



PARISH OF BARNSBURY ANNUAL REPORT, JAN-DEC 2023

PREPARED FOR THE 2024 APCM



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
A look back at the highlights and milestones of 2023	4
Report from the Parochial Church Council	5
St Andrew’s Church	7
Church on the Corner	9
All Saints Church	11
Electoral Roll Report	13
St Andrew’s Church.....	13
Church on the Corner.....	13
Finance Report	14
A year of change.....	14
Financial review.....	14
Fabric Report	16
St Andrew’s Church.....	16
Church on the Corner.....	16
Safeguarding Report	18
St Andrew’s Church.....	18
Church on the Corner.....	18
Children’s Work	19
Our vision and aim.....	19
The children.....	19
The leaders.....	19
Sharing with church family.....	19
All-age services.....	19
Teaching.....	19
Praise God for.....	20
Please pray for.....	20
Community outreach.....	20
Schools work.....	21
Roots Youth Group	23
St Andrew’s Church of England Primary School, Barnsbury	24
Arts on the Corner	26
Cosy Corner	28
Copenhagen Street Food Bank	29
Open Church	30
St Andrew’s Church Gardens	31
Eco Church	32
Deanery Synod	33

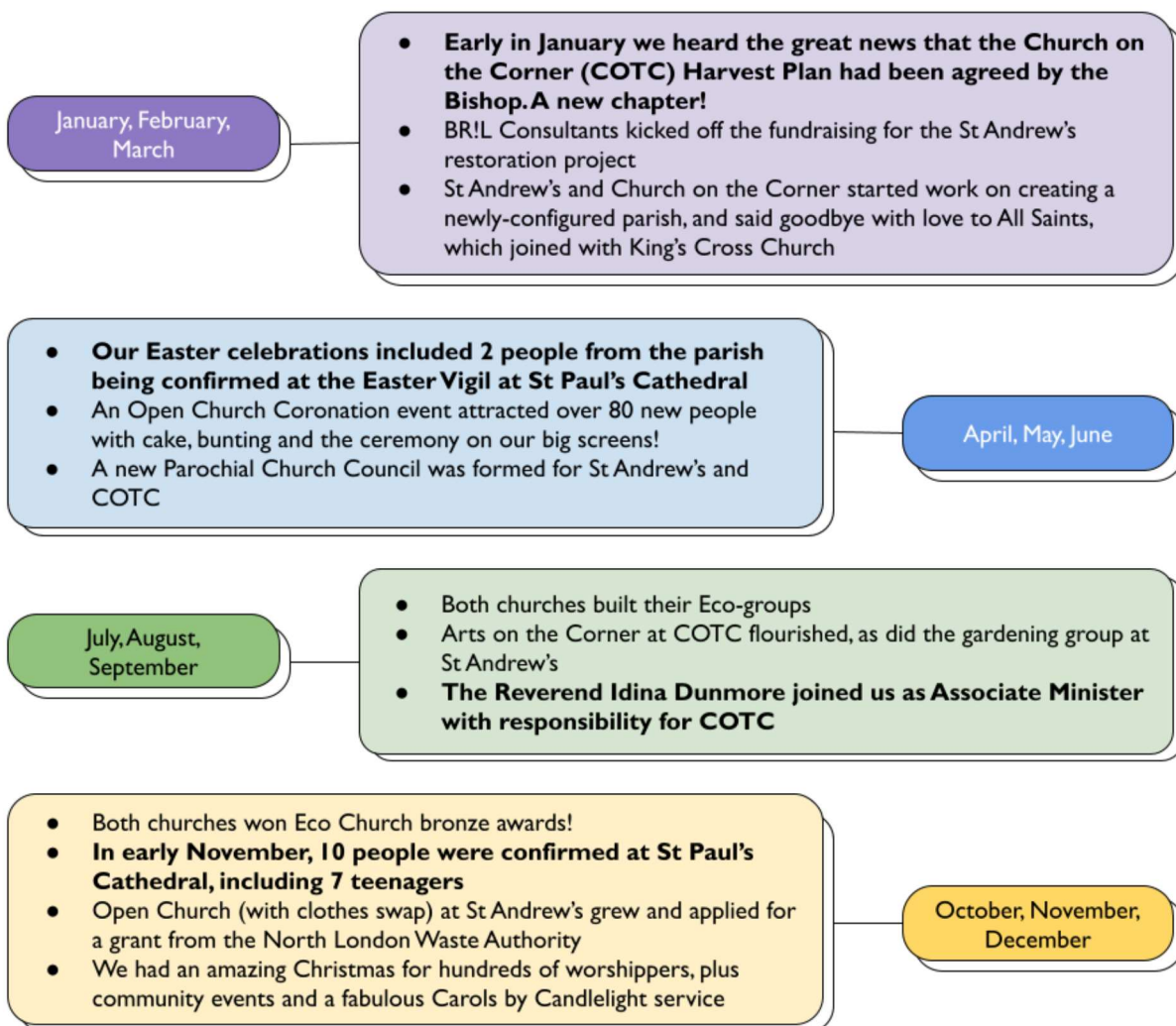
Introduction

I am delighted to introduce this report on the year 2023 (January to December). It has been a year of significant developments in the life of the Parish of Barnsbury as the reorganisation was completed and a renewed sense of God's purposes here emerged. The parish now has two full-time clergy confirmed in post: a Rector and an Associate Minister. In July, we were very pleased to welcome Rev Idina Dunmore as Associate Minister with particular responsibility for Church on the Corner (COTC), following the vacancy there. We wish The Revd Ted Fell and the people of All Saints well as they set out on a new path as a separate parish. There have been many signs of hope, reflected in this report, as we all move forward in discerning and carrying out God's mission in this part of his kingdom.

