



# **St Thomas with St Stephen**

**Parochial Church Council of  
ST THOMAS WITH ST STEPHEN  
TELFORD PARK**

**Annual Report  
2023 on 2022**



## **Church Membership**

There are now 153 members of the Church Electoral Roll. There were 147 in 2022.

## **PCC Membership**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC

**Clergy** Revd. Sue Cooke

**Churchwardens** Jenny Cairns  
Linda Long  
Glenn Bee (ended 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022)

**Reader Rep** Glenn Bee

**Deanery Synod  
Reps (2020)** Chido Haasanen  
Margaret Hedley

**Elected Members** **First Elected 2022**  
James Lee  
Cynthia McKenzie  
Sophie Vening

**First Elected 2021**  
Tiffany Watts  
Penny Church

**Elected 2021 (3yr Term)**  
Oliver Huggins (Treasurer)  
Simon Hemsley (Deputy Treasurer)

**Co-Opted** Emma Sullivan (Secretary)

**Vicar** Revd. Sue Cooke

**Youth Minister** Sam Baker

**Youth Minister in Training** Sam Ewins

**Children & Families Minister** Sue Musgrave and Camilla Simpson

**Caretaker** Nicholas Amponfi

<b>Parish Administrators</b>	Sarah Bee (finished 6/9/22), Roberta Cuppone (finished 24/11/22), Cynthia McKenzie
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Rachel Stokes
<b>Bookings &amp; Facilities Coordinator</b>	Rebecca Midwinter (finished 30/6/22), Lisa Latimer
<b>Readers</b>	Glenn Bee, Mike Hayes, Helen White

## **Vicar's Report**

*Sue Cooke*

### **Thank you!**

To all who have given so freely and generously of their time throughout the year. It was good to finally be able to increase our ministries post Covid restrictions and begin to gather together on more social occasions. I am very grateful to all those who regularly volunteer their time every week and serve us all in so many unseen ways.

In 2022 we said farewell and thank you to Glenn Bee after many faithful years' service as a churchwarden and we welcomed Linda Long as our new warden. A huge thanks must go to all our wardens for the many hours they commit to the role and for the support and advice they give me as we share the leadership on the church.

Particular thanks this year to the staff team who have adapted to so many changes in personnel over the year and to the PCC who have been faithful and prayerful through a long year with some difficult discussions and decisions.

### **Highlights**

- I began the year being licensed as Vicar of STwSS after spending my first year as Priest in Charge, it was a lovely occasion even if we still could not have a big meal afterwards.
- Launching our new MAP and vision plan in January after our vision day late 2021.
- Our All In Café Style Mothering Sunday service – who knew what a talented group you are and what beautiful flowers you could all make.
- Welcoming so many new children into our church family and being able to do Baptisms and Thanksgiving services, these really are a highlight of my role.
- Setting up and running a new Homegroup, gathering each week to talk about faith and share and pray together is such a joy.
- Our confirmation service with Bishop Richard was wonderful and so encouraging to hear so many wonderful testimonies of how God has been working in people's lives, especially the young people.

- Following 100 Days with Jesus and having Robing Gamble come and speak to us on the final week.
- Seeing The Hive open, having this space for members of our church and community to come together is brilliant.
- Having Judith come and bring such joy as a placement student over the summer.
- Leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and being joined by some members of STwSS on that journey.
- Seeing growth within our church community and welcoming new members.
- Welcoming Nick, Lisa and Cynthia to our staff team.
- I think for some seeing me dress up as an orange at the Christingle service will have been a highlight!

There were also challenges during the year, we began the year still with some concerns around covid and what was possible, but that eased in the early months. Leading the church through the FOSS process felt weighty and included some difficult conversations, many hours of meetings and a lot of prayer. Finances remained tight and the response to our Giving Day was less than we might have hoped for in terms of increases in regular givers, regular giving and one offs, but we thank God for what He provided and what we were able to achieve. One of the greatest privileges of this role, but also one of the hardest is walking alongside people in times of illness and crisis and there was a lot of this in 2022. The year ending with the untimely death of Isie Lancaster was a very sad time for us all.

God remains our constant source of strength and joy and I continue to pray that together we shall know His love, joy, peace and guidance in all our lives.

## **PCC Report**

*Sue Cooke*

The PCC met 8 times during the year, with the main focuses being:

- **Staffing** – we had several staffing changes during 2022 and were sorry to say goodbye to Sarah Bee as Administrator and Rebecca Midwinter as our Buildings Coordinator. Sue Musgrave finished as our Interim Children's Minister, only to return after six months and Camilla Simpson joined us for the period April to December 2022 as our Children and Families Minister. PCC agreed to a new administration staff structure and we were able to implement that during the year

- **St Stephen's** – the biggest challenge and PCC item in 2022 was St Stephen's and the increasing need to act in response to the Quinquennial, the boiler service and the increasing list of works. The PCC gave a significant amount of time during the year to discussing all of our different options and beginning the process that concluded in 2023 with the decision to sell the site. We are very grateful to the majority of the hirers of St Stephen's who were so gracious and understanding in their response to the news, particularly the two preschools who were heavily impacted by the decisions we had to make. The PCC also spent a lot of time discussing a settlement with The Weir Link for the early ending of their license of St Stephen's. This process concluded in 2023 with a settlement figure of £25k.
- **Buildings** – aside from St Stephen's the PCC were also able to agree on various works being done across both sites, with the two major projects being the lighting and the wooden flooring at St Thomas'.

### **Challenges Ahead**

- Much time in 2023 will still need to be given over to the sale of St Stephen's, the closing of the building and the moving of the staff offices to St Thomas' on a temporary basis.
- Our giving as a church does not at the moment cover our costs in terms of ministry and mission and we have to rely on buildings income and our small reserves. We have a large deficit forecast for 2023. Although we will have income from the sale of St Stephen's we still need to increase our regular giving.
- Making good and wise decisions about how to invest, allocate and spend the proceeds of the sale of St Stephen's.
- Recruiting a Children and Families Minister, we are very grateful to Sue Musgrave who has stepped back into the role on a temporary basis, but subject to finances we hope to recruit a full-time member of staff in 2023.
- Working together as a church to increase focus our mission activities and increase our connection with and impact on our local community.

### **Warden's Report**

*Jenny Cairns & Linda Long*

Wikipedia describes Churchwardens as having a duty to represent the laity i.e. church members, and to co-operate with the Incumbent (Reverend Sue Cooke). It goes on to say wardens are expected to lead the parishioners by setting a good example and encouraging unity and peace. We are working hard to do our best on this one, but feed-back is always welcome!

