

**PARISH OF FARNBOROUGH**  
**ST. GILES THE ABBOT and ST. NICHOLAS**

**Vestry Meeting**

Election of the Churchwardens and Deputy Wardens:

Churchwardens	Andrew Bailey	(St. Giles)
	Claire Couldridge	(St. Nicholas)
Deputy Wardens	Peter Russell	) St. Giles - 8.00 a.m.
	Sue Rennie	) St. Giles - 10.00 a.m.
	Sally Attwood	) St. Giles - 11.15 a.m.
	Philip Lovelock	) St. Giles - 6.30 p.m.
	Sheila Munns	) St. Giles - Thursdays 10.00 a.m.
	(Tbc)	) St. Nicholas

Proposal that we allow all of our Readers to be members of Farnborough P.C.C. (It is customary across the Diocese that licensed Readers are allowed by virtue of their office to be full members of their P.C.C. This needs to be agreed at the AGM or Vestry Meeting).

**ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**  
**SUNDAY 28th APRIL 2024 - 4.30 p.m.**

**OPENING PRAYERS**

May this meeting be in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us bless the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**READING: 2 Corinthians 9: 6-12**

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written,

‘He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;  
his righteousness endures for ever.’

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

## PRAYERS

**Leader:** We thank you, our Father, that you call us all to your service as members of the Body of Christ. Every one of us have a vocation to fulfil, a ministry to exercise. We thank you for your whole Church is a holy priesthood, and that it is the privilege of each of us to offer spiritual sacrifices, to enter into the Holiest, to intercede for the world, to introduce others to Jesus. Help us to see this more clearly, and show us what it means for our own life and service, for the glory of Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord, we have, but one life to live, the life you have given us, the life you have redeemed. Help us to make the best use of it and not to waste it or fritter it away. Show us your plan and purpose for our life, and let it be our joy to do your will and serve you all our days. Lord, let us not live to be useless, for Jesus Christ's sake.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord of the Church, you have given your servants differing gifts, that they may share them with others in the household of faith and use them responsibly in the service of the world: grant us to be generous in giving and humble in receiving, that we may grow up to mature manhood and attain to the full stature of Christ.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord God, may we never forget that the Church exists in the world not for its own sake but for your glory and the service of mankind. Save us as church people from getting wrapped up in our own affairs and the mundane things that absorb so much of our time and money and energy. Help us to get our priorities right: to seek first your kingdom and the hallowing of your name; to obey our Lord's command to preach the gospel everywhere and to everyone; to minister for his sake to the poor, the afflicted, and the oppressed; and to practice the royal law by loving our neighbour as ourselves. Give us a new vision of what the Church should be, and of your purpose for it, here and in every place; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Leader:** We thank you, O God, for those whom you have called through the centuries to serve in the ministry of St. Giles and St. Nicholas. Pour your blessings on those whom you have called today that by word and deed they may bear witness to your saving love and power, and enable your people to grow up into him who is the Head, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and honour for ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

# **A G E N D A**

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting** held at St. Nicholas on Sunday 14th May 2023, *(pages 4-6)*
3. **Matters arising**
4. **Reports**
  - (a) Electoral Roll, *(page 6)*
  - (b) Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council, *(pages 7-8)*
  - (c) Churchwardens' Reports including St. Giles Churchyard Report, *(pages 9-12)*
  - (d) The Parochial Church Council Consolidated Accounts for the year 2023 including Financial Statements for St. Giles the Abbot and St. Nicholas *(pages 12-16)*
5. **Safeguarding**
6. **St. Giles Centre**
7. **Election**  
Members for the P.C.C.  
St. Giles **TWO** vacancies  
St. Nicholas **ONE** vacancy
8. **Appointments**
  - (a) Sidespeople
  - (b) Independent Financial Examiner.
9. Goodbyes and Thank-you's.
10. **Any other business and date of next A.G.M. 2024.**

## **ADDITIONAL REPORTS**

Rector, *(pages 17-21)*  
Associate Rector, *(pages 21-22)*  
St. Giles Music, *(page 22)*  
St. Giles Family & Children's Worker, *(pages 22-23)*  
St. Giles Safeguarding Report, *(page 23-24)*  
St. Giles Flower Arrangers Report, *(page 24)*  
St. Giles Bell Ringers, *(page 25)*  
St. Giles Social Committee, *(pages 25-26)*  
St. Nicholas Family & Children's Worker, *(page 27)*  
Mothers' Union, *(pages 28-29)*  
House Groups, *(page 29-30)*  
St. Giles Website, *(page 30)*  
Friends of St. Giles, *(page 30)*  
Parish Magazine, *(page 31)*

**The Accounts are on the Notice Boards of both Churches.**

## 2. MINUTES

### MINUTES OF THE VESTRY MEETING AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING HELD ON SUNDAY 14th MAY 2023

#### PARISH OF FARNBOROUGH ST.GILES THE ABBOT and ST. NICHOLAS

##### Vestry Meeting

##### Election of the Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwardens

##### Churchwardens:

**Andrew Bailey (St Giles)** for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year

Approved:

Proposed: Sheila Munns

Seconded: Carol Stokes

Agreed: All

**Claire Couldridge (St. Nicholas)** for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year

Approved:

Proposed: Sheila Munns

Seconded: Carol Stokes

Agreed: All

##### Deputy Wardens:

Peter Russell (St. Giles – 8 a.m.)

Sue Rennie (St. Giles – 10.00 a.m.)

Janet Palmer and Sally Attwood (St. Giles – 11.15 a.m.)

Philip Lovelock (St. Giles – 6.30 p.m.)

Sheila Munns (St. Giles – Thursday 10.00 a.m.)

Nick Jolliffe (St. Nicholas)

A vote of thanks was given to all Wardens

Proposed: Mary Compton

Seconded Christine Coyle

Agreed: All

#### ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023 – 4.30PM

##### PRESENT:

The Revd. Matthew Hughes, Archdeacon Paul Wright, Revd. Stephen Broadie Mary Compton, Sheila Munns, Sue Rennie, Carol Fryer, Helen Roberts, Andrew Bailey, Valerie Blinks, Stewart Hutson, Nick Reynolds, Christine Coyle, Peter Crowe, Gail Low, Heather Argent, Eddie Roberts, Gill Knapp, Brian Allen, Lynda Allen, Chris Hallett, Paul Beamiss Carol Stokes, Susan Simpson, Richard Butterworth.

##### Opening prayers led by the Rector and Associate Rector

##### 1. Apologies for absence:

Roger Allard, Pauline Allard, Irene Dancer, Mike Dancer, Lynn Kelly, John Kelly, Nick Wilkins, Jenny Wilkins, Doreen Wilson, Valerie Bailey, Elizabeth Harriss-Orr, Carol Wright, Bette Skipper, Janet Palmer, Pat Eperon, Claire Couldridge, Jayne Calvert, Sally Attwood, Julia Hoadley, Alison Reynolds.

## 2. **MINUTES**

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held at St. Nicholas on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

Proposed: Andrew Bailey

Seconded: Heather Argent

Approved and agreed.

## 3. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

## 4. **REPORTS**

### (a) Electoral Roll Report:

It was reported that there were 396 (St. Giles 339, St. Nicholas 57) as at 31.12.2022.

### (b) Annual Report on the proceedings of the Parochial Church Council: no comments.

### (c) Churchwardens' reports including St. Giles Churchyard report: no comments.

### (d) The Parochial Church Council Consolidated Accounts for the year 2022 including Financial Statements for St. Giles the Abbot and St. Nicholas:

St. Giles is having a low key stewardship campaign in September 2023.

St. Nicholas had a successful appeal and has a Parish giving scheme which allows direct debit payments to increase in line with inflation. Heather Argent highlighted the importance of supporting St. Nicholas. Adding Gift Aid to donations was encouraged.

Adoption of the Accounts:

Proposed: Chris Hallett

Seconded: Nick Reynolds

A vote of thanks was given to Paul Beamiss for 10 years of his work as Treasurer at St. Giles and for the work of Roger Allard; Treasurer at St. Nicholas.

Proposed: Heather Argent

Seconded: Sheila Munns.

The Rector thanked Liz Diamond, Parish Secretary, for her work and all the contributors for their reports.

## 5. **SAFEGUARDING**

At St. Giles Irene Dancer has agreed to continue as Parish Safeguarding Officer and Lead Recruiter and Jenny Wilkins has agreed to continue as Disclosure & Barring Service Officer. Christopher Deeks is Disclosure & Barring Officer at St. Nicholas. All PCC members, Churchwardens and any others in positions of responsibility involving children and vulnerable adults will complete all necessary Diocesan Safeguarding training.

Proposed: Chris Hallett

Seconded: Nick Reynolds.

A vote of thanks to Irene, Jenny and Christopher.