I have been very grateful for the support and encouragement of our Churchwardens, Parochial and District Church Council members, clergy colleagues, staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the past year. I would also like to thank Bishop Joanne (Bishop of Stepney), Archdeacon Peter (Archdeacon of Hackney) and Area Dean Tamsin (Area Dean of Islington) for their continued support. To all those who contribute to God's mission in Barnsbury by your presence, your prayers, your time and energy, and your thoughtfulness, a heartfelt thank you. I am also grateful to those who have donated financially to the parish over the past year. Your help is essential for our future plans and is much appreciated.

The Revd Caroline Titley
Rector

A look back at the highlights and milestones of 2023



Things you need to know mid-way through 2024

We are on a pathway towards applying for a major National Lottery Heritage Fund grant for St Andrew's building. Church on the Corner is already refurbishing and growing! Fantastic generosity from our church family has meant we in a better place money-wise, but we must carry on giving; Open Church grows bigger and better; Cosy Corner has branched out into summer trips; we have concerts and other events planned; our wonderful primary school, St Andrew's Barnsbury has come through a roller-coaster year... and so much more is happening. Sadly we will say goodbye to our lovely administrator, Rachel Walker, who has guided us through so many grant applications. But we say hello to Alix Gilmer, the new Project Development Manager funded by our National Lottery Heritage Fund resilience grant, and her team.

Read on!

Report from the Parochial Church Council

For the first quarter of the year, the parish was in the final stages of the reorganisation, which saw All Saints leave the parish of Barnsbury on 31 March 2023. This brought to the end a long process of discussion and negotiation. We are very grateful to our then Parochial Churchwardens, Helen Codling and Roland Jones who served tirelessly on the Transition Team. Following my appointment as Priest-in-Charge in February 2022, I oversaw the process to ensure that this significant change took place with the goodwill of all participants. Following the departure of All Saints on 31 March 2023, we have since maintained good relations with what is now a neighbouring parish.

A new Parochial Church Council (PCC) was elected in May 2023 and Helen Codling and Lis Howell became Churchwardens of the continuing Parish of Barnsbury. We are very grateful to them both. The PCC later appointed Assistant Churchwardens Chanel Georgio, Hector Hinojosa, Susie Procter, Philip Rutnam and Simona Valeriani to spread our leadership and to help in any emergency. The PCC currently has one sub-committee, the Building Development Committee, which was set up to focus on the major challenges of the church building at St Andrew's and the project for its restoration and renewal. This is in addition to the Standing Committee.

Until July 2023, when Rev Idina arrived, the PCC was still overseeing the vacancy at COTC. Grateful thanks are due to the remarkable work of the core team at COTC for managing the daily life of the church during this period. Thanks are also due to all the home grown lay preachers and to Canon Robert Titley for his ministry there.

The PCC has overseen the implementation of an interim Mission Action Plan. Key achievements have been:

- the recruitment of a new Minister, with responsibility for COTC, following the discernment of a new Vision and associated plan, and discussions with the Diocese
- preparation classes for those exploring baptism or confirmation: 9 people baptised and 12 people confirmed, including 7 teenagers
- Bronze Eco Awards for both churches (achieved in 2024) following the setting up of a Parish Eco Church Group
- a successful Lent Group during 2023 (and expansion of Lent provision during 2024)
- significant improvements in our administrative systems
- Arts on the Corner continues to flourish as a church led community arts project
- continued support (helpers, food and financial) to Copenhagen Food Bank
- provision of sick communions
- increased provision for children: we are now running Starchasers (for young children) on most Sundays, apart from All Age Worship on the first Sunday of the month; and we have started Messy Church
- we have developed Open Church at St Andrew's on a Saturday morning, with clothing, book and toy swaps and links with charities
- we have started a service of Morning Prayer at COTC
- we have developed our knowledge of young people in our community, through links with local charity, Prospex and via our fund-raising/community engagement consultants.

The PCC is a Trustee body and, as such, has to give attention not only to the church as 'the people of God' responsible for mission, but also to the church as an organisation with legal and compliance responsibilities. The PCC has finance, safeguarding, data protection and health and safety as standing items on its agenda. We are very grateful for the work of our Treasurer, Anthony Codling, and to our book-keeper/Accountant, Tina Okoro, for providing us with timely and well prepared information. We are also grateful to our two Parish Safeguarding Officers for encouraging our progress. At the time of writing, both churches are at level 3 compliance with the Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, which represents significant progress during the year. The PCC is very conscious of its health and safety responsibilities and has appointed Greentree Safety to provide advice and to undertake health and safety testing for both our churches.

During the year, The Revd Vicki Davies, our Parish Administrator, moved on to become Priest-in-Charge of St Mark's Watford, following the end of her curacy. We thank Vicki for her valuable work with us during a time of transition and wish her well in her new position.

The Revd Caroline Titley, Rector and Chair of the PCC

St Andrew's Church

It has been an encouraging year at St Andrew's with new people appearing at our services on a regular basis. We have also welcomed back people who were shielding during the pandemic. St Andrew's has a congregation of all age groups and represents the wider diversity of people who live in the parish. It is a great basis on which to grow further. We try to serve our whole parish, not only those who come to church. We are grateful to The Revd Peter Bernhard, Canon Robert Titley and guest preachers who have contributed to our worship during the year.

During 2023 there were a number of special services at St Andrew's including the following:

- The Institution and Induction of The Revd Caroline Titley as Rector
- Three funerals for members of the local community (in addition to those held at the crematorium)
- A service of thanksgiving for the life of the mother of a member of the church community
- Two weddings for couples connected to the parish
- All Age Service held for the Coronation of King Charles III
- A very well attended Carols by Candlelight Service

All these services required special planning and attention. I am very grateful to all those involved. Planning and conducting large services well creates confidence, and further requests for support from people who feel that St Andrew's is a place for important moments in their lives and those of the community as a whole.