At STwSS one of the Churchwardens' key roles, along-side supporting our vicar Sue Cooke and meeting with her regularly, is to oversee the buildings and contents. This is done in collaboration and with the support of the PCC and staff team. Churchwardens are also ex officio members of the PCC and submit a number of annual returns to the Diocese to keep them updated on how STwSS is doing in terms of attendance numbers along with submitting information on finances and other records e.g. marriages, baptisms etc.

In 2022 Glenn Bee stepped down after 7 years of serving as Churchwarden and Linda Long stepped up to the role, along with Jenny Cairns. This year is Jenny's last as Churchwarden, she will be stepping down after 6 years' service at the APCM in March. Please talk to Jenny or Linda if this is a role that you feel God might be calling you to, and you would like to know more about what is involved.

We are very grateful that Covid Restrictions are over and we have been able to return more or less to 'normal', in terms of services and activities. However, the maintenance of the St Thomas and St Stephen buildings has presented some real challenges, even though this year we have been well supported by Lisa Latimer and Nicholas Amponfi in the care of the buildings.

Work at St Thomas has included the re-polishing of the wooden floor and the replacement of (a lot of) lightbulbs, the removal of a diseased tree and repairs as a result of storm damage to a window and pergola. It has also been a year of particularly difficult decision making over the future of St Stephen's, as information over the ownership of the building and extent of works required was revealed. In addition to the identification of the need for a wide range of building fabric upgrades, replacements and renewals, St Stephen's has been beset by boiler problems and structural issues. As a result, much time has been given to considering the best plan for its future. God has been very good in providing an excellent staff team during 2022. We are particularly thankful that the Hive has opened in the café space and that this area can now welcome members of our local community on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Statistics for Mission, submitted by the Churchwardens to the Diocese of Southwark in January, show that our church is growing in numbers and we are grateful to God in His answer to our mission prayer and for the provision of Rev Sue who has led us so well over the past year.

In 2023 please pray for the Churchwardens and particularly for wisdom and clarity over the future of St Stephen's.

## **Safeguarding Report**

*Rachel Stokes*

Safeguarding continues to be an important part of all that we do at STWSS. We want to ensure that everybody who participates in services and events organised or hosted by the church is safe. Furthermore, we aim to empower us all to be able to support those who have suffered abuse and recognise and challenge abusive behaviour.

Highlights of the year have included hosting two safeguarding evenings at St Thomas' church for members of the congregations and people in the local area focusing on domestic abuse and modern day slavery. These were well attended and very informative. The main challenges for the year have been working out what we need to have in place to ensure that we are keeping vulnerable users safe as the church engages on new endeavours.

We are nearly up to speed on checks and trainings of current staff, ministry leads and volunteers, so we're keen to encourage more volunteers into ministry areas.

Please pray for the safeguarding team, Penny, Tiffany and Rachel, that we can continue to work together productively with other ministries in the church with the aim of providing places of sanctuary for all who we encounter.

## **Sunday Children's Work**

*Sue Musgrave*

### **Highlights**

Working with the children in Mini Church and Kids Church is always a joy. Opening the eyes and hearts of children to the wonders of God and his word is a privilege.

Working with a team of volunteers who have a real heart for the children and their spiritual knowledge and development.

Seeing the regular group of children grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's word.

Special services e.g. Mothering Sunday, Crib service where families are together and children take part in the whole worship service of the church.

The start of a monthly 'All In' service which gives scope to do something different each time.

### **Challenges**

To have enough volunteers to run the team and keep everyone's slot to once a month.  
To retain the children (and families) of those who come for a few weeks and then stop.



## **To pray for**

The All-In services to be a joy for the whole range of the church

A growing keen and committed team of volunteers

Those who seem keen then drop off coming; to make church a regular feature of their Sundays.

Children to come to a living relationship with Christ, and to want to find out more from the Bible.

## **Families Report**

*Camilla Simpson*

This last year has been a year of reconnecting and what a joy and privilege it's been! We relaunched Little Bears Play and Praise on Wednesday mornings making it akin to a Toddler church and ensuring that we are distinctly different, providing welcome and care for parents and carers from the community with Jesus at the heart of it all. One Mum's leaving card said "Little Bears has been a real lifeline for us – Always a special place in our hearts."

A short-term Monday Mums and Toddler group was born out of the larger Little Bears group giving an opportunity for Mum's to connect and share something of their parenting journey; "Thank you for creating a welcoming space in what has been a weird and isolated time."

Our Light Party alternative to Halloween was enjoyed by 47 families, predominantly from the wider community.

All these activities have led to new families coming on Sundays.

The challenge and the prayer is for more volunteers to help run outreach events and groups, as well as parenting and faith courses for Families both in our church family and wider community, to provide hope and encouragement on their parenting journey.

## **STwSS Youth Ministry**

*Sam Baker & Sam Ewins*

So much has happened in our world over the past few years and youth ministry is all about adapting to the changing needs and dynamics of young people. In 2022 we thoroughly reviewed the structures of our youth programme, in line with the Church Vision.

One of the biggest changes we made was to move our two Youth Nights onto the same evening, running the sessions back-to-back. This transition has gone very well and we reach around 40 young people each week and 60+ per term. Towards the end of 2022 the Clapham Park Cube community centre agreed to host our Youth Nights each week on Tuesday evenings. This is an amazing opportunity to connect even more with our local community.

One particular good news story is based around a group of boys aged 14-15. The boys have been coming to our Youth Nights for around 4 years and they were eager to come to the summer youth holiday with us at Haslemere Ventures. We prayed prior to the holiday that God would meet with them in unexpected ways. Two boys gave their lives to God during that holiday. Since then we have been able to set up a new Youth Connect group on another night of the week that is specifically for those seven young people where we explore faith together.

### **Youth Ministry Snapshots**

- We were thrilled to take 30 young people to the Haslemere Youth holidays.
- We have continued our Young Leadership programme.
- Included more socials after church for our Sunday Youth Church group.
- Ran two weekly mid-week Youth Connect Groups for young people to grow in discipleship.
- Increased 1:1 coffee shop catch-ups with young people and also parents of teenagers.
- Ran worship nights alongside other local youth groups.
- Ran our annual Youth Summer Fun Day at St Stephen's in July.
- Developed our youth volunteer team, with improved Safer Recruitment processes.
- Sam Ewins successfully completed his first year of his degree in Youth Ministry.

### **The Hive**

*Sarah Bee*

We set up the Hive in Sept 2022 as a space where all would feel welcome, find company or quiet. It has been good to see young and old come on a Tuesday and Thursday. We have a wide demographic who come and the older folk love seeing the younger ones and it is great to see everyone interacting often around the big table.

There's a real buzz around the place!

God has provided the space where we are able to show God's love to those that come in. Relationships with those that come are being built and are growing. Also the opportunity to talk about one's own faith in a practical way.