Proposed: Chris Hallett

Seconded: Heather Argent.

All Agreed.

## 6. ST. GILES CENTRE

The plans for the Centre are with Bromley Planning Office.

## 7. ELECTIONS

PCC for St. Giles: Helen Roberts agreed to stand as PCC secretary and will be co-opted at the next PCC meeting.

Alfie Beston was nominated by The Rector and seconded by Andrew Bailey.

Proposed: Chris Hallett

Seconded: Nick Reynolds

PCC for St. Nicholas; Richard Butterworth

Proposed: Heather Argent

Seconded: Sue Simpson

Deanery Synod Representative.

After discussion of the merits of having only one representative, the Rector proposed that Chris Hallett be elected for the Parish.

Proposed: Chris Coyle

Seconded: Sheila Munns.

All agreed.

## 8. Appointments

(a) Sidespeople: All agreed to stand for another term.

(b) Independent Financial Examiner from Baxter & Co. is to continue as the Parish Independent Financial Examiner.

## 9. GOODBYES AND THANK YOUS.

Archdeacon Paul Wright was given a formal welcome to his ministry in the Parish.

Paul Beamiss was presented with a book and a bottle of beer to thank him for his services as Treasurer. He has agreed to stay on as a consultant and advisor.

Carol Fryer has agreed to be Hon Treasurer to be co-opted at the next PCC meeting.

Sheila Munns offered thanks to the Churchyard team for their work in the Orchard.

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## 11. TIME AND DATE OF THE NEXT AGM 2024

*tbc.*

## 12. Closing Prayers.

The meeting closed with a prayer at 5.10pm

## 3. MATTERS ARISING

## 4. REPORTS

### ELECTORAL ROLL Report (a)

The figure for the Electoral Roll stands at 396 (St. Giles - 338, St. Nicholas - 58). Our Electoral Roll membership continues to offer a solid base for the ongoing life of the Parish.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR  
THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2023 - Report (b)**

**ST. GILES THE ABBOT, FARNBOROUGH  
With ST. NICHOLAS, ORPINGTON**

**OBJECTIVES**

The Parochial Church Council (“PCC”) has the responsibility of co-operating with the incumbent, the Revd Matthew Hughes, in promoting in the ecclesiastical parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. It also has maintenance responsibilities for the Church Centre complexes of St. Giles at Church Road, Farnborough and St. Nicholas at Leamington Avenue, Orpington.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (“APCM”) in accordance with Church Representation Rules. Members of the PCC who served from 29 May 2022 until the date that this report was approved by the PCC were: -

**Ex-Officio:**

<u>Rector</u>	The Revd. Matthew Hughes	Chairman	
<u>Associate Rector</u>	The Revd. Stephen Broadie		
<u>Reader</u>	Mrs. Chris Hallett		
<u>Wardens</u>	Mr. Andrew Bailey	until APCM 2026	St Giles
	Miss Clare Couldridge	until ACPM 2024	St Nicholas
<u>Deputy Wardens</u>	Mr. Peter Russell	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mr. Philip Lovelock	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mrs. Janet Palmer	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mrs. Susan Rennie	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mrs. Sheila Munns	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Miss Sally Attwood	Not on PCC	St Giles
	Mr. Nicholas Jollife	until APCM 2024	St Nicholas

**Elected:**

<u>Hon. Secretary</u>			
<u>Hon. Treasurer</u>	Mr. Roger Allard		St. Nicholas
<u>Hon. Treasurer</u>	Mrs. Carol Fryer		
<u>Gift Aid Secretary</u>	Mrs. Carol Fryer		

**Members**

Mr. Stewart Hutson	until ACPM 2025	St Giles
Mrs. Gill Knapp	until ACPM 2025	St Giles
Mrs. Lynn Kelly	until ACPM 2025	St Giles
Mr. John Kelly	until ACPM 2025	St Giles

Mrs. Irene Dancer	until APCM 2024	St Giles
Mr. Richard Healey	until ACPM 2024	St Giles
Mrs. Carol Stokes	until ACPM 2024	St Giles
Mrs. Rosemary Fordyce	until ACPM 2025	St Nicholas
Mrs. Sue Simpson	until APCM 2024	St Nicholas

The United PCC met 2 during the year with an attendance of 68 per cent. In addition, the members representing St. Giles met 5 times (with an average attendance of 76 per cent) and those representing St. Nicholas met 6 times (average attendance 79.2 per cent).

## **COMMITTEES**

The PCC operates through a number of committees, which meet between meetings of the PCC:

- Standing & Finance Committee – this is the only committee required by law. It has the power to transact business of the PCC between PCC meetings, subject to any directions given by the PCC
- St. Giles' Fabric Group
- St. Giles' Churchyard Group
- Ad hoc groups.

## **CHURCH ATTENDANCES**

There were 390 names on the Church Electoral Roll for the parish as at 31st December 2023.

As a Parish, we are available at times of birth, marriage and death. In 2023, the Parish and its ministry were involved in the following occasional offices: -

14 Baptisms  
7 Weddings  
21 Funeral services held in church followed by burial in the churchyard or Cremation  
10 Funeral services held at a crematorium  
51 Burials of ashes.

## **FINANCIAL RESULTS**

Aggregated parish income for the year was £334,142 (2022-£342,275) and aggregated resources used were £295,336 (2022-£281,614). Net incoming resources amounted to £38,806 (2021-£60,661). St. Giles recorded net incoming resources of £33,198 (2022-£52,330) and St. Nicholas recorded net incoming resources of £5,608 (2022-£8,331).

## **RESERVES POLICY**

It is the PCC policy to maintain a balance on unrestricted funds (less fixed assets) which equates approximately to six months unrestricted expenditure. This was achieved as at 31st December 2023.



## THE CHURCHWARDENS' REPORTS Report (c)

### ST. GILES CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT INCLUDING CHURCHYARD REPORT

This is my second report for my second 'tour' as Churchwarden for St. Giles, something that I see as both a privilege and a great responsibility.

This has once more been another busy year at St. Giles with much of it dominated by the effects of the Parish recovering from the coronavirus pandemic. We are moving back to what I would call 'normal' activities, but are not quite there yet in 2023.

As Churchwarden I enjoy a good working relationship with Matthew. I believe that is part of my role to have a good relationship with the incumbent of St. Giles in order to advise and support him in the exercise of his ministry. The Churchwarden is there to bring to the Rector's attention any issues raised by the congregation, and to represent the interests of the Parish to him and the PCC. I enjoy working with Matthew and appreciate the mutually supporting roles that we share together.

In 2023 we once again had a full set of services across the whole year, as we get back to 'normal'. Again the parish observed the seasons of Lent and Easter. At Easter we held the usual services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday - both inside and outside the Church (where my brother once again was able to toast industrial quantities of hot-cross buns for the congregations in the Churchyard). We held the full set of services for Harvest, the Pets Blessing and Remembrance Sunday, with lots of flowers (courtesy of the Flower Ladies) and singing (courtesy of the Choir).

This year at Christmas we broke with tradition and had just the three Nativity services on Christmas Eve (compared to four in 2022). This appears to have worked well as we still have 'room in the inn' for everyone who wished to attend. Numbers in attendance were roughly the same as previous years, if not slightly up in some services. It also makes it easier to organise logistically. We also had the two Advent Carol services beforehand, the 'Midnight Mass' and the Epiphany Carol services in January.

2023 also saw several major 'highs', especially in celebrating the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III with a special Sung Evensong on Sunday 7th May 2023. For the occasion I thought the Parish did splendidly in the music, the flowers, and the way that we conducted the service.

In June we were finally able to have the dedication ceremony for the two bells that were installed back in 2021. The bells were dedicated by the Bishop of Tonbridge, the Rt. Revd. Simon Burton-Jones. Also attending the service was the Mayor of Bromley, Councillor Mike Botting.

We continue to enjoy a full calendar of Parish events. In April we had an organised Spring Coach trip to Brighton. The coach was full, and came back laden the fudge and rock. June saw the Parish Fete, which was very well attended like last year. Everybody enjoyed themselves (thanks in no small part to the small army of volunteers who helped organise it). We once more had a good range of individuals & organisation who contributed to the day to make it enjoyable for all. This is always an excellent opportunity where the wider Parish 'family' was able to get together and participate in an event outside the Church. The following month we had the Seaside Coach excursion to Broadstairs in July. The coach was full and once more I would like to thank Carol Fryer and her team in organising this and all the other events across the year.

In October we held our usual Churchyard Saturday Morning where members of the congregation of the Parish turn up with a whole array of gardening tools to scarify the grass, rake up the moss and seed the lawn. This year it was very well attended. In February we hosted a Deanery Synod in the St. Giles Centre, which was very well attended by people all across our local Deanery. This was the first time we have hosted such an event at St. Giles for a great many years. I am indebted to the team of helpers (Irene, Carol and Marilyn) who helped to make it all possible.