During 2023 we opened up our church building more to members of the public. Thanks to Lis Howell, Richard Parker and Chanel Georgio we are now opening the church regularly from 11am to 1pm on Saturdays. During these times, we have also offered events such as toy, book and clothes swaps, which have been popular and have fulfilled a need in the local community. We also opened up our church on Coronation Day so that people could see the Coronation Service within a church setting. It was open to the public and well supported.

Led by Philip Rutnam, and with the help of James Dunnett and others, we participated again in Open House weekend. This helped to bring the church to the attention of the people in the local area and beyond. We are also encouraging concerts, which are raising funds for the restoration of our building, and are bringing more people into contact with us.

Along with friends from COTC, we had a presence outside our church building at major local events during the year including the Cally Festival and the summer fair in Barnard Park. We sang carols on the Caledonian Road as part of the 'Cally Lights' Switch On' and in Thornhill Square, in addition to our services in church.

The St Andrew's Montessori School continues to be based in our church building and we value our longstanding partnership with them. We have other bookings which bring in valuable, additional income. The issue, which looms over us, but which is also a tremendous opportunity, is the need to deal with the structural repairs and the optimisation of space within our church building.

St Andrew's is currently on the 'The Heritage at Risk Register'. Its condition is officially recognised as 'very bad (Priority A)'. The responsibility for Church of England buildings lies with local Parochial Church Councils,

such as the one here in Barnsbury, so we have to find a way forward for this much loved church building which we aim to restore and renew for worship and community use, supported by a sustainable business plan.

During the year, the Building Development Committee has been meeting monthly to begin to address these challenges. We have been grateful to local charity, Cloudesley for their support in funding consultants (BR!L) to work with us on this project and in funding repairs and monitoring of the building prior to a major capital project taking place. We are also grateful to Kevin Rogers, Director of Parish Property and Fundraising at the Diocese of London, and his staff for their support and advice. In November 2023, after significant preparatory research and community engagement led by BR!L, we submitted a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for resilience funding and were delighted that it was successful. This funding has the aim of making us 'project ready' for embarking in earnest on the major capital works that are so sorely needed.

The Revd Caroline Titley, Rector

Church on the Corner

We had a nervous start to the year at COTC as we waited to hear if the Bishop of Stepney would support our plan to seek to grow COTC. The Bishop has an unenviable task of allocating scarce resources throughout the diocese and it was therefore not a foregone conclusion that our plan would be supported. We left the matter in God's hands and prayed that whatever the outcome for COTC, His will would be done.

Early in January we heard the great news that the Bishop had decided to support COTC's Harvest Plan. As you can imagine after a very challenging period this was very exciting and welcome news. We were now able to plan ahead and start the process of finding a new minister. We remain thankful for that decision and very thankful for all the support we had from the Archdeacon, Caroline and St Andrew's as we put our documentation together and started the recruitment process. We all felt that this was a true parish initiative and we are grateful that St Andrew's has been alongside us for every step of this journey.

With documentation complete and job advert posted we continued to pray that God would bring the right candidate to us and that his will would be done. Fittingly on Easter Sunday we were able to announce that Rev Idina Dunmore would be joining the parish in July 2023.

Since joining we have worked as a congregation and a parish with Idina and Caroline to continue to develop the direction of our ministry and, although it is still early days, COTC has a fresh spring in its step.

We are also very thankful indeed for all the work Robert Titley did and all the support he gave when we didn't have a minister in the first half of 2023 and we are delighted, touched and grateful that he continues to be such an active member and supporter of COTC.

As a church we also hope that Idina is enjoying COTC as much as we are enjoying having her as our minister. We are all very excited about where God will lead us in the coming year.

*Anthony Codling, former Churchwarden
16th April 2024*

Rev Idina was licensed at Church on the Corner on 17th July, with a very joyful service led by Bishop Joanne. The following Sunday a lovely welcome tea was held. Idina would like to thank everyone at COTC, St Andrew's and across the community for their warm welcome and support for her as she has settled in.

COTC organised a weekend-away in mid-August in Salisbury, where the highlights were eating and chatting together, walks in the sunshine, and attending a guided-tour and worship in the Cathedral. With thanks to Cat, Ali and Steph who organised the logistics.

The Autumn Term found us settling into our rhythm of Sunday-evening worship, with a few innovations thrown into the mix, such as a termly creative service. We sought to deepen discipleship at our mid-week Homegroup Central and Advent Group through December. In 2023, we have been blessed with a stable, committed core congregation, some new members, and hosting a good number of encouraging visitors.

Arts on the Corner has continued monthly, beautifully led by Emily, and creating a positive, supportive community, as well as amazing art projects. In November we held our annual 5th November celebration, with sausages and sparklers around a brazier in the front-garden. And we started a warm space, named Cosy Corner, every Monday from 11am-2pm. This was soon a thriving drop-in, with people from the local community, as well as church-members (and some from Southall) dropping-in. We served hot drinks, snacks and home-made soup made by willing church-volunteers, and provided simple activities: colouring, games, puzzles, quizzes and bingo!

As we entered Advent, Anthony curated an on-line Advent project, where we reflected on where we find God at Work in our day-to-day lives. Our Carol Service, Beer and Carols at The Crown Pub, and Italian-themed Christmas meal were wonderful celebrations of Jesus' birth amongst us and drew in both church-members and friends from our local community. And we were able to join with St Andrew's Church for carol-singing and Christmas services.

At the end of 2023, COTC feels to be in a more secure and rooted season, enabled by affirmation from the Diocese; friendship, support and partnership with St Andrew's Church; and a committed and faith-filled leadership team. We are grateful to God.

Rev Idina Dunmore, Associate Minister

All Saints Church

Last year proved to be a busy and eventful year at All Saints with various ministries taking place throughout the year. Once again, there are many people to thank. Barbara Hooker has served us well as our administrator and has helped in many ways at All Saints. Kath Hawkins and Ele Simeone have served us in the kitchen and in other practical matters. Elena Heatley and Chris Lambert have served us well as our churchwardens, as have all the members of the new PCC. Also, Aaron Rodewald has done a great job for us as our Treasurer.