Pray that we reach out to the wider community and continue to be a service to them.

## **Pastoral Care**

*Richard Lea*

The Pastoral Care Group were able to give and coordinate support to a number of people with a variety of needs, some of whom particularly benefited from sustained contact over a period of time, helping them to move on. Highlights included those encouraging times when we were able to take people off our list due to the progress they had made. Challenges related to those individuals whose depth of need made it hard for them to move on.

God's goodness was apparent in the way in which people were often able to respond to support offered. It was heartening to see God at work when individuals and families returned to the church community, playing a positive part in the life of the church. In 2023 the Pastoral Support Group welcomes continuing prayer for its work and for the individuals with whom it is working.

## **Community Garden**

*Jenny Cairns and Fiona Carnegie*

The community garden team continued to run sessions on Sunday afternoons every week and fortnightly Wednesday morning sessions from the beginning of March to the end of October. During these sessions we grow fruit and vegetables and share the produce. We also held monthly themed events called 'Get Outside!' which were aimed at families with younger children and included crafts, quizzes as well as growing. These were well attended by members of our local community who do not usually come to church services and were a good way to introduce people to some of the life of the church. Our challenge was the weather, which in 2022 was extremely dry and hot and it was difficult to grow fruit and vegetables successfully.

God provided us with lovely sunny dry days for the Get Outside! events. We especially appreciated the sunflowers, which were grown by the children from seed and had a special poignance in 2022, being the national flower of Ukraine.

In 2023 we want to give thanks for our garden, the plants, the insects, birds and animals that inhabit it and the people that enjoy it. We pray that it will be a place where people

can experience God's love for them. Please pray for the garden team that they will have joy in the work and compassion and hospitality to all those who visit and for inspiring ways to attract more people to enjoy gardening here..

### **Wednesday Club**

*Helen White & Fiona Carnegie*

**Highlights:** Our lunch celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was one of the group's highlights along with a day out to Littlehampton in the autumn where we were met by ex-STwSS Reader, Eileen Ross, who gave us a potted history on the town and some of its famous citizens. Children from the White House School visited us twice in the year with their senior choir to serenade us much to the delight of all. Ron and David continued as regular church-outside members welcomed by Winston, and several of the group have enjoyed hospitality at the Hive.

**Challenges:** The increasing frailty of the group and supporting them through bereavement. A blessing that our SPA is part of the team. And there are occasional weeks when we need back-up hosting from other church members.

**God's Provision:** has been present in our fellowship and the love and care the group show to each other and there is *always* enough food for unexpected visitors.

**Prayer Request:** please pray for the health of the group and the opportunity to invite a friend or neighbour to join us – do bring them along and join us for lunch! We meet every Wednesday throughout the year.

### **HOME GROUPS**

*Fiona Carnegie*

We have 7 evening home groups and one meeting during the day. The first part of the year we followed the preacher's notes, from May – September we followed the '100 days with Jesus' programme, either in home groups, or over the summer months, together in St Thomas'. Getting to know those in different groups was a highlight for many who attended. Over the autumn groups planned their own programmes enabling them to study subjects or books that were of particular interest to them. Groups have enjoyed their social gatherings and some have organised outreach activities which have engaged the wider community eg the Swishing event in November.

2 group leaders have needed to step down. In both these cases no one person has taken on the full role but group members share responsibility.

Seeing God at work through the support and prayer provided by members of groups for one another has been a joy.

60 members of the congregation are involved in Home groups. We pray others in the congregation would join, and that groups will continue to grow in faith, obedience and discipleship together and be a help to each other both spiritually and practically and will engage in outreach within the congregation and to the community in varied ways.

## **Music**

*Eunice Brushfield-Hodges*

### **SUNG WORSHIP**

The year began well with much enthusiasm and well attended monthly rehearsals. We learned several new songs, and began to look at proper strategy for introducing songs to the congregation so that they did not feel there were too many new songs that they didn't know, all at once.

After the summer it became quite hard to restart the rehearsals again due to absences, and the final term was a real struggle not least due to the hugely-felt loss of Isie. However God in His goodness has provided the resources and energy we have needed to lead the congregation in worship of Him throughout the year, including the Choir contributing to this in various services.

*"I would like to thank all my Team of Co-Leaders (Ingrid, Carl, Lizzie and Chido) for their faithful support throughout the year."*

We also thank God for several new trainees for the sound system, and while it is a long process, we value them immensely and encourage them to stay with it! We have also welcomed our newest youngster, Isabella, joining us on a number of occasions, and hope to welcome more in 2023!

If you have even just a little musical talent you would like to use in worship, we would like to invite you to join our monthly rehearsals (please ask when) and try it out!

## **ECO Update**

*James Lee*

As a church, we took further steps in caring for God's creation, led by the Climate Justice Group. We were pleased to receive the Bronze Eco Church Award from A Rocha, the Christian charity which equips churches in the UK to care for the environment. This

covers our Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. At the Harvest service, we celebrated God's good creation and looked at the Creation Care award. This is for households and several have signed up and now have the Bronze Award. Kid's church have also used Genesis 1 to create some amazing drama and thinking about why looking after God's creation is important. The church's garden continues to be a great asset for the community (and was highlighted by A Rocha as a good example of creation care in practice) – being a place where people can relax, learn by getting stuck in and sample the benefits! The garden was twinned with a garden project in Kenya through the Ripple Effect programme. In November we held an Eco Clothes Swap which was a fun way to pass on unworn clothes and refresh your wardrobe and was well attended by members of the local community. This is great base from which to work towards Eco Church Silver next year.

## **World Church Group**

*Linda Long*

The World Church Group's role is to encourage and support partnerships between STwSS and other church and mission partners around the World. In addition to praying for and encouraging those who undertake mission trips, we partner more closely with a small number of Christian organisations. We offer financial, prayer and personal support through regular communication, visits (where possible), and updates at Sunday morning services. Our current partners are: Latin Link, International China Concern, Providence House, Mike and Brigid Adams (First Response Radio), and Open Doors. More information can be found here <https://www.stwss.org.uk/partners>.

Challenges during 2022 have included living in a post-Covid world, which is still having a significant impact on many of our partners' work and travel. Highlights included: a visit by Mike and Brigid Adams of First Response Radio; hearing from Lizzie Lancaster about her mission trip in Summer 2022; welcoming Open Doors as our new mission partner at the end of 2022 and Linda Long attending ICC's first conference in 3 years, meeting with others from across the world who support work with disabled children and families in China. We have been thankful to God for protecting the health and morale of our mission partners and those they serve amidst concerns about Covid. Two long term volunteers were able to renew visas and return to China, against all the odds.

