast**

We are constantly developing the format of the meetings with continued emphasis on our Christian faith We have achieved this with readings from 'The Bible Companion - a guide to understanding and appreciating the Bible,' and individual members are encouraged to do the reading aloud for the group. This then leads us on to the CAST Prayer and the meetings close with us joining together to say the Grace led by Phil Wells.

People are greeted with refreshments, a selection of books are available to exchange, and we have introduced the occasional raffle. The core of regular

attendees remains constant at about 16 per meeting. We have continued with a variety of talks including 'A history of North and South Island, New Zealand, 'A history of Storeton Woods' and 'Christmas around the world'. Wirral artist Jan Lupton came and displayed her Christian artwork and we had musical entertainment from the Liverpool Ukulele Orchestra. The programme also included a quiz about Liverpool and several film showings. We have increased our list of speakers for the coming months and have a full programme prepared until the end of July.

Camelia Usher-Galvin

### **Children's and Family Ministry**

Tots Church, for families with children under five has consistently on a weekly basis throughout the year, provided a firm foundation for family worship within all services at St. John's. Following the lectionary in an age-appropriate way, using materials and resources such as Roots, regularly guided and often adapted to suit the ages, abilities and personalities of our regularly attending children. Throughout seasons such as Easter, Lent and Christmas, varied programmes of activities were followed and displayed in the Tots Church area and on the information board at the rear of the church.

The year has seen new ideas being generated and tried, including family church services taking place at 9am on Sundays before the main Sunday service at 10:30. Although these services were a huge amount of fun and learning and successful in their style, the services proved to be quite difficult to attend for some busy families. Another issue they raised was that families were beginning to miss attending services of Holy Communion and were also missed greatly by the general population of the congregation meaning the intergenerational community we had worked so hard to build was no longer there.

Following the departure of Rev. Tom Langdon Smith in September we saw the return of our families to our main services and children and their families were integrated back into our services and into the Tots Church area until plans for the future could be made.

Families and children have been in attendance throughout the year at events such as the 'Feast of Fun', PnP 'Summer Sessions', 'Stir up Sunday', family film sessions, all age nativity, carols by candlelight and Christingle.

This year has been one of positive relationships between all our family and children's groups, improving attendance at Sunday worship and a marked increase in Baptism.

A very busy and successful year of growth in faith for all of our children and families.

Tina Johnson

## **St John's Choir**

Music continues to play an essential part in our worship and we are very lucky to have two organists and a robed choir to lead worship at our Eucharist services on the first and third Sundays. The choir has learnt several new hymns and a new Royal School of Church Music setting of the Gloria. This setting of the Gloria now remains as part of our communion services and we have also reintroduced the sung responses including the Sanctus and Benedictus to the Eucharist which we lost over the last couple of years.

We were delighted that Mark Donnelly joined our worship group, adding guitar to the keyboard and flute. This enables our Family Praise and Café church services to be a bit more informal. We are also grateful that Karen Doran can step in to help from time to time to play the keyboard. Membership stands currently at 11 and we will always be happy to welcome anyone who would like to sing with us – either in the choir or worship group. You don't have to be able to read music.

Sadly, we lost John Holmes in October – his rich baritone voice is missed. I do hope you will continue to pray for and support St. John's choir as they raise their voices to the Lord in His service, and if you would like to be involved in music worship you would be made very welcome.

Sue Farley

## **Coffee, Craft and Chat.**

This small group, currently at 6, meets every Wednesday after our service of Holy Communion at 10.30am. The group is currently knitting or crocheting scarves for an art installation called Knitted Kindness at St Luke's (bombed out) church in September. So far, we have made and donated 30 scarves for the project which, after the initial showing, will be given to a homeless shelter. We have previously knitted and donated hats and scarves to the local Salvation Army. The group also makes small, knitted pairs of hearts and teddy bears, which, linked together, are given to the young patients at Alder Hey hospital – one for the patient and one for the parent or carer. Geoff Bagnall, who is a long-time volunteer at the hospital, liaises this project for us. He tells us that they are really appreciated by the hospital. The group is an ideal way to meet new people and even if you can't knit or crochet, we can teach you if you like, or just come along for a chat and a cup of tea. If you would like to just knit some small items without coming along to the group, we have patterns available.

Sue Farley



## **Church Gardening Team Report**

We have had a busy and quite eventful year. The Community Payback team have become established and have worked regularly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the year.

The grass and pathways have been regularly attended to and the whole site looks so much better for their efforts. When the weather has been inclement, they have also been occupied cleaning and polishing inside the Church and removing skip loads of rubbish from the Crypt.