As usual, I'm very grateful for all our volunteers on Sunday mornings, at the Gap, the Thursday Bible Study and What's the Story? Once again, we've run several regular ministries which wouldn't happen in the way they do without our volunteers.

We continued to run the Gap on Friday nights at the Paget Centre. The Gap is for young people aged 10-17 years old. We began last year with two young people regularly coming along but ended the year with four young people attending on a regular basis. We had seven leaders helping to run the group. As part of our formal partnership with London City Mission, they provided one of their workers, Mindy Sanghera, to help us grow our youth work.

On Thursdays, we ran our weekly bible study at the Paget at 2pm. This group is led by me and James Fairbairn, a volunteer, who came to us via London City Mission. Numbers vary from week to week but there can be up to 12 or 13 of us.

We also continued to run "What's the Story?" in conjunction with London City Mission (LCM). This happens once a month on a Tuesday night. We meet from 6pm - 7.30pm at the Paget beginning the evening with pizza. We then hear a guest speaker who shares something of their story with God. There's then an opportunity for those attending to connect with the speaker's story and ask questions. It was planned that these evenings would encourage church members as well as drawing others to faith and to get involved with All Saints. Daada Luogon from LCM has been a great help to us in running these sessions.

We've also continued our outreach with Good News for Everyone (formerly known as Gideons UK). This has tended to be just before Christmas and Easter. This has been a good opportunity to hand out New Testaments and church flyers, and to meet with people who live in the local area.

All Saints Church has continued to meet at the Paget at 10.30am for Sunday services. Sunday attendance has continued to be fairly low. Since the lockdowns, numbers have dropped by around a third or more which has been the pattern in many churches over that period. All Saints has a very committed core of people but we recognise that we need to grow. It is hoped that our new partnership with KXC will be part of that growth. Once again, I've been very grateful to Derrick Green, our preachers from Euston Church and from KXC. It's also been very encouraging to see Azhar Jomaa leading services for us when I've been away.

At the end of March 2023, All Saints left Barnsbury Parish and became its own parish of All Saints, Caledonian Road. Rev Pete Hughes (KXC) became Vicar of the parish, and I became an Associate Minister.

With regard to the All Saints building, in March 2022 we saw Wing Entertainments Ltd, our previous tenants, move on and ARK coworking move in. ARK rents out affordable office space and is a business which has emerged from KXC. The new relationship has worked well and ARK has transformed the old All Saints building. ARK moving into our old building has raised the possibility of All Saints moving its Sunday service back into the building. All Saints have been seriously considering this possibility.

We give thanks once again, as we reflect on 2023, to God, who has sustained us and strengthened us as we've sought to seek Him and to serve Him.

Rev Ted Fell

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll is a list of those who are eligible to vote at the Annual Church Meetings and is also as close as the Church of England gets to a membership list.

In 2024, the electoral was revised and the figures are as below:

St Andrew's Church

Last year (2023)	108
Stopped coming	0
Moved away	0
Died	1
Added	1
Total	108

Church on the Corner

Last year (2022)	26
Stopped coming	0
Moved away	0
Died	0
Added	1
Total	27

Finance Report

A year of change

2023 will be remembered as a year of significant change for the parish finances as All Saints left the parish and Church on the Corner transitioned from being a locally supported ministry to becoming a stipendiary post.

Once again, I am very thankful for the support of Tina Okoro our bookkeeper and accountant and Rachel Walker our Parish Administrator throughout the year in helping me to maintain the accounts during the year and for all their additional work in helping prepare the year end accounts.

Financial review

The year of change has led to several moving parts in the parish accounts which paints a flattering picture of the financial accounts at the parish level. Whilst at a parish level we show a surplus, the reality is that both St Andrew's and Church on the Corner's running costs are currently much greater than their income. To fully understand what is going on it is best to look at St Andrew's and Church on the Corner separately.

St Andrew's in 2023

St Andrew's saw income rise by £53,211 driven by a combination of increased giving, rental income, grants and one-off refunds, from £170,225 to £223,436.

However, expenditure rose by £57,738 from £172,634 to £230,372 as we spent more on building repairs and staff costs and saw the impacts over economy wide inflation on our costs.

The net result for St Andrew's in 2023 was that expenditure was £6,936 higher than its income, and this deficit was covered by reserves.

Church on the Corner in 2023

Church on the Corner saw its income fall by £10,082 from £137,732 to £127,671. Congregational giving and rental income were broadly flat, and we benefited from a one off catch up in gift aid reclaims. The reduction in income reflects the fact that 2022 benefitted from a Matilda Street rent refund following Mark Fletcher's departure.

Church on the Corner's expenses reduced significantly from £117,630 to £50,970 a reduction of £66,660. Whilst this was very welcome, unfortunately it is a one off reduction reflecting the fact that Church on the Corner did not have a minister for the first six months of 2023 and therefore had no stipend or rent to pay.

This reduction in costs flatters the 2023 net financial results for Church on the Corner (and the Parish) showing a net surplus for the year of £75,583.

The challenges ahead for 2024

Both St Andrew's and Church on the Corner will see their expenses increase in 2024, we therefore need to seek to both increase our income and carefully manage our costs during the year.

We currently forecast that St Andrew's will have a net deficit of £25,000 in 2024. We do have reserves in place to cover this deficit, but we should aim, at least, to cover our costs as we cannot run at a deficit over the longer term. The PCC's aim is for St Andrew's to cover all of its running costs within three years.

Church on the Corner needs to increase its annual income to £150,000 to cover its full running costs and currently has a three-year plan in place to cover its full costs. It has sufficient reserves to fund this three year period of transition.