We would love people to pray for the possibility of visits to and from our mission partners to be restored, for developing our partnership with Open Doors and for more folk to engage with and join in the work of the World Church Group. Contact Linda Long [linda.long@stwss.org.uk](mailto:linda.long@stwss.org.uk) to find out more.



**St Thomas  
with  
St Stephen**

Parochial Church Council of  
ST THOMAS WITH ST STEPHEN  
TELFORD PARK

Financial Statements  
For the year ended 31 December 2022



Parochial Church Council of St Thomas with St Stephen, Telford Park Page 1 Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2022

General Fund cumulative surplus is £47,001

Total giving has reduced, although the congregation continued to give generously and prayerfully





been met; or (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*S.A. Lewcock*

S.A. Lewcock FCCA  
Windsor Lodge  
Millfield Road  
Hounslow  
Middlesex TW4 5PN  
20 March 2023

Balance Sheet  
at 31 December 2022

Note 2022 2021  
£ £

Fixed Assets 2

Tangible fixed assets 1(f,g) - -

Current Assets 1(e)

Cash at bank and in hand 123,093 128,746 Short term deposits - - Marketable securities 301 300 Debtors 3 24,854 21,372 148,248  
150,418

Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year 4 (12,023) (9,487) Net Current Assets / (Liabilities) 136,225 140,931 Liabilities: amounts

falling due after one year - - Total Net Assets 136,225 140,931

Parish Funds 5 & 8

Unrestricted 67,001 105,526 Restricted 69,224 35,405 Endowment - -

Total Parish Funds 136,225 140,931

*OH* the Parochial Church Council on 20 March 2022  
on its behalf on 20 March 2023 by:

Oliver Huggins, Treasurer

Notes 1–10 attached form part of these accounts

Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

TOTAL FUNDS

Unrestricted Restricted

Funds Funds 2022 2021  
Note £ £ £ £

Income and endowments

Income and endowments from donors 6(a) 164,610 16,040 180,650 217,158 Other voluntary Income and endowments 6(b) - 24,914 24,914  
 650 Income from charitable and ancillary trading 6(c) 124,003 462 124,464 112,565 Other ordinary income and endowments 6(d) 1,926 -  
 1,926 5,086 Income from investments 6(e) 10 - 10 19 Total Income and endowments 290,548 41,416 331,964 335,478

#### Expenditure

Grants 7(a) 10,000 7,315 17,315 12,174 Activities directly related to the work of the church 7(b) 218,369 282 218,651 168,204 Church  
 management and administration 7(c) 100,705 - 100,705 86,428 Total Expenditure 329,075 7,597 336,672 266,805

Net Income/(Expenditure) (38,526) 33,819 (4,707) 68,672 Gains/(Losses) on Investments  
 Realised - - - Unrealised 1 - 1 -

Net Transfers Between Funds - - - Surplus/(Deficit) for Year (38,526) 33,819 (4,706) 68,672

Balances Brought Forward at 1 January 2022 105,526 35,405 140,931 72,259

Balances Carried Forward at 31 December 2022 5 67,001 69,224 136,225 140,931 Notes 1–10 attached form part of these accounts  
 Parochial Church Council of St Thomas with St Stephen, Telford Park Page 5 Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

## 1 Accounting Policies

### a General

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Accounting and Reporting by Charities (FRS 102), and applicable accounting standards. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the valuation of investment assets, which are shown at market value.

### b Funds

General funds represent the funds of the PCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the PCC. Funds designated for a particular purpose by the PCC are also unrestricted. The accounts include all transactions, assets and liabilities for which the PCC is responsible in law. They do not include the accounts of church groups that owe their main affiliation to another body nor those that are informal gatherings of Church members.

### c Income and endowments

#### Income and endowments from donors. Other voluntary Income and endowments. and Income from charitable and ancillary trading

Collections are recognised when received by or on behalf of the PCC. Planned giving receivable under Gift Aid is recognised only when received. Income tax recoverable on Gift Aid donations is recognised when the income is recognised. Grants and legacies to the PCC are accounted for as soon as the PCC is notified of its legal entitlement, the amount due is quantifiable and its ultimate receipt by the PCC is reasonably certain. Funds raised by events and from the sale of books and magazines are accounted for gross. Rental income from the letting of church premises is recognised when the rental is due.

#### Income from investments

Dividends and interest are accounted for when received.

#### Gains and losses on Investments

Realised gains or losses are recognised when investments are sold. Unrealised gains or losses are accounted for on revaluation of investments at 31 December. Investments are valued at market value at 31 December.

### d Expenditure

Grants and donations are accounted for when paid over, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding obligation on the PCC.

The diocesan quota is accounted for when payable. Any quota unpaid at 31 December is provided for in these accounts as an operational (though not a legal) liability and is shown as a creditor in the Balance Sheet.

e Current assets

Amounts owing to the PCC at 31 December in respect of fees, rents or other income are shown as debtors less provision for amounts that may prove uncollectable. Short term deposits include cash held on deposit either with the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England or at the bank.

f Fixed assets

Consecrated land and buildings and moveable church furnishings: Consecrated and beneficed property is excluded from the accounts by section 10 of the Charities Act 2011. No value is placed on moveable church furnishings held by the churchwardens on special trust for the PCC and which require a faculty for disposal since the PCC considers this to be inalienable property. All expenditure incurred during the year on consecrated or benefice buildings and moveable church furnishings, whether maintenance or improvements, is written off in the Statement of Financial Activities and separately disclosed.

g Furniture & equipment

Purchases of fixtures, fittings, furniture and office equipment are written off when the asset is acquired.

h Donated goods, facilities and services, including volunteers

Donated professional services, goods, and facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), time spent by volunteers is not recognised in the financial statements, and the annual report contains more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

Parochial Church Council of St Thomas with St Stephen, Telford Park Page 6 Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

2 Fixed Assets

The PCC does not have any fixed assets.