In terms of goods and ornaments we have purchased new items for both inside and outside the Church. We have obtained a pair of 'hoods' for the brass candle sticks on the altar. We also saw an upgrade to the Church's security system.

During 2023 we continued to undertake the rolling program of 'deep cleaning' within the Church. A common theme is checking on the use and distribution of storage space around the church, what is where and who is using it. This has been a recurring issue in previous years as we only have a finite resource in space, and we need to use it in the most efficient way.

In the Churchyard we have gained a new water tank, up by the South wall of the church. This has proved very useful in terms of watering the rose bed on the north side of the church.

I can report that all the Church's goods and ornaments are in a good state of repair.

Looking forward, the next major challenge will be the refurbishment of the St. Giles Centre. I am confident that we will rise to the challenge, and that eventually we'll have a decent place for us to use for parish meetings and activities.

I am always grateful for my fellow Churchwardens/Verger and their total commitment and support over the last year. We would not be able to do what we do without their efforts. I thank them for their time and for the kind support they have shown me. As Churchwardens you have to do lots of things behind the scenes which the congregation do not always see. However, I do have to say that being a Churchwarden is a most satisfying undertaking, and I have enjoyed being one in 2023 immensely.

***Andrew Bailey***  
***St. Giles Churchwarden***

### **ST. GILES CHURCHYARD REPORT AS PART OF THE CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT Report (c)**

We have continued our regular committee meetings over the last year to receive reports from Committee members regarding usage and maintenance of the Church and Churchyard, and discuss and action matters arising. We have welcomed two new and enthusiastic members to the work team in the last year, with an expression of interest from one other. We continue to welcome new members, and would be pleased to see new faces on a regular or occasional basis. I would like to thank our team of volunteers who turn out every Tuesday in all weathers and work very hard.

There is always something that needs our attention, either in the Church, the Centre, or the Churchyard. The boundary fencing to the Churchyard has been repaired, as have the compost bins. New signs and noticeboards have been constructed, painted and installed, and the War Memorial has had essential repairs to the pointing.

Unfortunately the Council have still to repair the flint wall by the lych-gate, which continues to slowly deteriorate. Approaches from members of the Committee received the standard response from the Council that they are still seeking a suitable price for the works. In June it will be four year years since it was first brought to their attention, and I fear this item will crop up again in next year's report.

Earlier in the year the Council decided to remove one of the waste bins adjacent to the Church car park, which has resulted in rubbish and bags of dog faeces being dumped on the ground beside the remaining bin. As well as being unsightly the smell is distressing to relatives visiting the Garden of Remembrance. The Council has been contacted in an effort to get the Council to remove the remaining bin and replace it with two bins sited on the public footpath in a position to be agreed.

The Church Fields area has become extremely popular with dog walkers, and this combined with the very muddy condition of the field has resulted in mud being carried into the Churchyard on the footpaths. Two new boot scrapers have been installed adjacent to the field gate to alleviate this problem.

The condition of the car park surface has deteriorated over the course of the past year, and a quotation of £4850 plus VAT has been obtained for it to be resurfaced. The works will hopefully be carried out over three days in April, and will carry a 10 year guarantee.

Nick Reynolds, one of our team and a Committee member, continues to be in charge of the burials of ashes, and digs the holes when he can. This results in saving the Church a significant sum of money. There were 74 burials of all types during the year to the end of December 2023. Of these 49 (66%) were in the Garden of Remembrance, the remaining 25 being in the graveyard. These totals are in line with long term yearly averages.

8 new adult graves were used which is the same as last year, but below the long term average of 12 per year. Approximately 258 adult grave spaces remain available excluding the area used for outdoor services. Based on long term annual usage this space should be sufficient for around 21 years. No new child graves were used.

Eddie Bellamy, another volunteer and Committee member, remains in charge of ordering the plaques for the Garden of Remembrance Memorial Wall. During the past year 43 new inscribed plaques have been ordered, as well as 18 new blanks, a slight increase on last year's totals of 31 and 12 respectively. 8 blanks were removed and replaced with incised plaques. We have space for 476 more plaques on the existing walls, with a yearly average of 46 this is enough for approximately 10 years and four months. Eddie has cleaned the plaques which are our responsibility.

PRO Landscapes have had their contract renewed for this year, the cost being £7,500 for 20 visits, March to November. The cost remains the same as last year. The contractors mow the grass, remove the rubbish, wood chip the paths, and cut some of the hedges. In February the local farmer kindly assisted by cutting the hedge bordering Church Fields.

***Martin Parsons***  
***Chairman Churchyard and Fabric Group***

## ST. NICHOLAS CHURCHWARDEN'S REPORT

It has been a very varied and interesting year with reasons to celebrate and a time of growth with Stephen away on sabbatical for three months. We celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III in various ways with cake and bubbly at the Sunday service the day after the event, along with a community lunch and our Messy Church celebrating in their own ways.

With Stephen away for the whole of the Summer we welcomed various clergy and speakers for which we were very grateful for them giving their time and giving us their various insights as we continued to maintain our numbers and welcomed Stephen back with everything as it was.

The Holiday Club which took place during this time was a great success and was enjoyed by both children and helpers alike. Messy Church continues to be enjoyed by its families, and even growing now that it has moved to a Sunday.

Community Larder and Warm Space continue to provide vital services to our community along with our new venture of Afternoon Teas on Mondays which provides companionship and a place for people to meet.

Our Spring and Autumn Fairs were, as always, successful, and at time of writing we are starting to prepare for this year's Spring Fair to which all are welcome.

St. Nicholas is a unique and welcoming place which all our visitors attest to. This is due to everyone playing their part. My thanks to everyone. My thanks as always to Stephen, Nick and the PCC for their support.

***Claire Couldridge***  
***St. Nicholas Churchwarden***

## THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2023, INCLUDING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR ST. GILES THE ABBOT AND ST. NICHOLAS

### **ST. GILES THE ABBOT**

In 2023, we finished with a surplus of £33,198. Our total income was £231,761 which exceeded our total expenditure of £198,563. We continue to maintain our position in what has proved to be difficult times. Income continues to comfortably exceed expenditure. St Giles is supported by a strong range of donors and sponsors, both small and large, including the hard-working volunteers whose work allows us to limit expenditure. Donations and legacies from the past continue to provide security against future costs and emergencies we may be unable to avoid.

### **Income**

General giving is down on last year; cost of living pressures along with increased energy costs will have had their effect. We are lucky to have a solid core of donors who have St Giles high on their giving list. Small and large donations are always gratefully received.

We have, however, seen an increase in giving via Gift Aid envelopes: £14,282 claimed in 2023 as opposed to £13,983 in 2022. We need to make sure that GA envelopes and pens are always available from the pews so we keep this momentum going. Even the smallest amount from a tax payer enables us to claim 25% of the donation directly from HMRC.

A low-key Stewardship campaign during the year resulted in a small increase in regular giving compensating for the loss of those who have found the current pressure on income difficult.

Income from letting the St Giles Centre is now very low; its size limits its suitability for many activities. The decision to renovate the Centre will allow a better standard of use for church activities and will allow us to offer the much needed and easily accessible toilet facilities to those using the Church. We are encouraging donations for the Centre renovation; dedicated envelopes with a GA option should help. This may, however, affect the amount of general giving.

The Summer Fete proved a great success and gives a focal point to the community aspect of St Giles. With continued support from sponsors and donors, as well as help from a hardy crew of volunteers, we raised £6,590. We are lucky to have so many people who are willing to give their time and energy to St Giles. Thanks to all those who supported us and came along and enjoyed the day.

Interest on funds held this year compared to last has started to increase, and this seems to be a continuing trend. As an example, funds with the Cambridge account (£80,000+) in 2022 earned £823.29 and in 2023 earned £1,911.71.

The Wentworth property, a product of a past legacy, produced a rental income of £19,920, reduced by expenses of £4,544. This income provides a much-needed buffer against the cost of living pressures we are seeing. The actual property itself offers St Giles financial security into the future. Although house prices are not increasing as steadily as previously seen, this is only a blip in a long term expectation.

We have seen a decrease in the number of funerals, which may be due to competition from other sources, but an increase in the number of burials of ashes. The number of weddings has also fallen, which seems to be part of a continuing trend. In 2024 we have to date 3 weddings, a blessing and a renewal of vows.

There has been an increase in the number of plaques, and this area continues to provide a steady income stream. Many people remark on the appearance of the Remembrance Garden, and the churchyard team of volunteers do a great job in its upkeep.