Anthony Codling, Parish Treasurer

Fabric Report

St Andrew's Church

St Andrew's church building is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, condition Very Bad, priority A. During 2023, we have been grateful for the support of local charity, Cloudesley for grants towards the continuing monitoring of the condition of the stonework of the Tower and Spire, the monitoring of stonework in the North Transept, the internal propping of the North Transept following a fall of masonry in the summer, the renewal of netting around the Tower and Spire, a measured building survey and other necessary repairs and professional fees. In 2023, Cloudesley also granted us funding towards works to be carried out in 2024/25, consisting of works to restore the stonework on the West Elevation of the Nave and the North Vestry Gable, to carry out preventative works on the East Window, to do necessary drainage works and to commission a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) consultation.

We are also grateful to the Diocese of London for an Area Grant which allowed us to carry out a drainage survey and tree survey. The drainage survey included recommendations for urgent works and these have been carried out. We also had to attend to roofing issues which were causing leaks in the Welcome Area and over the piano in the Nave. It was pleasing to see that the leak in the Nave is no longer present, though further damage occurred to the roof over the Welcome Area for which we are seeking urgent repairs. We have also needed to attend to routine maintenance throughout the year.

We are grateful for the support of our professional advisers, Alex Veal and Toshiya Kogawa (ARTArchitects) and Isaac Hudson (Michael Alexander Consulting Engineers) who have continued to support us during 2023. Our next quinquennial inspection is due in 2024.

Given the scale of the works required for the restoration and renewal of the St Andrew's church building, the setting up of a Building Development Group is proving to be a much-needed spearhead to the endeavour required. Meetings have been held on a monthly basis, supported by BR!L consultants. The committee has overseen successful funding applications to Cloudesley and to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The parish has been awarded £95k in resilience funding from the NLHF in order to make us 'project ready'. This will include the recruitment of a design team to provide concept designs and costings for a major capital project.

Church on the Corner

The Church on the Corner building is much smaller in scale, but it too has had maintenance issues during the year, the most significant of which has been works required to the roof. We are grateful to Cloudesley for the grants received towards replacing the roof and installing solar panels and look forward to these works being carried out in early 2024.

We had a successful DIY day shortly after Rev Idina's arrival, which focused on tackling the ivy in the rear courtyard and tidying throughout the building.

Following water damage, we were pleased to make good several areas of paintwork throughout the building towards the end of the year, as well as installing a new floor in the first floor WC and making good the plaster in the hallway between the main space and kitchen.

Routine maintenance to fire alarms, extinguishers, plumbing and lighting was also carried out successfully throughout the year.

Rachel Walker, Parish Administrator

Safeguarding Report

It is essential that Safeguarding maintains a high profile in Barnsbury Parish. We take great care in working towards ensuring our parish is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults. Our Safeguarding Policy is renewed annually and is our guiding document in our practice. The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, in relation to having due regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The role of Safeguarding Officers are held at St Andrew's by Dr Karen Summerfield and at Church on the Corner by Suzanne Procter.

The focus this year has been on ensuring the mandatory training is completed. There have been delays due to the availability of leadership training outside of core working hours. A concerted effort means that we are at 84% compliance at St Andrew's and 87.5% compliance at COTC, and 100% compliance in DBS certificates.

We continue to work through the Safeguarding Dashboard for the parish. This is a new framework used by the Church of England designed to help us think through and set up all aspects of safeguarding correctly. Currently St Andrew's have completed 71% of the requirements and are at level 3, and Church on the Corner have completed 83% of the requirements and are at level 3. At level 3, focus is on the use of social media and other organisations who use our buildings beyond church activities.

The PCC has approved and adopted The House of Bishops' Safeguarding Policy "Promoting a Safer Church" and members are aware of the need to complete the relevant training courses.

Safeguarding continued to be an agenda item for each PCC meeting.

St Andrew's Church

Safeguarding Officer – Karen Summerfield

Children's Champion – Stephanie O'Donnell

PCC Safeguarding Policy statement is displayed on the notice board in the Welcome Area.

Church on the Corner

Safeguarding Officer – Suzanne Procter

Children's Champion – Stavroulla Andreou

PCC Safeguarding Policy statement is displayed on the entry notice board.

Children's Work

Our vision and aim

Starchasers is a group for our children across Barnsbury Parish. It aims to evangelise (tell the children about God, his love for them and how they need Jesus) and to encourage (to grow and mature the faith of those who are Christians).

The children

The group was originally for 5–11 year olds (primary school age). Due to changes (people moving away, kids moving up to the youth group) we decided in 2022 to open this up to all under-11s. It has been great to be able to provide more for the under-5s and have fun and worship together. We have had more new families come and join us in 2023. We have additional children we are in contact with who come ad hoc to (for example) Christmas and Easter events. Some children have linked in from coming to our Stay and Play group and local schools.

The leaders

I would like to thank our wonderful volunteers and parent helpers for all their hard work and dedication. There have been lots of changes and I couldn't have managed without them. Special thanks to Heather Wood for her wonderful support and teaching with the group, and for her great ideas!

Sharing with church family

In the notice section of the 10.30am service, we share things the group has been up to. We also have an activity table for any children attending the 9am service.

All-age services

We have really enjoyed building on our all-age services. It has been great to encourage more children to attend, and numbers have been growing. We continue to think of new ideas to engage everyone in worship together. Special thanks to Rev Idina and Revd Caroline for working with me on this.

Teaching

Starchasers trips

To encourage our families to join in with Eco friendly activities, we went on another trip to Camley Street Natural Park for their community festival celebrating World Environment Day. There were lots of activities to join in with, including storytelling, planting seeds, minibeast hunting and pond dipping. This was a wonderful time to get to know families more and explore local nature places.

Spring term

This term we looked at New year, new starts and building good foundations. We then looked at Lent/Easter themes after half term.