3 Debtors 2022 2021

£ £

Income tax recoverable 10,780 15,860  
Prepayments & other debtors 14,074 5,511  
Balance 31 December 24,854 21,372

4 Creditors 2022 2021

Amounts falling due within one year £ £  
Deposits held 1,000 1,000  
Other creditors 11,023 8,487

12,023 9,487

5 Movement in Funds

Unrestricted Funds General Building Mission TOTAL 2022 TOTAL 2021 £ £ £ £ £  
Balance 31 December 2021 63,230 19,625 22,671 105,526 59,443 Income and endowments (note 6) 290,548 - - 290,548 309,134 Expenditure (note 7) (319,075) - (10,000) (329,075) (263,063) Transfers between funds (notes 6 & 7) 12,296 (19,625) 7,329 - - Gain/(loss) on investments 1 - - 1 12 Surplus/(deficit) for the year (16,230) (19,625) (2,671) (38,526) 46,083 Balance 31 December 2022 47,001 - 20,000 67,001 105,526

Restricted Funds Legacies & Gifts Restricted Parish Sharing TOTAL 2022 TOTAL 2021  
Other

£ £ £ £ £

Balance 31 December 2021 7,380 27,350 675 35,405 12,816 Income and endowments (note 6) - 31,216 10,200 41,416 26,332 Expenditure (note 7) - (282) (7,315) (7,597) (3,742) Transfers between funds (notes 6 & 7) - - - - - Gain/(loss) on investments - - - - - Surplus/(deficit) for the year - 30,934 2,885 33,819 22,589 Balance 31 December 2022 7,380 58,284 3,561 69,224 35,405

6 Income and endowments TOTAL TOTAL Unrestricted Funds Restricted Funds

General Building Mission Legacies & Other  
Gifts Restricted Parish Sharing 2022 2021

£ £ £ £ £ £ £

a Income and endowments from donors

Planned giving  
Total Giving 105,694 - - - - 105,694 129,555 Tax recoverable on Gift Aid 26,412 - - - - 26,412 32,072 Other planned giving 31,745 - - - 5,187 10,200 47,132 55,023  
Collections 759 - - - 653 - 1,412 508 164,610 - - - 5,840 10,200 180,650 217,158

b Other voluntary Income and endowments

Grants - - - 24,914 - 24,914 650

c Income from charitable and ancillary trading  
Buildings income 122,625 - - - 462 - 123,086 111,419 Events & merchandise - - - - - 225 Café income - - - - - PCC fees for services 1,378 - - - - 1,378 920 124,003 - -  
- 462 - 124,464 112,565

d Other ordinary income and endowments  
Insurance claims & furlough receipts 1,926 - - - - 1,926 5,086

e Income from investments  
Interest & dividends 10 - - - - 10 19  
Total Income and endowments 290,548 - - - 31,216 10,200 331,964 335,478 Transfers from other funds 19,625 - 7,329 - - - 26,954 13,737 Total 310,173 - 7,329 - 31,216  
10,200 358,919 349,215  
Parochial Church Council of St Thomas with St Stephen, Telford Park Page 7 Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

7 Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds		TOTAL TOTAL
	General Building Mission Legacies & Gifts	Other Restricted		Parish Sharing 2022 2021
				£ £ £ £ £ £ £ £
a Grants				
Missionary societies - - 7,500 - - - 7,500 7,777 Home missions & Church societies - - 2,500 - - - 2,500 4,344 Parish Sharing Fund - - - - 7,315 7,315 53 - - 10,000 - - 7,315				17,315 12,174
b Activities directly related to the work of the church				
Ministry				
Diocesan quota 100,000 - - - - 100,000 100,000 Clergy expenses 2,508 - - - - 2,508 1,516 Other ministry expenses 623 - - - - 623 1,385 St Stephen's Church building				
Maintenance (St S) 4,409 - - - - 4,409 1,607 Utilities (St S) 7,204 - - - - 7,204 4,231 Other running expenses (St S) 19,134 - - - - 19,134 13,385 St Thomas' Church building				
Maintenance (St T) 28,485 - - - 282 - 28,767 4,736 Utilities (St T) 8,173 - - - - 8,173 6,307 Other running expenses (St T) 19,868 - - - - 19,868 12,848 Support costs				
Youth work 6,450 - - - - 6,450 8,614 Training 5,392 - - - - 5,392 1,851 Worship-related expenses 9,434 - - - - 9,434 8,919 Furniture & equipment 6,690 - - - - 6,690 2,807				218,369 - - - 282 - 218,651 168,204
c Church management and administration				
Expenses 19,538 - - - - 19,538 11,669 Salaries 81,167 - - - - 81,167 74,758 Salary & administration expenses 100,705 - - - - 100,705 86,428				
Total Expenditure 319,075 - 10,000 - 282 7,315 336,672 266,805 Transfers to other funds 7,329 19,625 - - - - 26,954 13,737 Total 326,404 19,625 10,000 - 282 7,315				363,626 280,542
Parochial Church Council of St Thomas with St Stephen, Telford Park Page 8 Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2022				

8 Fund details

a Unrestricted Funds

General Fund Used for all general receipts and expenditure.  
Building Fund donors, excluding Gift Day and certain other giving. During the financial year, £10,000 was distributed to mission partners:

Mission Fund

	£
FEBA	2,500
International China Concern (ICC)	2,500
Latin Link	2,500
Providence House	2,500

b Restricted Funds

A reserve for redevelopment at St Thomas's and the future maintenance of both churches. The last planned St Stephen's quinquennial inspection took place in 2022. The next St Thomas's quinquennial inspection will take place in 2024 (the previous one was in 2019).

A reserve which holds a proportion of the year's incoming and endowments from

Legacies & Gifts Fund Used for legacies and substantial gifts. None were received during the year. There was no expenditure during the year.

## Parish Sharing Fund

Parish Sharing Fund balance to be paid to external parties in need. £7,315 was paid out of the Parish Sharing Fund during the year.

Other Restricted Funds Used for gifts for purposes earmarked by donors, including gifts toward for mission partners and projects pending distribution. During the financial year, £282 was distributed to the following:

£

Community Garden 282

The balances on each fund at year end were:

£

Grant Fund 20,000

Local Area Fund 25,000

Youth Work Fund 5,603

Earmarked Fund 5,187

Wednesday Club 949

Bethlehem Children's Home 653

Providence House EF 453

Food Bank 389

Tear Fund 33

Community Garden 16

## 9 Staff Costs 2022 2021

£ £

Wages and salaries 72,541 67,025

Employer's national insurance costs 4,374 4,036

Pension costs (defined contribution schemes) 4,252 3,697

Total 81,167 74,758

At year end, the PCC employed 7 staff, none of whom earned more than £60,000 pa. Apart from the clergy expenses included in Note 7 above, there were no expenses reimbursed to PCC members incurred in carrying out their role, and no PCC member received any remuneration for carrying out their role.

## 10 Independent Examiner

The independent examiner was paid £415 during the year for his services in respect of examining the church accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021. The independent examiner will be paid £415 in 2023 for his work examining the church accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022. We are grateful for his work.



# **St Thomas with St Stephen**

**Parochial Church Council of  
ST THOMAS WITH ST STEPHEN  
TELFORD PARK**

**Annual Report  
2023 on 2022**



## **Church Membership**

There are now 153 members of the Church Electoral Roll. There were 147 in 2022.