### **Expenditure**

We try to keep firm control over expenditure, but cost of living increases are hard to balance. We are lucky to have good financial support from many givers and donors and have appreciated specific donations for the purchase of prayer books and renovation of our noticeboards. Back up from the Friends of St Giles is always welcome.

Unfortunately, theft of a small amount of lead from the church roof involved us in a cost of £798 for its repair. Theft repellent will hopefully prevent any further damage.

The Diocesan share in 2023 was £67,948 as opposed to £66,028 in 2022. Our offer for 2024 being £70,600.

At the present time we have 3 choral scholarships, and 15 junior choristers who get paid depending on attendance. We are using the funds from the Tolman and Greenhalgh legacies to support this. A good deal of effort, including great leadership from our Choir Master has been put in to make the choir as good as it is. The support by the adult choir who are all volunteers is amazing.

Our church ministry has been re-enforced by the advent of Archdeacon (retired) Paul Wright, who has fitted in well and brings a lot of experience and support to St Giles.

Utility bills have continued to rise. We ended a fixed rate contract in mid-2023 so saw the start of an upturn. Business rates do not seem to be coming down yet.

#### Magazine fund

Advertising –	£1,507	£1,530 L/year
Hard copy –	£4,244	£5,045 L/year
Email -	£160	£350 L/year
Donations -	£140	£297 L/year
One off sales -	£373	£351 L/year
Total Income	£6,424	£7,573 L/year
Total Expenditure	£6,400	£6,818 L/year
Profit	£24	£755 L/year

Funds held: £11,054

#### Subscribers

2023 Hard copy /145 Email / 16 Postal / 18

2024 Hard copy /104 Email / 12 Postal / 10

In the past, the magazine has produced good profits and these are shown in the funds still held. We have a great editor, Gail Low, who continues to maintain the high standard of the Parish magazine.

Pressure on finances has resulted in fewer subscribers, and as a by-product fewer advertisers. Reduced circulation makes it difficult to increase our advertising. This results in higher monthly costs per magazine.

The delivery team help to keep postal costs to a minimum by hand delivering the magazine each month. Thanks to Paul Barnes, Lee Bellamy, Nick and Jenny Wilkins, Eddie and Helen Roberts.

If we regard the magazine as part of our outreach the existing fund will last a while longer. We do, however, need to increase the number of subscribers and we should try to find someone with time on their hands to do this.

#### **Flower fund**

Income	£4,397	£4,138 L/Year
Expenses	£3,348	£2,355 L/Year
Profit	£1,049	£1,783 L/Year

Funds held: £ 2,752

The flower fund remains self-funding. They have 2 fund raising projects per annum along with a variety of donations throughout the year. It is always nice to see the church beautifully decorated and thanks need to be given to our dedicated flower team.

## **Funds**

We have two types of funds: Designated which are allocated to certain areas but may be used for other purposes as needed and Restricted which are allocated by the donor or St Giles and may not be used for other purposes without permission.

We hold £211,809 (£204,978 L/year) in Designated funds to which for accounting purposes is added the Wentworth property at its initial valuation of £540,000. We hold £274,302 (£249,060 L/year) in restricted funds.

## **Conclusion**

The increase in the cost of living has affected both our income and our expenditure, but even so we have managed to hold a good position with income exceeding expenditure by a comfortable amount. Although funerals have reduced, the Remembrance Garden continues to provide a flow of income. Weddings have almost disappeared, probably due to pressures from other event providers and is unlikely to change.

During 2023 we raised a total of £4,408.05 for a variety of external charities.

We are lucky that we have loyal and generous supporters, both volunteers and donors.

The coming year is likely to be a hard one with increased pressure to keep expenditure under control. The fund raising for the centre renovation will go on and consideration will need to be given to finding other sources of funds for this purpose.

Thanks must go to:

Linda Crisp and Mary Compton as part of the Financial Team

Eddie Bellamy as administrator of the Memorial Wall fund

Liz Diamond as Parish Secretary

Adele Cooke for office administration

Pam Stacey as Planned Giving Envelope Scheme Secretary

Lee Bellamy as insurance administrator

Mark Auger for preparing the Parish accounts for audit

Chris Jones of Baxters, our Auditors

***Carol Fryer  
Hon. Treasurer, St. Giles***

## **ST. NICHOLAS**

The original 2023 St Nicholas budget had figures of income £86,700, expenditure £104500. The expenditure budget included Repair Fund contributions of £3750. Although these contributions are not expenditure, but a transfer between funds, I do show them as expenditure as a means to try and ensure that the contributions are actually made and the balances increase at least by that amount.

The original budget included a Pledged Offer of £45450 to the Diocese compared with the Indicative Offer of £55473. In view of our financial position we did not feel that we could make any contribution to the Wider Diocesan Mission in the Offer.

In view of the financial position it was decided to make no charity donations until the position at 31 December 2023 was known. The budget included Mission Charity giving of £3750 and a donation to Welcare of £650. If no donations were made that would reduce the budget deficit from £17800 to £13400.

By the end of the year the budget deficit had become a small surplus such that we felt able to give away £300 each to our three Mission Charities and £100 to Welcare, a total of £1000 compared with the £4400 in the budget. At least that was something if only less than 25% of the original budget figure.

There were increases across the board in the income budget headings with almost £4000 in general giving helped in part by the June appeal. Other significant increases were almost £6000 in Hall Lettings, £750 from the Parent and Toddler Group, £250 from Community Lunches, £400 from the Spring Fair, £350 from the Christmas Raffle, almost £1300 from higher interest rates and an insurance claim of £1100.

On the expenditure side expenditure came in under budget by some £4400, £3400 of which can be attributed to the reduced charity donations. The majority of expenditure heads finished the year close to budget with the most significant saving being almost £1000 on Church Hall Repairs and Maintenance.

Total net assets have increased by £5608 from £86766 at 31 December 2022 to £92374 at 31 December 2023. The Repair Funds balances have increased by £4500 to £43499 and General Reserves by £1108 to £48875. Total net assets at £92374 are still below the 31 December 2019 figure of £95926. The General Reserves figure of £48875 is broadly in line with parish policy of 50% of annual expenditure.

We start 2024 in a similar way to 2023 with an income budget of £94150 and an expenditure budget of £106700, a deficit of £12550. Our pledged offer to the Diocese is £44928, down from £45420 in 2023, reflecting that St Giles will be paying two thirds of the Benefice Cost rather than 50% as in previous years. We are again making no contribution to the Wider Diocesan Mission. The expenditure budget includes charity giving of £4400 which again will be dependent on the year end financial position. In 2024 there are no grants from the Diocese as in 2023 – Energy Support Grant £2528 and Warm Spaces Grant £290 – and salaries for our three employees will be some £2000 more than 2023 reflecting the increase in the London Living Wage.

The St Nicholas PCC will be considering the need for works at Church House, in particular replacement of the fascia and soffits and the fence which are not in a good state of repair. It is intended to finance this expenditure from the Repair Funds at the Diocese which should not therefore add to the estimated deficit.

We shall do well to be in surplus by the year end but I am hopeful that the budget deficit of £8150 (£12550 less the charity giving of £4400) is very much a worst case scenario.

***Roger Allard***  
***Hon Treasurer, St Nicholas***

## **5. SAFEGUARDING**

## **6. ST. GILES CENTRE** Redevelopment update.

## **7. ELECTIONS** **TWO MEMBERS FOR THE ST. GILES P.C.C.** **ONE MEMBER FOR THE ST. NICHOLAS P.C.C.**



## 8. APPOINTMENTS

### SIDESPERSIONS -

#### St. Giles:

Mrs. R. Arney, Miss S. Attwood, Mr. P. Barnes, Mrs. L. Barnes, Mrs. V. Clark, Mrs. M. Compton, Mrs. C. Coyle, Mr. M. Dancer, Mrs. I. Dancer, Reeves Family, Russell Family, Scarlett Family, Mrs. M. Sullivan, Mr. J. White.

#### St. Nicholas:

Mrs. C. Allen, Mrs. V. Blinks, Miss I. Broadie, Mrs. P. Butcher, Miss C. Couldridge, Mrs. S. Dixey, Mrs. M. Felstead, Mrs. R. Fordyce, Mrs. C. Gibbons, Mrs. M. Gillies, Mrs. L. Henniker, Mrs. J. Mason, Mrs. L. Matthews, Mrs. S. Simpson.

### INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINER

Acting under delegated powers (A.G.M. 2001) The P.C.C. appointed Mr. Christopher Jones, F.C.C.A., Baxter and Co. as independent examiner for the 2021 accounts.

The PCC recommends Mr. Jones's appointment for the year 2022 accounts and the A.G.M. is requested to approve this proposal.