Summer term

This term we looked at the 'I AM statements' of Christ. We also made some decorations, and had activities for the coronation celebration in Church.

Autumn term

This term we looked at the story of Joseph from Genesis 37.

Praise God for...

- The kids – New kids joining
- The leaders – Wonderful skills and knowledge

Please pray for...

- The kids – New kids to feel welcome. For them to grow a stronger faith
- This year – Great relationship building, and for everyone to grow in faith
- Leaders – Developing new skills to help the children

Community outreach

Messy Cathedral

I attended Messy Cathedral in February 2023. This was a lovely time to meet people from all over London, and share the Easter story with children and their families.

Cally Fest

We had a brilliant time engaging with the locals. As well as the usual refreshments stand, we had a table of kids' crafts.

Easter activities

For Shrove Tuesday we had a pancake party at St Andrew's School. We started small, as a test run for the following year. It was a great success, and we were able to have lovely pancakes, play games and share what Shrove Tuesday is all about.

On Holy Saturday we had Messy Easter, alongside Open Church. It was wonderful to welcome many new families into Church. We had lots of fun activities and crafts.

We also had another fun Easter egg hunt on Easter Sunday after the service. We were able to advertise locally, and had a few new people come and join in.

Messy Christmas

It was wonderful to have Kate Reid and Rev Idina alongside to lead and plan this. This time we had a lovely time of singing and teaching led by Rev Idina, which the kids (and adults!) really enjoyed.

Christingle service – Christmas Eve

We were able to have our usual Christingle service. We saw some new families and enjoyed worshipping together, and had a great increase in numbers from last year.

Schools work

Ted Fell and I continued our work delivering collective worship to St Andrew's Primary School. Rev Idina and Revd Caroline join us in leading our usual school services. We also do assemblies for Thornhill School, and have been building on our relationships there.

St Andrew's Primary School assemblies

Spring 2023:

- Spring 1 – We looked at new year and new starts. We explored this with the stories from the Bible, and see how having a firm foundation, and listening to God can help us in the year ahead.
- Spring 2 – We learnt more about fairtrade fortnight, before learning more about lent, and charities that help others in the world.

Summer 2023:

- Summer 1/2 – This term we looked at celebration days and the 'I AM statements' of Christ

Autumn 2023:

- Autumn 1 – We looked at the theme of 'Our world'. We thought about certain awareness days, and how we can help others around the world.
- Autumn 2 – We looked at the theme of national days and Advent/Christmas.

St Andrew's Primary School services

For key events, the whole school comes to St Andrew's Church for a service. These include St Andrew's day, Christmas/Christingle, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Pentecost, and Year 6 Leavers. It's always a pleasure to support the school and to see the pupils, staff and parents attend the services. A few pupils from school help us each time.

Assemblies at Thornhill School

This is such an amazing opportunity to share the Christian faith with a few hundred pupils. We have been in to deliver assemblies. We hope to build on this and do more in the future.

Prayers

Please pray for both schools...

- The staff/pupils – may they have a great year, and that we can continue to support.
- Thank God for all the staff/volunteers at school that work hard to provide a fun and safe environment for the children.

Stay and Play

The Church runs a popular Stay and Play group for parents/carers and toddlers on Friday mornings. It continues to attract good numbers and is much appreciated by those who attend. Many different activities are provided and the children and parents/carers have the opportunity to socialise. Many thanks are due to

Kate Reid who works so hard to lead the activities and to Rev Idina who has been able to contribute since her arrival in the parish.

Heather Parker, Barnsbury Parish Children's Worker

Roots Youth Group

Our Roots Group has continued to thrive this year. Following discussion with the young people, 'The Revelation to John' was chosen as a key area of study. Through the generosity of kind donors, the group was able to have an outing during the year. For the first time, an Easter Egg hunt geared to young people was arranged, with clues both inside and outside the church.

The highlight of the year was that seven young people from the group were confirmed at St Paul's Cathedral. It was an awe inspiring service. They all attended confirmation classes prior to being confirmed, and learned about Christian commitment and vocation, the reading of Scripture, prayer, and the Church of England. As part of their preparation, they had to study one of the gospels. They were able to share their testimonies at a service at St Andrew's following the confirmations at the Cathedral.

Through our concern for young people in the local area, Lamar Henry has arranged prayer meetings on the Bemerton Estate, in the western area of our parish. Our hope is that young people in the area will come to know and rely on Jesus, rather than be drawn into harmful activities.

Please pray regularly for our young people, for Lamar and for local youth charities including Prospex, which was born out of St Andrew's Church. We are hoping that, through God's grace, we can have a growing impact on the lives of young people in Barnsbury.

The Revd Caroline Titley, Rector and Lamar Henry, Roots Group Leader

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Barnsbury

"Realising Potential through Faith, Hope and Love"

This has been a roller coaster year for St Andrew's Primary School. You will have seen in the local press about the merger of Vittoria and Copenhagen Schools, and the closure of Blessed Sacrament School, events which seemed unthinkable even a year ago in Barnsbury. St Andrew's started the academic year with 170 pupils but now has 188 owing in part to the closure of the other schools but also to its reputation and Ofsted rating (Good). The increased numbers mean a healthier bottom line as a school's budget is based on an allowance per head for the number of pupils. But expenses continue to rise. As part of a national trend, we also have an increase in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (which includes children with poor mental health), and the funding for this is slow to come down the pipeline, meaning the school often needs to spend money on children's needs long before the child is assessed. Even then there is no guarantee of additional funding. At present around 25% of the children in St Andrew's have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and the number on Pupil Premium (where there is an allowance for children from homes with financial challenges) is up to more than 60% from the 40% of pre-pandemic levels. This means the majority of children at St Andrew's come from 'disadvantaged' backgrounds and the school has to work extra hard to get them to the same place as children from more affluent backgrounds.