## **PCC Membership**

Members of the PCC are either ex-officio or elected by the APCM in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. During the year the following served as members of the PCC

**Clergy** Revd. Sue Cooke

**Churchwardens** Jenny Cairns  
Linda Long  
Glenn Bee (ended 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022)

**Reader Rep** Glenn Bee

**Deanery Synod  
Reps (2020)** Chido Haasanen  
Margaret Hedley

**Elected Members** **First Elected 2022**  
James Lee  
Cynthia McKenzie  
Sophie Vening

**First Elected 2021**  
Tiffany Watts  
Penny Church

**Elected 2021 (3yr Term)**  
Oliver Huggins (Treasurer)  
Simon Hemsley (Deputy Treasurer)

**Co-Opted** Emma Sullivan (Secretary)

**Vicar** Revd. Sue Cooke

**Youth Minister** Sam Baker

**Youth Minister in Training** Sam Ewins

**Children & Families Minister** Sue Musgrave and Camilla Simpson

**Caretaker** Nicholas Amponfi



<b>Parish Administrators</b>	Sarah Bee (finished 6/9/22), Roberta Cuppone (finished 24/11/22), Cynthia McKenzie
<b>Safeguarding Officer</b>	Rachel Stokes
<b>Bookings &amp; Facilities Coordinator</b>	Rebecca Midwinter (finished 30/6/22), Lisa Latimer
<b>Readers</b>	Glenn Bee, Mike Hayes, Helen White

## **Vicar's Report**

*Sue Cooke*

### **Thank you!**

To all who have given so freely and generously of their time throughout the year. It was good to finally be able to increase our ministries post Covid restrictions and begin to gather together on more social occasions. I am very grateful to all those who regularly volunteer their time every week and serve us all in so many unseen ways.

In 2022 we said farewell and thank you to Glenn Bee after many faithful years' service as a churchwarden and we welcomed Linda Long as our new warden. A huge thanks must go to all our wardens for the many hours they commit to the role and for the support and advice they give me as we share the leadership on the church.

Particular thanks this year to the staff team who have adapted to so many changes in personnel over the year and to the PCC who have been faithful and prayerful through a long year with some difficult discussions and decisions.

### **Highlights**

- I began the year being licensed as Vicar of STwSS after spending my first year as Priest in Charge, it was a lovely occasion even if we still could not have a big meal afterwards.
- Launching our new MAP and vision plan in January after our vision day late 2021.
- Our All In Café Style Mothering Sunday service – who knew what a talented group you are and what beautiful flowers you could all make.
- Welcoming so many new children into our church family and being able to do Baptisms and Thanksgiving services, these really are a highlight of my role.
- Setting up and running a new Homegroup, gathering each week to talk about faith and share and pray together is such a joy.
- Our confirmation service with Bishop Richard was wonderful and so encouraging to hear so many wonderful testimonies of how God has been working in people's lives, especially the young people.

- Following 100 Days with Jesus and having Robing Gamble come and speak to us on the final week.
- Seeing The Hive open, having this space for members of our church and community to come together is brilliant.
- Having Judith come and bring such joy as a placement student over the summer.
- Leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and being joined by some members of STwSS on that journey.
- Seeing growth within our church community and welcoming new members.
- Welcoming Nick, Lisa and Cynthia to our staff team.
- I think for some seeing me dress up as an orange at the Christingle service will have been a highlight!

There were also challenges during the year, we began the year still with some concerns around covid and what was possible, but that eased in the early months. Leading the church through the FOSS process felt weighty and included some difficult conversations, many hours of meetings and a lot of prayer. Finances remained tight and the response to our Giving Day was less than we might have hoped for in terms of increases in regular givers, regular giving and one offs, but we thank God for what He provided and what we were able to achieve. One of the greatest privileges of this role, but also one of the hardest is walking alongside people in times of illness and crisis and there was a lot of this in 2022. The year ending with the untimely death of Isie Lancaster was a very sad time for us all.

God remains our constant source of strength and joy and I continue to pray that together we shall know His love, joy, peace and guidance in all our lives.

## **PCC Report**

*Sue Cooke*

The PCC met 8 times during the year, with the main focuses being:

- **Staffing** – we had several staffing changes during 2022 and were sorry to say goodbye to Sarah Bee as Administrator and Rebecca Midwinter as our Buildings Coordinator. Sue Musgrave finished as our Interim Children's Minister, only to return after six months and Camilla Simpson joined us for the period April to December 2022 as our Children and Families Minister. PCC agreed to a new administration staff structure and we were able to implement that during the year

- **St Stephen's** – the biggest challenge and PCC item in 2022 was St Stephen's and the increasing need to act in response to the Quinquennial, the boiler service and the increasing list of works. The PCC gave a significant amount of time during the year to discussing all of our different options and beginning the process that concluded in 2023 with the decision to sell the site. We are very grateful to the majority of the hirers of St Stephen's who were so gracious and understanding in their response to the news, particularly the two preschools who were heavily impacted by the decisions we had to make. The PCC also spent a lot of time discussing a settlement with The Weir Link for the early ending of their license of St Stephen's. This process concluded in 2023 with a settlement figure of £25k.
- **Buildings** – aside from St Stephen's the PCC were also able to agree on various works being done across both sites, with the two major projects being the lighting and the wooden flooring at St Thomas'.

### **Challenges Ahead**

- Much time in 2023 will still need to be given over to the sale of St Stephen's, the closing of the building and the moving of the staff offices to St Thomas' on a temporary basis.
- Our giving as a church does not at the moment cover our costs in terms of ministry and mission and we have to rely on buildings income and our small reserves. We have a large deficit forecast for 2023. Although we will have income from the sale of St Stephen's we still need to increase our regular giving.
- Making good and wise decisions about how to invest, allocate and spend the proceeds of the sale of St Stephen's.
- Recruiting a Children and Families Minister, we are very grateful to Sue Musgrave who has stepped back into the role on a temporary basis, but subject to finances we hope to recruit a full-time member of staff in 2023.
- Working together as a church to increase focus our mission activities and increase our connection with and impact on our local community.

### **Warden's Report**

*Jenny Cairns & Linda Long*

Wikipedia describes Churchwardens as having a duty to represent the laity i.e. church members, and to co-operate with the Incumbent (Reverend Sue Cooke). It goes on to say wardens are expected to lead the parishioners by setting a good example and encouraging unity and peace. We are working hard to do our best on this one, but feed-back is always welcome!

At STwSS one of the Churchwardens' key roles, along-side supporting our vicar Sue Cooke and meeting with her regularly, is to oversee the buildings and contents. This is done in collaboration and with the support of the PCC and staff team. Churchwardens are also ex officio members of the PCC and submit a number of annual returns to the Diocese to keep them updated on how STwSS is doing in terms of attendance numbers along with submitting information on finances and other records e.g. marriages, baptisms etc.