## 9. GOODBYES AND THANK YOU'S.

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**To be notified at the beginning of the meeting.**

**Date and time of next A.G.M. 2025**

## ADDITIONAL REPORTS

### RECTOR'S REPORT

The past year has been another busy and eventful one at St. Giles as we have once again travelled through the church's year which is split into two halves. The first half from Advent to the Ascension tracks our Lord's life from his birth to his Ascension. The second half, from the Ascension to Advent Sunday focuses on a number of different festivals and occasions, such as Pentecost, Trinity, Harvest, All Souls and Remembrance. Experiencing the church's year through worship and prayer is at the heart of our Church's life. Regular reception of Holy Communion, learning and growing in our understanding of God's word, putting our faith into practice outside the church is all part of our Christian identity.

It is through our attendance at church that we are able to participate in the mystery which is the church's year and to find within it spiritual nourishment for our inner life and peace and hope amongst life's trials and sorrows. The amount of people who travel through the church year at St. Giles continues to fluctuate, sometimes our services are well supported and other times they are not. When I look out across our different congregations I am acutely aware of how much change there has been, old friends continue to depart from active worship and new people join. This reminds me that St. Giles is never static, it's an alive organism with many moving parts, a family made up of different generations and different memories. Each member is there to support the family in love and loyalty, acknowledging that members have different needs and contributions.

Despite the many years I have been at Farnborough it remains a great honour and privilege to be the Rector of this Benefice.

I would now like to focus on different areas of our church's life (in no order of priority), starting with the St Giles Centre.

## **ST. GILES CENTRE**

We have finally started to get things moving with the refurbishment of the Centre. The priority is to thoroughly refurbish the entire building and its immediate surroundings, so that it is safe, attractive and fit for use. Part of this will be the installation of a new modern toilet that will be of use to our church users. To date we do not have a price for this work, but I will let the church know just as soon as the PCC is in receipt of one. I am very grateful for all the contributions that we have received to date towards this work.

## **COLLEAGUES**

I want to begin by thanking my colleagues in ministry for their ongoing support of the life and mission of St. Giles and St. Nicholas. In particular it is so good to have the wise and experienced ministry of Paul Wright who in this past year has done much to encourage and inspire all of us in our Christian faith and discipleship.

## **CHURCHWARDENS**

We are so fortunate to have such an amazing group of Churchwardens at St. Giles and here I must thank our Parish Warden Andrew Bailey for his constant support and encouragement of both me, his fellow Wardens and our church community in general. We are so lucky to have Andrew in this post and to benefit from his hard work, wise counsel and almost endless reserves of patience and diligence for the big and small aspects of parish life. I do want to offer particular thanks and praise to our parish Verger Peter Russell who is so dependable and hard working. Peter has an important role to play in our ministry to bereaved families and those having their weddings with us. I am grateful for his careful and sensitive approach to these important occasions.

## **FINANCE TEAM**

Running church finances continues to be a very demanding and complex undertaking. The hours required to keep everything in good order is considerable and I am so grateful for our Finance Team at St. Giles and in particular our Treasurer, Carol Fryer. Carol's grasp of detail is considerable and our finances continue to be in a healthy place largely due to Carol's wise and intelligent management of our resources. Aim - to make sure that St. Giles' finances continue to be healthy and that we encourage a sense of regular giving amongst our congregation.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

St. Giles pastoral care continues to be of the highest quality. At the moment there are over 60 people who are largely housebound and in need of our care and concern. This is in addition to the many bereaved people who find comfort and support through our various bereavement groups. We can only do this through the outstanding contribution of all our Pastoral Assistants and Visitors and the excellent leadership that is provided by Heather Argent. Aim - to continue to offer support to all those in need so that St. Giles continues to be known as a kind and loving church.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

On behalf of all of us at St. Giles I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Irene Dancer and all our Sunday School teachers and those who work with our young people. It is wonderful to have so many young people involved in the life of our church and I am grateful that their participation is so carefully and thoroughly organised. Also I am very grateful to Irene for all the hard and complex work she does in the vital area of Safeguarding. Aim - to encourage more families into the life of our church and to help our young people grow in their knowledge and faith in the Lord Jesus.

## **CHOIR AND CHURCH MUSIC**

We are so fortunate at St. Giles to have the outstanding choir that we do. This is largely down to the dedicated and inspirational leadership of Ralph and the faithful and hardworking service of our organist, Clive. The addition of a number of Choral Scholars has greatly enhanced the capacity and quality of our choir and our choir continues to provide wonderful music across a wide range of services. I am so grateful to all our choir members and musicians for their hard work and commitment to this vital part of church life. Aim - to continue to attract new people to the choir and for the choir to grow in its musical ability

## **FABRIC TEAM**

So many people comment on our beautiful and well maintained church and churchyard. This is down to our Tuesday morning Churchyard team and the leadership of its chairman Martin Parsons, plus the hard work of our grass cutting contractors PRO. Thank you to all of them for the many hours of hard work that they put into keeping our church and grounds in top condition. Aim - to attract new members to the team and to continue to repair and improve the fabric of the church and churchyard

## **BELL RINGERS**

It is so lovely to hear our church bells calling people to worship on Sunday mornings and at other times, particularly when the sound rings out across Church Fields. All of this takes a considerable amount of skill, time and organisation. I am very grateful to all our bell ringers and to Nick Wilkins and Lesley Barclay for their hard work in creating and sustaining a flourishing bell ringing community at St. Giles. Aim - to attract new ringers and to build up the team we have in confidence and ability.

## **FLOWER ARRANGERS**

The flower arrangements at St. Giles, particularly at our major festivals, are quite stunning, reminding all of us of just how fortunate we are to have such wonderful teams of Flower Arrangers at St. Giles. Purchasing the flowers, collecting greenery, planning the arrangements and the people to make them takes huge amounts of time and labour and on behalf of all of us I want to say a sincere thank you to all our Team leaders and their team members for all their hard work. Aim - to attract new members.

## **MAGAZINE**

I am so grateful on behalf of our church and all subscribers for the excellent work that Gail Low is doing as our parish magazine editor. With the increased use of the internet as a means of communication the number of magazine subscribers is not as high as it was in former times. However, well over 150 people still subscribe and I am always proud to have such a high quality magazine to give to people who are interested in the life of our church. At this point I would also like to thank T&C Printers, our article writers, photographers and deliverers for all they do to make this publication possible.

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

A good social life is at the heart of parish life and I am very pleased that we have a good one at St. Giles. Whether its day trips to the seaside, barn dances, film nights, cream teas, refreshments after a service or the parish fete, on behalf of all of us a huge thank you to Carol Fryer and her team for the hard work that they put into this important part of parish life.

## **HIDDEN JOBS**

There are also many people who generously contribute to the life of St. Giles in other ways as well, some of which are not particularly high profile. I am grateful to our administrators, office manager, our sacristan and servers, Nick who runs our website, our intercessors, house group leaders, the cash counters, gift aid secretary and music librarians, those who look after the choir robes, PCC secretary, brass cleaners our church cleaners John and Lynn, those who organise our insurances and update the notice boards, even those who replenish the dog water bowls, those who open the church for the meters to be read, it all helps.

Please forgive me if I have forgotten to thank you. What you do is valuable and appreciated as well!

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The above contribution of so many of you is set against very difficult times for parishes across our country. Declining church attendance, an increase in the secularisation of society matched with a creeping indifference to Christianity and widespread cynicism to organised religion doesn't make church life and mission particularly easy. Despite all this St. Giles and St. Nicholas have much going for them and this is down to the outstanding and talented contribution of its members, past and present. I thank the ones we have now and I salute the ones who served in previous times. I would like to leave you with a slightly humorous and yet honest appraisal of the priest/parishioner relationship:

### *What do parishioners expect of their parish priest?*

- To care for them in times of need and to celebrate in times of joy
- To preach interesting sermons that are not too long or boring
- To preside at Holy Communion and the other sacraments with dignity and tradition
- To oversee a safe church for children and vulnerable adults
- To teach and explain the Christian faith and the Bible
- To oversee the upkeep of the church and its surrounds
- To motivate and inspire a large group of volunteers
- To make sure that the church is adequately resourced
- To plan for major festivals and services in advance
- To respond promptly to crises
- To lead the church in spiritual and numerical growth
- To pray and lead by example
- To remember everyone's names and to be always bright and cheerful
- To ensure church is warm in the winter.

### *What does a parish priest expect of his parishioners?*

- To attend church faithfully and regularly
- To pray and read the Bible
- To be nice and friendly to other people in the church and to newcomers
- To give regularly to the finances of the church
- To volunteer if possible for the necessary jobs that allow a church to function
- To read notices
- Not to complain too much if the church is unexpectedly cold
- To sing up. (as long as you are not tone deaf)
- To support the life of the church as best you can.