Amongst the school's achievements is that attendance is higher than the national average and has risen in the spring term (2024) to 94.5% but there is a national slide in attendance at school post-pandemic. At least we are over one percentage point higher than the national average, thanks to incessant work by the staff in chasing absent children and hitting home with the message that missing school can have dire consequences. But it is a depressing picture.

It's easy to get swamped by facts and figures and it's perhaps better to go for the headlines – there is much good news. St Andrew's has as many children now as before the pandemic despite falling rolls in Islington. It is preparing for the upcoming Ofsted inspection with confidence. It's also looking forward to a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) next year. There is no doubt that the Christian ethos permeates the school and that the many children of different cultures and backgrounds who attend St Andrew's leave with an understanding and appreciation of Christianity even if it isn't their heritage. Just come and see the children at a church service at our church – it's a joyful experience. The children attend church at least once a term and thanks to our clergy and children's worker Heather Parker, they enjoy the services – and the bell ringing is still very popular!

And their wider education is impressive – fortnightly visits to West Library and Lewis Carroll Libraries, swimming lessons at the Cally Pool, trips to City University, the biennial Prom Praise for Schools at the Royal Albert Hall, and the Year 6 Annual School Journey to Cardfields Outdoor Activity Centre in Essex where the highlight was the removal of a giant spider by a heroic teaching assistant. There was so much fun – and there was the disco of course....

And thanks to the many people in the community who support the school. One local person made a wonderfully generous donation to support food provision for hungry children, and the work done by FoSA (Friends of St Andrew's) brings in funds for specific extras. If you want to help the school financially call in at

the office or contact the head. Or if you want to volunteer to help children read, you will be welcomed with open arms. Over 40% of the children have a different mother tongue from English yet they are brilliantly eloquent and put me to shame with their wit and eloquence. It is so rewarding. The school's phone number is 020 7837 4049 and the website is www.standrews.islington.sch.uk. The email address is admin@standrews.islington.sch.uk

Our headteacher Felicity Djerehe and deputy head Richard Smith do a wonderful job, as do all the staff. Our sincere thanks go to them for providing such a wonderful, safe, comforting, but exciting, challenging, ambitious environment for local children, who go on to do so well. It is an amazing achievement.

Lis Howell, Co-vice chair; Board of Governors, St Andrew's Primary School

Arts on the Corner

This year has been another lovely one for Arts on the Corner, as we continue to experience the nurturing, joyful and life-giving nature of creativity in the community.

We've had fun with a **whole host of creative forms**, including silk painting, experimental watercolours, egg dyeing at Easter, al fresco summer painting in Culpepper Community Garden, and Christmas wreath making with foraged foliage. Members of Arts on the Corner have shared their skills too, with origami with Cat, creative writing with Stavs and collage with Lorraine. We've ventured further afield with trips to the Saint Francis exhibition at the National Gallery, Drop-in Drawing at the National Portrait Gallery and our very own Lorraine's first solo painting show! We celebrated our second birthday in November (complete with Colin the Caterpillar).



Most importantly of all, we've enjoyed creativity and a diverse community, countering the sterile individualism and underlying anxiety that are widespread features of so much London living. A mental image I had a while ago was of a lily pond – I didn't know this, but on researching, I discovered that while being beautiful, lily pads also remove toxins from water, oxygenate it and are an important part of the wider ecosystem. As we create art and create community in the oxygenating presence of divine love, we are removing the toxins of isolation, anxiety and distraction we all experience.

Some of the regular members of the community have recently summarised what it means to them, so I'll finish with their words:

"It's an incredibly **creative, welcoming and expressive event**, where you can natter with others over tea and cake."

"Cool, creative, connecting with other people is stimulating. **Calming mind and spirit... wholeness... An adventure (in artwork).**"

"I enjoy my monthly visit to Arts on the Corner because it is a very welcoming and nurturing group."

“What I love most about Arts on the Corner is its **variety**. It's genuinely unique to witness the diverse ways people express themselves through one type of medium, and I find constant inspiration in their creativity. What makes Arts on the Corner exceptional is also its **inclusive community spirit**. **Everyone feels welcomed, cared for, and valued**. Whether a regular or a newcomer, there's an **instant sense of belonging**, perhaps because we all share a passion for art and community. I'm immensely grateful. I do not doubt that Arts on the Corner will continue to thrive as a hub for **creativity, connection, and exploration**.”



Emily Hockley, Arts on the Corner Leader

Cosy Corner

We started Cosy Corner as a Warm Space at Church on the Corner at the beginning of November 2023. We meet every Monday from 11am–2pm, offering a warm welcome, a hot soup and bread lunch, and a social space with games, puzzles, quizzes, bingo and mindful activities.

We were inspired by the Warm Welcome Campaign, which exists to turn poverty and isolation into warmth and welcome through the power of local Spaces made by and for the community. They have a vision to create a fairer and friendlier society, built by local communities, so everyone can thrive and knows where to turn to for warmth, welcome, friendship and support.

We have about 15 regulars, some local and some from West London. They are very positive about our group, and have called it 'peaceful', 'a safe space', and 'something to look forward to on a Monday'. During Lent we added in a short reflection and prayer time at the end of each session, which people found helpful. Having been comfortable in the group, several people have come along to our church worship services and other events, and some now attend regularly.

A big thank you to everyone who has volunteered to make this group happen: especially Stavroulla, Kaaren, Robert, Val and Sue, everyone from COTC and St Andrew's who have made delicious soups, and many people who've helped in other ways from putting out tables, to donating puzzles.

We hope to continue the group throughout 2024, so if you'd like to come along or to volunteer, do get in touch with Rev Idina.