In 2022 Glenn Bee stepped down after 7 years of serving as Churchwarden and Linda Long stepped up to the role, along with Jenny Cairns. This year is Jenny's last as Churchwarden, she will be stepping down after 6 years' service at the APCM in March. Please talk to Jenny or Linda if this is a role that you feel God might be calling you to, and you would like to know more about what is involved.

We are very grateful that Covid Restrictions are over and we have been able to return more or less to 'normal', in terms of services and activities. However, the maintenance of the St Thomas and St Stephen buildings has presented some real challenges, even though this year we have been well supported by Lisa Latimer and Nicholas Amponfi in the care of the buildings.

Work at St Thomas has included the re-polishing of the wooden floor and the replacement of (a lot of) lightbulbs, the removal of a diseased tree and repairs as a result of storm damage to a window and pergola. It has also been a year of particularly difficult decision making over the future of St Stephen's, as information over the ownership of the building and extent of works required was revealed. In addition to the identification of the need for a wide range of building fabric upgrades, replacements and renewals, St Stephen's has been beset by boiler problems and structural issues. As a result, much time has been given to considering the best plan for its future. God has been very good in providing an excellent staff team during 2022. We are particularly thankful that the Hive has opened in the café space and that this area can now welcome members of our local community on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Statistics for Mission, submitted by the Churchwardens to the Diocese of Southwark in January, show that our church is growing in numbers and we are grateful to God in His answer to our mission prayer and for the provision of Rev Sue who has led us so well over the past year.

In 2023 please pray for the Churchwardens and particularly for wisdom and clarity over the future of St Stephen's.

## **Safeguarding Report**

*Rachel Stokes*

Safeguarding continues to be an important part of all that we do at STWSS. We want to ensure that everybody who participates in services and events organised or hosted by the church is safe. Furthermore, we aim to empower us all to be able to support those who have suffered abuse and recognise and challenge abusive behaviour.

Highlights of the year have included hosting two safeguarding evenings at St Thomas' church for members of the congregations and people in the local area focusing on domestic abuse and modern day slavery. These were well attended and very informative. The main challenges for the year have been working out what we need to have in place to ensure that we are keeping vulnerable users safe as the church engages on new endeavours.

We are nearly up to speed on checks and trainings of current staff, ministry leads and volunteers, so we're keen to encourage more volunteers into ministry areas.

Please pray for the safeguarding team, Penny, Tiffany and Rachel, that we can continue to work together productively with other ministries in the church with the aim of providing places of sanctuary for all who we encounter.

## **Sunday Children's Work**

*Sue Musgrave*

### **Highlights**

Working with the children in Mini Church and Kids Church is always a joy. Opening the eyes and hearts of children to the wonders of God and his word is a privilege.

Working with a team of volunteers who have a real heart for the children and their spiritual knowledge and development.

Seeing the regular group of children grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's word.

Special services e.g. Mothering Sunday, Crib service where families are together and children take part in the whole worship service of the church.

The start of a monthly 'All In' service which gives scope to do something different each time.

### **Challenges**

To have enough volunteers to run the team and keep everyone's slot to once a month.  
To retain the children (and families) of those who come for a few weeks and then stop.

## **To pray for**

The All-In services to be a joy for the whole range of the church

A growing keen and committed team of volunteers

Those who seem keen then drop off coming; to make church a regular feature of their Sundays.

Children to come to a living relationship with Christ, and to want to find out more from the Bible.

## **Families Report**

*Camilla Simpson*

This last year has been a year of reconnecting and what a joy and privilege it's been! We relaunched Little Bears Play and Praise on Wednesday mornings making it akin to a Toddler church and ensuring that we are distinctly different, providing welcome and care for parents and carers from the community with Jesus at the heart of it all. One Mum's leaving card said "Little Bears has been a real lifeline for us – Always a special place in our hearts."

A short-term Monday Mums and Toddler group was born out of the larger Little Bears group giving an opportunity for Mum's to connect and share something of their parenting journey; "Thank you for creating a welcoming space in what has been a weird and isolated time."

Our Light Party alternative to Halloween was enjoyed by 47 families, predominantly from the wider community.

All these activities have led to new families coming on Sundays.

The challenge and the prayer is for more volunteers to help run outreach events and groups, as well as parenting and faith courses for Families both in our church family and wider community, to provide hope and encouragement on their parenting journey.

## **STwSS Youth Ministry**

*Sam Baker & Sam Ewins*

So much has happened in our world over the past few years and youth ministry is all about adapting to the changing needs and dynamics of young people. In 2022 we thoroughly reviewed the structures of our youth programme, in line with the Church Vision.

One of the biggest changes we made was to move our two Youth Nights onto the same evening, running the sessions back-to-back. This transition has gone very well and we reach around 40 young people each week and 60+ per term. Towards the end of 2022 the Clapham Park Cube community centre agreed to host our Youth Nights each week on Tuesday evenings. This is an amazing opportunity to connect even more with our local community.

One particular good news story is based around a group of boys aged 14-15. The boys have been coming to our Youth Nights for around 4 years and they were eager to come to the summer youth holiday with us at Haslemere Ventures. We prayed prior to the holiday that God would meet with them in unexpected ways. Two boys gave their lives to God during that holiday. Since then we have been able to set up a new Youth Connect group on another night of the week that is specifically for those seven young people where we explore faith together.

### **Youth Ministry Snapshots**

- We were thrilled to take 30 young people to the Haslemere Youth holidays.
- We have continued our Young Leadership programme.
- Included more socials after church for our Sunday Youth Church group.
- Ran two weekly mid-week Youth Connect Groups for young people to grow in discipleship.
- Increased 1:1 coffee shop catch-ups with young people and also parents of teenagers.
- Ran worship nights alongside other local youth groups.
- Ran our annual Youth Summer Fun Day at St Stephen's in July.
- Developed our youth volunteer team, with improved Safer Recruitment processes.
- Sam Ewins successfully completed his first year of his degree in Youth Ministry.

### **The Hive**

*Sarah Bee*

We set up the Hive in Sept 2022 as a space where all would feel welcome, find company or quiet. It has been good to see young and old come on a Tuesday and Thursday. We have a wide demographic who come and the older folk love seeing the younger ones and it is great to see everyone interacting often around the big table.

There's a real buzz around the place!

God has provided the space where we are able to show God's love to those that come in. Relationships with those that come are being built and are growing. Also the opportunity to talk about one's own faith in a practical way.

Pray that we reach out to the wider community and continue to be a service to them.

## **Pastoral Care**

*Richard Lea*

The Pastoral Care Group were able to give and coordinate support to a number of people with a variety of needs, some of whom particularly benefited from sustained contact over a period of time, helping them to move on. Highlights included those encouraging times when we were able to take people off our list due to the progress they had made. Challenges related to those individuals whose depth of need made it hard for them to move on.