I hope that in our church most of these reciprocal expectations are somehow met, or at least enough of them. What the above lists do remind us is that ministry is a two way street and something that we have to be collaboratively involved with, so that the life of Christ can be faithfully and effectively proclaimed by St. Giles in its care for people, in its worship, and in the large and small details of its common life. Thank you to you all for your outstanding service in making this possible.

**Matthew Hughes**  
**Rector of Farnborough Benefice**

### ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT

I am very grateful to the Bishop of Rochester for authorising a period of 3 months Extended Ministerial Development Leave (EMDL) for me in 2023, between July and October. During this period I was able to look in more depth at the subject of 'The Holy Spirit and the Church'. This involved visits to the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tallinn, Estonia (a partner church with our diocese), Bethel Church in California, HTB in London and 2 cathedrals. It was inspiring to be able to visit other places of worship, and to see how different people experience the transcendence of God, from high production worship teams in mega churches, to the censing of the altar in cathedrals. I was struck how in each of these places 'the pursuit of excellence' could be seen in different ways, but also how ultimately the Holy Spirit is freely available for us all to encounter, wherever we worship. Thank you so much to everyone who kept things running so smoothly in my absence – particularly Claire as Church Warden, but also various clergy who covered in my absence including Paul Wright and Diana Coutts. I am also grateful to Diane Stiff who during that time ran a very successful holiday club and to Jayne Calvert, Andrew Chapman and the team for continuing to run and develop the Community Larder, setting up some key partnerships in my time away between the Larder and Gregg's Bakery, Open Kitchen on Charterhouse Road, and Sainsbury's.

Since my return I have continued to be encouraged by the number of children and young people at our church. For the second year in a row we were able to enjoy our Christmas services at the end of 2023 with unrestricted numbers once again, and it was good to welcome so many from the community into our building over that period. Recently we have been enjoying generally good attendance overall, on a recent Sunday seeing over 60 people attend our two morning services, which has been hugely encouraging for us here at St Nicholas.

We look forward to many of our usual activities taking place this year. By the time this meeting takes place we will have had our annual Passover Meal, and our Spring Fair on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. I am confident that both will go well and will continue to be opportunities to host many from our local community. We are also looking forward to having a celebratory Community Lunch during the Euros, and another holiday club this summer.

A recent development has been a Monday afternoon 'tea, cake and chat' in our main hall. I am very grateful to Val Richardson and her team for starting this initiative which has been well attended, and has provided a lovely welcoming space for people to gather and see old friends or make new ones. As well as signs of life and growth in our congregation, we have also been sad to say goodbye to a number of dear saints who have been part of our congregation for many years, including Iris Bavin, Doreen Hudson and Joyce Rackham. I am conscious of the faithful witness of this post-war generation who helped build and establish this church in the second half of the twentieth century, and carry it on into the new millennium. As we continue to pray that our surrounding community will be transformed by the presence of Christ among us, I know that we are building on the work of those who have gone before us.

As I think about all those who have served our church over the past year, I would like to express my thanks to Claire Couldridge as Church Warden, and to Nick Jolliffe for his faithful service as he steps down from his current role as Deputy Warden. I would also like to thank the PCC, and in particular Sue Simpson as she steps down from PCC after many years serving the church in different ways. Thank you also to Roger Allard, as treasurer, and Richard Butterworth as deputy treasurer. I must also thank the different Lay Ministers at St Nicholas: Diane Stiff, our Children's and Families' Worker and Pastoral Assistant, Ian Gillies, Reader with PTO, and Rosemary Fordyce, Pastoral Assistant with PTO. Thanks must also go to Jayne Calvert, for all she does with music, MU and the Community Larder and to Catherine Roffey our Church Administrator and Lettings Manager. Thank you also to Val Richardson and the tea and coffee team, to Jackie Mason, Margie Gillies and the flower team, and to all the many volunteers who make ministry at St Nicholas possible. I am blessed to be serving a church where I feel we can look forward with hope and expectation to see what work the Holy Spirit will do among us over the coming year.

***Stephen Broadie  
Associate Rector***

### **ST. GILES MUSIC**

Music at St. Giles continues to go from strength to strength. We now have around 40 very regular choir members and a dozen or so more who attend more occasionally. A particularly strong group of current choristers has meant that we have been able to sing increasingly ambitious repertoire as well as continuing to sing our long-standing favourites. As always, although it is the big set-piece services such as Nine Lessons & Carols that receive the loudest praise, it is the high quality and dedication in the regular weekly services that are most impressive and that support the ongoing worship of the Church. There are few parishes left where Choral Evensong is sung so often with such an extensive repertoire. If you haven't been to an Evensong recently, do come along - it is invariably an uplifting and spiritual service!

***Ralph Barlow  
Music Director***

### **ST. GILES FAMILY & CHILDREN'S WORKER**

Our various groups for children and young people continue to meet regularly thanks to the commitment of parents who bring them along and a team of volunteers who make it all work. Children and young people attend when they can. Our groups are: Lollipop Club for parents and carers with babies and toddlers. This group meets monthly and makes a poster for church.

Junior Sunday School meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 9.50am. Numbers on roll are fairly consistent and our topics this past year have included an Old Testament focus on 'Moses', 'God with us' a theme based on the fruits of the spirit, and 'A time for everything' teaching that God is a part of our everyday lives throughout time and place.

Senior Sunday School meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays at 9.50am. We study the lectionary bible readings for that week and present the learning through craft, encouraging personal interpretation and reflection. This group has struggled with numbers since September, falling prey to Sunday morning football and other activities now operating on Sunday mornings.

Youth Group meets for discussion, followed by a meal at the Rectory on a Sunday evening. We currently plan termly meetings.

At our Easter Workshop children prepare posters which are then the focus for the Good Friday Family Service held in the churchyard.

The Annual Celebration and Prizegiving Service is held in July every year and in 2023 the theme was 'Why bother coming to church?' A display of children's work undertaken throughout the year is exhibited. All children and young people who attend church are rewarded with either a book or small token of our appreciation.

Christmas Eve services are always well attended and this past year was no exception.

The Sunday school led service involved a Nativity treasure hunt with children searching for the characters that make up the Christmas story. On Christmas Day, children brought their presents to church to show the congregation.

This year we held a New Year party for Sunday school, which was well attended. There were games and party food and we all enjoyed dancing!

Holiday Club is a great opportunity for outreach in the parish and my thanks go to Diane Stiff and St Nicholas Church for arranging and hosting the annual Holiday Club which some of our children attend. I am pleased to be involved with this, leading one of the groups, usually involving paint!

Thank you to everyone involved in these activities and groups... parents, grandparents, carers, and all volunteers.

***Irene Dancer***  
***St. Giles Family & Children's Worker***

### ST. GILES SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Church of England Safeguarding Policy states that "Safeguarding is at the heart of our Christian faith.... Safeguarding means the action the church takes to promote a safer culture in all our churches..... The church will take appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all."

As an aid to ensure that appropriate actions are taken, I have adopted an online tool known as the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard. This gives me prompts in each area of safeguarding to assess our compliance against. This year the focus has been on ensuring that regular hall hirers either have their own safeguarding policy or adopt our one. This has been accomplished in both churches. Another focus has been on training for all role holders, over and beyond those who specifically work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. The church sees anyone with a regular commitment to a church grouping (e.g. choir, bell ringers) as a role holder and requires them to complete basic training. At the time of writing some progress is being made in meeting this target.

I am required to report annually to the church AGM that our churches have adopted the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy and Practice Guidance. I also report that all church groups have been approved by the relevant PCCs.

Our own Parish Safeguarding Policy is updated regularly and approved by PCC's. Copies are located in both churches, in St Giles Centre and on the parish website.

As Lead Recruiter I am delighted to say that all those who are required to have DBS check (including a police check) have done so. Both churches are up to date with this requirement. My thank to Jenny Wilkins at St Giles and Chris Deeks at St Nicholas for their help in achieving this.

A positive safeguarding culture is integral to the smooth and safe running of all institutions. The church, however, has a special responsibility as we are disciples of the Gospel of Christ. While policies and guidance are important, it is the actions we take to implement those policies and the positive relationships we build with one another that ensure such a culture is present in our churches.

***Irene Dancer***  
***Parish Safeguarding Officer/Lead Recruiter***

## ST. GILES FLOWER ARRANGERS REPORT

### **2022-23**

Mothering Sunday posies, Easter, Harvest and Christmas displays were achieved and also a successful King's Coronation display in May.

### **Organisation**

There are approximately four meetings during the year with Matthew when we discuss previous events and advise on future commitments.

We now have four teams up and running with a new team 2 in place led by Julie Ray to whom we are all very grateful for taking on this role.

Lynn Taylor continues to deal with all bookings for the Book of Remembrance and other requests and Elizabeth Harriss-Orr with wedding bookings.