Our Apiary was established in a corner of the Vicarage Garden during the summer last year. Brian and Alan, our Beekeepers, sourced the funding for fencing, a Shed and other materials and we are now up and running with two Hives, both doing very well. This Summer we will be altering the fencing to make the Apiary more discrete from the Vicarage with access solely from the gate to the Church grounds.

Members of our volunteer group planted spring flowers last year and we are looking to plant more wild flowers in certain areas of the Church grounds. Any ideas, help or suggestions will be gratefully received. We also have a rota to be at the church when the Community payback people attend to open and close and look after the interest of the church.

If any Church members could spare a couple of hours on Tuesdays or Wednesdays between 9:30am and 3:30pm to sit in Church and keep an eye on things it would be very much appreciated. Please contact me or Eddie Watson if you can help.

St John's is now registered as an ECO Church and we are committed to enhancing our environment to make our community a better place to live in.

I would like to thank all our volunteers for the time they have freely given and their hard work on the church grounds and the Probation service for providing the Supervisors, work force and equipment.

Stan Merrill & Eddie Watson

## **144<sup>th</sup> Liverpool Guiding Group**

We've had a very busy year with active groups across all age ranges. All our groups have been working hard on the Girlguiding programme earning badges and awards throughout the year. Our Rainbow unit has been very small due to a lack of leaders but we welcomed a new Leader in training in September who has been working very hard with the girls and we are lucky to be getting 2 experienced leaders joining us ready for the new year. Our Brownies have a full pack of 24 and we took the girls away on Pack Holiday for a weekend at Woodbank in June and a Winter Wonderland event at our campsite in Scarisbrick in November. Our Guides have grown in numbers over the year and are pleased that Annabel, one of our leaders

who has been with us since she was a Rainbow has qualified as an adult leader. Well done Annabel! We now have 9 Rangers, a large number for a 14+ age range Girlguiding group! 4 of them attended our annual Merseymoot camp along with 1,200 other young people, which they all thoroughly enjoyed.

We have managed to attend a couple of church parades and are looking forward to bringing the girls into church more often in the future.

Jane Owen

### **Praise n Play**

Praise n Play came into the new year of 2023 with a very strong group of two, three and four year olds, averaging between eight and twelve attending weekly. We did have the occasional visitor or one week attendee who gave us a try but decided we weren't for them, but we are never discouraged by this, in fact we embrace all newcomers, both those who stay and those who decide our group is not for them. This group was well established in their friendships and dynamics and had become accustomed to the faith framework of the session. Listening and re-telling stories from the Bible and following the lectionary, singing with confidence and joy, joining activities to support their age appropriate and individual stages of development, and praying creatively with a purpose. The healthy organic snack provides an opportunity for those with allergies, intolerances and at times a 'fear' of trying or the dislike of textures to be cared for, considered and encouraged. Whilst also providing opportunity to enhance important developmental skills in using tools while cutting and social skills in turn taking, and celebrations such as birthdays and the birth of babies. Another extremely important aspect of the group is the friendship and support of the adults both within the group and whilst networking with each other, offering practical and emotional support to each other whilst also learning alongside their children of a life with faith. As we approached the end of the school year in July a request was made by the parents and carers within the group that the sessions continue throughout the summer holidays in order to continue and maintain relationships with each other and their children, including older siblings. After a great deal of thought, prayer, and discussion with all church family's, a six-week plan of Summer Sessions was devised. This was very well attended and enjoyed by both PnP and church families who now became one group. Each session consisted of one hour of play followed by lunch and table talk, usually taking up to 1 hour, and by the second week, we were praying for many different reasons including prayers for each other. It was indeed a great success. Then came September, sadly we lost seven of our children in one go to nursery or school places, however we wished them well and prayed for them as they took the next steps of their journey in life. Just when we wondered what we would do to refresh and increase our group again we found very quickly we had a new influx of children, mothers and regular carers. This has steadily built and has actively encouraged new regular attendance to Tots

Church on a Sunday and increased the regular attendance of family and cafe church services. A great number of existing and new family members supported and attended Christmas events and services and we were very fortunate due to a generous grant from Scripture Union to provide each family with a gift of a Bible, each unique to their age and family personality. A beautiful ending to a very successful year.

Tina Johnson

### **Searchers Study and Fellowship Group**

We began in October 2023 as the START group which followed a basic, introductory/refresher course in Christianity. We then continued into the Moving On course which offered a more detailed study of our faith. We meet together to search the bible scriptures with time for questions and discussion and keep our meetings Jesus centred. To fit in with our study theme we changed our name to Searchers as we moved into 2024. We meet at 6.30 on a Sunday evening and everyone is very welcome to come and join us.

Wayne & Karen Doran