God's goodness was apparent in the way in which people were often able to respond to support offered. It was heartening to see God at work when individuals and families returned to the church community, playing a positive part in the life of the church. In 2023 the Pastoral Support Group welcomes continuing prayer for its work and for the individuals with whom it is working.

## **Community Garden**

*Jenny Cairns and Fiona Carnegie*

The community garden team continued to run sessions on Sunday afternoons every week and fortnightly Wednesday morning sessions from the beginning of March to the end of October. During these sessions we grow fruit and vegetables and share the produce. We also held monthly themed events called 'Get Outside!' which were aimed at families with younger children and included crafts, quizzes as well as growing. These were well attended by members of our local community who do not usually come to church services and were a good way to introduce people to some of the life of the church. Our challenge was the weather, which in 2022 was extremely dry and hot and it was difficult to grow fruit and vegetables successfully.

God provided us with lovely sunny dry days for the Get Outside! events. We especially appreciated the sunflowers, which were grown by the children from seed and had a special poignance in 2022, being the national flower of Ukraine.

In 2023 we want to give thanks for our garden, the plants, the insects, birds and animals that inhabit it and the people that enjoy it. We pray that it will be a place where people



can experience God's love for them. Please pray for the garden team that they will have joy in the work and compassion and hospitality to all those who visit and for inspiring ways to attract more people to enjoy gardening here..

### **Wednesday Club**

*Helen White & Fiona Carnegie*

**Highlights:** Our lunch celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee was one of the group's highlights along with a day out to Littlehampton in the autumn where we were met by ex-STwSS Reader, Eileen Ross, who gave us a potted history on the town and some of its famous citizens. Children from the White House School visited us twice in the year with their senior choir to serenade us much to the delight of all. Ron and David continued as regular church-outside members welcomed by Winston, and several of the group have enjoyed hospitality at the Hive.

**Challenges:** The increasing frailty of the group and supporting them through bereavement. A blessing that our SPA is part of the team. And there are occasional weeks when we need back-up hosting from other church members.

**God's Provision:** has been present in our fellowship and the love and care the group show to each other and there is *always* enough food for unexpected visitors.

**Prayer Request:** please pray for the health of the group and the opportunity to invite a friend or neighbour to join us – do bring them along and join us for lunch! We meet every Wednesday throughout the year.

### **HOME GROUPS**

*Fiona Carnegie*

We have 7 evening home groups and one meeting during the day. The first part of the year we followed the preacher's notes, from May – September we followed the '100 days with Jesus' programme, either in home groups, or over the summer months, together in St Thomas'. Getting to know those in different groups was a highlight for many who attended. Over the autumn groups planned their own programmes enabling them to study subjects or books that were of particular interest to them. Groups have enjoyed their social gatherings and some have organised outreach activities which have engaged the wider community eg the Swishing event in November.

2 group leaders have needed to step down. In both these cases no one person has taken on the full role but group members share responsibility.

Seeing God at work through the support and prayer provided by members of groups for one another has been a joy.

60 members of the congregation are involved in Home groups. We pray others in the congregation would join, and that groups will continue to grow in faith, obedience and discipleship together and be a help to each other both spiritually and practically and will engage in outreach within the congregation and to the community in varied ways.

## **Music**

*Eunice Brushfield-Hodges*

### **SUNG WORSHIP**

The year began well with much enthusiasm and well attended monthly rehearsals. We learned several new songs, and began to look at proper strategy for introducing songs to the congregation so that they did not feel there were too many new songs that they didn't know, all at once.

After the summer it became quite hard to restart the rehearsals again due to absences, and the final term was a real struggle not least due to the hugely-felt loss of Isie. However God in His goodness has provided the resources and energy we have needed to lead the congregation in worship of Him throughout the year, including the Choir contributing to this in various services.

*"I would like to thank all my Team of Co-Leaders (Ingrid, Carl, Lizzie and Chido) for their faithful support throughout the year."*

We also thank God for several new trainees for the sound system, and while it is a long process, we value them immensely and encourage them to stay with it! We have also welcomed our newest youngster, Isabella, joining us on a number of occasions, and hope to welcome more in 2023!

If you have even just a little musical talent you would like to use in worship, we would like to invite you to join our monthly rehearsals (please ask when) and try it out!

## **ECO Update**

*James Lee*

As a church, we took further steps in caring for God's creation, led by the Climate Justice Group. We were pleased to receive the Bronze Eco Church Award from A Rocha, the Christian charity which equips churches in the UK to care for the environment. This

covers our Worship and Teaching, Buildings, Land, Community and Global Engagement, and Lifestyle. At the Harvest service, we celebrated God's good creation and looked at the Creation Care award. This is for households and several have signed up and now have the Bronze Award. Kid's church have also used Genesis 1 to create some amazing drama and thinking about why looking after God's creation is important. The church's garden continues to be a great asset for the community (and was highlighted by A Rocha as a good example of creation care in practice) – being a place where people can relax, learn by getting stuck in and sample the benefits! The garden was twinned with a garden project in Kenya through the Ripple Effect programme. In November we held an Eco Clothes Swap which was a fun way to pass on unworn clothes and refresh your wardrobe and was well attended by members of the local community. This is great base from which to work towards Eco Church Silver next year.

## **World Church Group**

*Linda Long*

The World Church Group's role is to encourage and support partnerships between STwSS and other church and mission partners around the World. In addition to praying for and encouraging those who undertake mission trips, we partner more closely with a small number of Christian organisations. We offer financial, prayer and personal support through regular communication, visits (where possible), and updates at Sunday morning services. Our current partners are: Latin Link, International China Concern, Providence House, Mike and Brigid Adams (First Response Radio), and Open Doors. More information can be found here <https://www.stwss.org.uk/partners>.

Challenges during 2022 have included living in a post-Covid world, which is still having a significant impact on many of our partners' work and travel. Highlights included: a visit by Mike and Brigid Adams of First Response Radio; hearing from Lizzie Lancaster about her mission trip in Summer 2022; welcoming Open Doors as our new mission partner at the end of 2022 and Linda Long attending ICC's first conference in 3 years, meeting with others from across the world who support work with disabled children and families in China. We have been thankful to God for protecting the health and morale of our mission partners and those they serve amidst concerns about Covid. Two long term volunteers were able to renew visas and return to China, against all the odds.

We would love people to pray for the possibility of visits to and from our mission partners to be restored, for developing our partnership with Open Doors and for more folk to engage with and join in the work of the World Church Group. Contact Linda Long [linda.long@stwss.org.uk](mailto:linda.long@stwss.org.uk) to find out more.