We are ALWAYS grateful for new volunteers and would like to appeal especially for someone to take on the role of Treasurer as Alison Reynolds will be relinquishing this role at the end of the calendar year after many stalwart years in the post.

### **Donations**

We continue to receive regular donations from the congregation for the main flower festivals and requests for Book of Remembrance, window arrangements and occasional pedestals.

### **Costs**

The cost of fresh flowers varies from week to week. For main festivals and weddings we use wholesale suppliers. We use supermarket flowers most weeks and/or local florist for some occasions. We are lucky that our members bring fresh foliage from their gardens each week and at festivals.

### **Pricing for 2024/25**

The budget for weekly flowers and festivals remains the same this year despite costs increasing with the rise in the cost of living. To keep the budget within our means on ordinary weeks we only arrange a minimum of arrangements i.e. two church windows, pedestal, book of remembrance and porch. A budget for each festival is agreed in advance with Matthew.

### **Contact Details**

Our details remain available via the church website and church magazine although we will no longer be listing names of individual team members each month in the magazine. Photos of the main festivals are included in both the magazine and on the church website.

### **Next Events**

Following the cost Easter Festival in March 2024 the next planned event will be our Harvest Festival in October.

***St. Giles Flower Arrangers***



## ST. GILES BELLRINGERS

2023 was a better year than the immediately preceding years as Covid restrictions were largely removed.

The bells have been rung most Sunday mornings prior to the Family Service as long as there has been a competent person to take charge. Additionally, the bells are rung for practices approximately every other Monday evening, on most Tuesdays from 11.00am, for weddings and funerals upon request and occasionally by visiting bands by arrangement.

Twenty seven quarter peals were rung in 2023 (24 in 2022), and nine peals (6 in 2022).

On Saturday 6th May ten local ringers rang in celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III and on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June the Rt Revd Simon Burton-Jones came to Farnborough to dedicate the two new bells (treble and tenor) installed in 2021.

Following the sale of the redundant clock bell a radar controlled electromagnetic hammer to strike the hours on the big and sonorous G&J bell has been installed.

A plaque recording the 2021 augmentation and naming major donors has been provided by Taylor's of Loughborough and awaits fixing to the ringing chamber wall once the weights board has been delivered as these should be situated close to each other and read together.

Taylor's have returned to carry out some snagging works although a permanent solution to the double clapping of the treble is still outstanding, probably to be achieved by a new, heavier clapper.

In order to maintain a healthy band of ringers and replace those no longer ringing it is necessary to recruit and teach new ringers and this was not possible during Covid. This is now being done at times convenient to the new recruits mainly before or during the Monday evening practices.

Sadly in December one of our band, Anne Taylor, died and several of the local ringers attended her funeral at Chelsfield.

Finally, thanks go to the members of the band that turn up regularly to ring.

***Nick Wilkins***

## ST. GILES SOCIAL COMMITTEE

One of the main reasons to provide social events is to bring together people who attend St. Giles and open our doors to the larger community of Farnborough.

Throughout the year we try to put on refreshments after services. This can diminish during the winter when it gets too cold for the volunteers to stand outside serving tea and coffee; and standing in the rain is just not on. During the summer, we try to do this a couple of times a month, with cakes and biscuits. Mother's Day seems to be the first of the year's regular refreshments days. Many people linger for a drink and a chat; keys for the Centre toilet are always to hand.

Refreshments are always served after the Thursday service, and all are welcome. Thanks to all those who regularly help: Marilyn Reeves, Carole White, Sheila Munns. Sue Rennie

After the evening services we offer wine, juice and snacks: an opportunity to hear our wonderful choir. This is increasingly popular when warmer weather encourages people out.

Coach trips are always well supported, and we have seen an increase in people coming who do not come to church on a regular basis, so we are seeing more of the local community. The year starts with a trip to Brighton in April, followed by our annual trip to Broadstairs in July. A full coach and lovely weather; some people swim. A visit to the Winchester Christmas ends the year.

The annual Fete in June is always well attended. It also proves to be the biggest fund raiser of the year. It takes a lot of work, but it's well worth it, and this year we raised £6,590. The pressure was eased by the generous sponsorship beforehand of the costs of setting up this event. The fete has changed over the years and now has a Garden Party atmosphere, with lots of tables and chairs encouraging people to sit and enjoy the great food, a wonderful glass of Pimms and the really excellent entertainment.

Our Farnborough May Queen opened the fete, and she and her attendants gave a lovely display of maypole dancing. The Sevenoaks and Tonbridge band provide great music, and the Punch & Judy is always popular, as is the singing from the enthusiastic Rock Choir and the violin playing of Matthew English. Students from Dance Off studio put on a great display. And we didn't run out of Pimms this year.

So many people help at this event that it is almost impossible to list everyone, so erring on the side of caution, I can only say that this event would not take place without the unstinting help of sponsors, donors, entertainers and volunteers.

Planning is already under way for this year's fete on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June, so put the date in your diary. Look out for the requests for prizes, gazebos and help. Fingers crossed for good weather.

Harvest Supper incorporates a Barn Dance, with the Ian Petrie band providing the music and the calling; an opportunity to join in or just watch the antics of the dancers. We serve a two course meal which always goes down well. This is always a real family affair.

The year finishes with the refreshments in the Village Hall after the Nine Lessons & Carols service. Mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine for everyone to wish each other a Happy Christmas.

These events bring us together as a community, and we encourage those outside of the congregation to participate. Willing volunteers are the one key to successful social activities and we always seem to get the support we need, but of course we are always in need of more. So, a very big thank you to all those who give their time and energy to making these events work.

The other key to great social events is participants. We need your support; come along to events when you can, bring your family and friends; if you can't get there, please sponsor or donate. If you have the energy, get involved and help out.

***Carol Fryer***

## ST. NICHOLAS FAMILY & CHILDREN'S WORKER

### **ST NICHOLAS TODDLER GROUP**

The St Nicholas Toddler Group meets on Wednesday mornings during term time. Each week about 40 toddlers plus their mums, dads and carers come along. A variety of toys are available and there is a craft or messy play activity for the adults to do with their children each week. The morning finishes with a story and song time. Every half term we do a Bible story with associated craft.

### **KIDS CLUB AT ST NICHOLAS**

KIDS CLUB takes place on Sunday mornings during the church service. It is for children from about 3 years old upwards and we divide into groups for age appropriate activities that include a Bible story songs, prayer and craft. The older group, Ignite, (school year 6+) is led by Isabel Broadie. In Summer 2023 term we looked at the resurrection accounts and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the autumn we looked at the life of Joseph, of multi coloured coat fame, and found out that God is always with us. This term we have been looking at Jewish Biblical Feasts, the fact that Jesus celebrated them and how they relate to our faith today. The children and teenagers were involved again in the Christingle service, the title of the play this time being 'No Room', the 'camel' stole the show!

### **JUST BABIES**

Just Babies takes place in the Mother and Baby room at St Nicholas on a Tuesday afternoon and is for mothers and their babies, up to crawling age. It provides an opportunity for mums to develop friendships and to chat over a cup of tea in an informal and friendly atmosphere. Currently we have about 6 little ones that come along each week with their mum.

### **MESSY CHURCH**

During 2023 Messy Church took place monthly on a Friday afternoon after school. We have had about 30 people at each session. Children and their parents come together to play games and do craft activities which are linked to a Bible story. The themes during 2023 have included some parables such as The Prodigal Son; Hidden Treasure; The ten Bridesmaids and the Bigger barns. This year we have started having Messy Church monthly on a Sunday afternoon, the numbers have stayed about the same but we have some different families coming along. We have done sessions on Creation, Noah and Jonah so far this year.

### **LIGHT AND BRIGHT and EASTER ACTIVITY MORNING**

These events are open to all in the community and are very popular. They provide opportunities to build up relationships with people and to share the good news of Jesus through games and crafts.

### **HOLIDAY CLUB**

The children's holiday club took place last August. It was called 'The Restoration Station' and we found out that God has the power to heal and restore people by looking at Bible stories such as an official's son being healed, a lame man being able to walk again, and a blind man receiving his sight. Over the course of the week the children had the opportunity to do a variety of crafts which included decorating stones, making clay pots, painting, woodwork, making biscuits and decorating sun catchers. They also learnt some first aid. We decorated the letters of our memory verse which we hung up in the church - 'Anyone who belongs to Jesus has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!' *2 Corinthians 5:17.*

I would like to thank all who help with the children and family activities at St Nicholas.

***Diane Stiff***

***Family and Children's worker St. Nicholas***

## MOTHERS' UNION

Another year has gone by, and Mothers Union is still thriving in the parish of Farnborough!

As last year, our monthly Monday evening meetings have again been held by zoom, so, with the dark winter evenings, it has meant that no one has had to venture out into the cold to meet one another in person. Another positive thing is that zoom meetings have enabled members from other branches, both near and far, to join in these Evening Prayers by zoom. Sharing faith and fellowship through prayer is very important to us all and underpins all the work we do in Christ 's name together.

We have 30 members in the group and enrolled the latest 2 in December during a Family Service at St. Nicholas Church.

We follow the Church's year, and most of the prayers are taken from The Mothers' Union website, an excellent resource to share together. This present month of March has been all about inspiring women. The reflection says:

'Inspiring women appear in our lives in many guises. like Martha, some are busy serving, whereas others like Mary, relish being present in the moment. Both were inspired by Jesus, and in turn are inspiring models to follow. Like them, we each have different traits and personalities. But whatever our individual qualities we are all equally valued and loved by God. And whether we are a 'doer 'or a' thinker'(or maybe a mixture of both) God can, and does use us as a light to inspire others. Let's save that thought!'

In December we again held our zoom service supporting the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence entitled, "No More 1 in 3 ", and lit candles to show solidarity with our friends who have sadly been affected, both in the UK and overseas. Many suffer in silence and are undetected in their wider community. Mothers' Union joins each year with other organisations from approximately 187 countries who participate in this campaign to raise awareness of, and call for, an end to gender- based violence in all forms and in all societies. Last November, several MU members from Rochester diocese gathered in solidarity outside Rochester cathedral with other organisations during the 16 days of activism, which runs from 25th November to 9th December.

In 1876, Mary Sumner, a clergyman's wife from Old Alresford, near Winchester, founded Mothers' Union, which started from hosting a small home- group meeting in the vicarage to support young mothers in the parish where her husband George was the local vicar. In those days it was very unusual for women to start up any group, and even more unusual that Mary Sumner reached out to all the women in the parish, irrespective of their class. Almost 150 years later, our beliefs and goals are still very relevant today. There are over 4 million Christian members in 84 countries in the world who belong to Mothers' Union.

Like many other charities, Mothers' Union has suffered again this past year through lack of fund raising, however our group is currently participating in this year's **Make a Mother's Day** campaign. The 2024 theme is entitled, "Give the gift of DIGNITY this Mothering Sunday." Our gifts of dignity are gifts you can give that will empower women and girls around the world- giving them their voices, rights, and helping to turn the tide on gender inequality. By choosing an ethical gift, we can make a difference for mothers and their families through the groundbreaking work Mothers' Union does at home and overseas. We are formidable strength when we pull together, and there are so many ways we can support girls and women to hold their heads high with dignity.

Here in Farnborough parish, we are still supporting our AFIA scheme, the 'Away From It All' project, which is a scheme funded by Mothers' Union members to help people who would not otherwise have a holiday or day trip. A short break can give families the space and time to create positive memories, build relationships and strengthen family bonds.

Two of our MU members, Jocelyn and Kate, are the Rochester Diocesan representatives for AFIA.

Last year, 4 families had a holiday through AFIA, where they made wonderful memories together.

This year, Farnborough Branch has got involved with the Prison Project, at Rochester men's prison.

We were asked to give prisoners filled toiletries bags for when they were released from prison. We were able to provide 10 bags, which were very gratefully received, and we are hoping to be able to provide more in the future.

We have also provided prisoners with rucksacks which, again, were given to prisoners on their release from prison. These 2 gifts of love help to make them feel loved and valued, whatever their crime.

Our Thursday afternoon meetings continue in person each month at St. Nicholas Church, where we sometimes have speakers, join in reflective services, or meet for prayer and fellowship with refreshments. In January, 14 of us enjoyed a New Year meal out together at Polhill Toby Carvery.

We are very pleased to be back worshipping at St. Giles Church once a month for the Thursday morning 10am Communion Service.

Many of our members continue to knit colourful squares, which are then sewn up into blankets, and distributed to people in need. Again, this past year, several baby cot blankets have been given to SCBU at the PRUH, along with cardigans, hats, booties, canula mitts for the pre- term and sickly babies needing care there.

If you are interested in hearing more about the Mothers' Union, or joining our Farnborough branch, contact Jayne Calvert on 07780664340 or by e mail at [jayne\\_calvert@hotmail.com](mailto:jayne_calvert@hotmail.com)

***Jayne Calvert***

## HOUSE GROUPS

### **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

The group meets Thursday evenings, fortnightly, with a summer break in August and short breaks at Christmas and Easter. Meetings are on-line utilizing the Zoom meeting service. Group members are regular church attendees from both St. Giles and St. Nicholas.

Over the last 12 months we have covered studies on:

- The Lord's Prayer
- The 2023 St Giles' Lent Course
- The Twelve Disciples
- A Christmas bring and share special
- For Lent 2024 we are currently undertaking a course of studies entitled A Passion for Christ.

Whilst not planned specifically, the studies on prayer and then discipleship proved to be complimentary, fitted well with the dynamics of the group and was effective at bringing an understanding to the group of the importance of both in our Christian lives.

The group has nine regular members. We are happy to welcome new members who may be looking to join a group.

**Andrew Chapman**

### ST. GILES WEBSITE

#### **FARNBOROUGH PARISH WEBSITE:**

[www.farnborough-kent-parish.org.uk](http://www.farnborough-kent-parish.org.uk)

The website has continued to provide information to parishioners and others about our Church, its history, and events both past and upcoming.

As well as the regular services and events taking place during the year the website, this year noted the special evensong to celebrate the coronation of the new king, and posted many photos taken at our fete and garden party in June.

The website has around 100 pages, although this fluctuates during the year. Usage is slightly up compared to the year, before, however a full comparison was not possible as we changed hosting contract during 2022. There are around 1400 visitors per month, with an average of 3.5 pages viewed per visit. The busiest months were July and December.

#### **FARNBOROUGH VILLAGE HISTORY WEBSITE**

[www.farnborough-kent-village.org.uk](http://www.farnborough-kent-village.org.uk)

Additions this year have included the history of Darrick Wood House, The Suffragette of Green Street Green, Amelia Dolding and the Workhouse, and more articles about early transport, as well as more childhood memories from John Riches, and an account of early Parish history written by the late Peter Bailey.

The site now contains over 120 pages, which makes it larger than the St. Giles website. The number of visitors is growing steadily year on year, and is now similar to the St. Giles site, although they spend less time on the site at each visit.

Some pages from the website have been used in modified form to create articles for the Parish magazine.

**Nick Reynolds**  
***nickrstgiles@gmail.com***

### FRIENDS OF ST. GILES

The Friends of St. Giles is composed of Church members, villagers and those who have moved away. We support the Church in any way we can. This year we have supported the cost of the tuning of the organ and the refurbishing of the Noticeboards.

Our fund-raising this year was a Quiz organised by The Woodman pub. It was a very happy evening and we raised £394 after expenses.

The Committee meets regularly both in person and sometimes we use Zoom in order to keep in touch with our financial advisor. We thank the Committee, and particularly Roger Allard our Treasurer and Sue Ellis our Secretary. Our AGM was held in the Church as usual.

We lost one of our long time supporters this year. Eileen Seed was a wonderful supporter of all our fund-raising activities.

The 250 Club thrives. If you would like to be a member, it costs £12 per year and details are available from Sue Ellise on 07715 860504.

**Julia Hoadley, Chairman**

## PARISH MAGAZINE

I have been editor of the FPM for a year now, during which time I have found my feet slowly in the art of editing such a publication. I am very grateful for the support I have received from both Eddie and Helen Roberts in showing me the way. I was very pleased that the FPM came ninth in the National Parish Magazine awards, so I must see if I can beat that in 2024.

Following a lot of effort from Gill Knapp last year, contacting old and prospective new advertisers, we seem now to have settled with more regular advertisers.

In relation to subscribers, to date in 2024, we have 135 (121 who receive hard copies and 14 by email). I am very grateful to the willing volunteers who deliver the magazines and to Paul who looks after the emailed ones. Hopefully, these numbers will pick up as the year goes on as we have dropped since last year when our numbers were 162 (145 hard copies and 17 email copies). This in turn was a drop from 2022 when we had 184 subscribers in total (145 hard copies and 39 email copies).

I would like to think that we could build back up to the 2022 level of subscribers in time, but I think that is reliant on the magazine remaining relevant to its readers, as even the digital subscribers have dropped significantly. I am very grateful to the regulars who provide interesting articles for the magazine, without whom I'd be struggling, but It would be lovely if the congregation of St Nicholas could provide articles as well. This hopefully might increase the reach of the magazine when people see articles written by members of their congregation. I'm sure some of the articles have brought back memories to people and it would be lovely for me to be able to print some responses.

Here's hoping for 2024!

*Gail Low, Editor*

## 9. CLOSING PRAYER

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**