Rev Idina Dunmore, Associate Minister with responsibility for Church on the Corner

Copenhagen Street Food Bank

We continue to support the food bank which is open every Thursday at the Catholic church in Copenhagen Street. Two years ago we were serving about 80 customers a week, last year 150, now about 170, providing food for about 400 local people. The main helpers from our parish are Tania Levett, Avril Riddell, Sharon Alexander, Idina Dunmore, Ali Lloyd and Richard Parker.

We are grateful to all those who bring Sunday donations to church. You might have noticed that we now collect in the box next to the red wheelie bin outside the office. We share this box for donations from families of children at the Montessori nursery. More, please! We need non-perishable food: tinned meat, fish, soup, vegetables and fruit, plus pasta, rice, tea bags, instant coffee and toiletries. Items can also be left at collection points in Caledonian Road: in the Co-op (just inside the door on the left, almost hidden behind the baskets), and in Iceland. (The Sunflour Bakery in Caledonian Road generously gives us a lot of their excellent bread every week.)

The organisers are also able to respond to what people need by buying stuff in bulk. This is made possible by local supporters who make regular financial contributions, perhaps £5 a month, usually by standing order. If you would like to help in this way, or make a single donation, please see Richard.

And, of course, we could always use more help on Thursdays, setting up and packing bags in the morning and/or serving customers in the afternoon. Have a word with Richard for more information.

Richard Parker

Open Church

Though Lis Howell had started opening up St Andrew's before 2023, last year was when Open Church became properly established. I (Chanel) joined Lis in May 2023, and we wanted to make Open Church something that would meet our local community's needs. We started by developing the item swap, expanding it to children's and adults' books and baby clothes. Through donations we extended the swap to all clothes in December 2023, providing women's, men's, and children's clothes for all ages. We started to grow quickly. As the donations increased we reached out to provide to other charities, such as women's refuges, Smart Works (who provide decent clothes for women returning to work), the Manna Project in Canonbury (providing men's clothes), Choices (clothes for 0-5 year olds) and Traid (who can recycle all the items that we do not need or cannot recycle). And, of course, there is our Undercover project providing new underwear – a need that is often ignored.

As well as opening St Andrew's for our clothes and book swap on Saturdays from 11am–1pm, Open Church also allows visitors access to our church for quiet reflection or prayers, to light a candle or to look around the church and its grounds and learn about its history. Revd Caroline or Rev Idina are also available on Saturdays. We also have a clothes hub on a Tuesday morning which enables us along with our wonderful volunteers to sort out all of the donations in readiness for Saturdays.

In February we heard to our delight that we have been awarded a grant from the North London Waste Authority, under their North London Community Scheme. This will enable us to get proper storage facilities and to have clothes racks, shelving and bookcases on wheels. We've recently started recycling toys as well, and we always have crafts available for kids.

In 2024, we hope to start extending further with our café project, the Coffee Bar, where coffee and homemade or locally purchased cakes will be available. Please do keep popping in – casual visitors who like to see a place with a bit of a buzz and to meet members of our church family are always welcome.

We are hoping to welcome you all to our extended Open Church in the near future!

Chanel Georgio

St Andrew's Church Gardens

The St Andrew's Volunteers' Gardening Group has continued to meet on the second Saturday in the month during the past year. We have not grown much in numbers but we continue to make progress, which is much appreciated by the local community. We are always looking for others to join us. You don't have to be a gardener as we will happily give you guidance as to what needs doing.

During the summer of 2023, we were invited to visit by the gardening group in Arundel Square, together with other gardeners from Thornhill Square. It was interesting to see what other people were doing in our locality. Afterwards we had afternoon tea with one of the residents. We hope to be able to reciprocate during 2024.

We were fortunate with the weather during the summer as there was enough rain so that we didn't have to do too much watering by hand. The weather may not have been the best for everyone but for gardeners it was great!

In October, Bishop Joanne attended the church for the Induction of Caroline as our Rector. She visited the church gardens and was impressed by our efforts. She requested that we should send her a brief report on what we had achieved, which she was pleased to circulate on the Stepney Lives website.

In early March 2024, we decided to renovate another flower bed, which had become overgrown, and were pleased to discover an arc of bricks which were buried and defined the area we were trying to save. Much work is still needed here to get rid of the ivy and other greenery but we hope to have this in good order by the summer.

We were pleased to receive a donation of cash which enabled us to purchase several bags of white pebbles to go under the Yew trees at the back of the church building. Many thanks to Debbie for organising this.

We are grateful to Islington Council who once again provided us with large bags of bark and manure to help improve the soil.

The Group is very informal and meets on the second Saturday of every month between 11am and 1pm. Everyone is very welcome.

Avril Gardner, on behalf of the St Andrew's Gardening Group

Eco Church

In early 2023, the parish committed to caring better for creation. This is very much in line with the focus of the Church of England nationally, and of the Diocese of London. The Church of England is committed to the ambitious target of net zero by 2030, and churches within our own diocese are required to measure the energy footprint of our buildings and to set targets for reducing our consumption. We are also encouraged, to help us on our eco journey, to apply for Eco Church status under a scheme operated by the charity A Rocha. This scheme, based on a tick list of actions, some of which are quite challenging, provides a useful stimulus.

We established a Parish Eco Group early in 2023, and (using the Eco Church framework as a guide) we have made good progress. We have met every 2 to 3 months. Care for creation is a regular theme of our worship and prayer in both churches, and the parish has consciously moved towards reusable and eco-friendly products in our kitchens, cleaning cupboards and offices. Church on the Corner has been able to apply to Cloudesley for funds to have solar panels installed on our roof. I am pleased to report that St Andrew's achieved a Bronze award early in 2024, followed a few weeks later by Church on the Corner, which decided to apply separately. Celebrations will follow in 2024. But there is no room for complacency; our environment is deteriorating. Now both churches need to be working towards our Silver awards.

Heather Wood, on behalf of the Parish Eco Church Group

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synods are held three times a year and include representatives from each church in Islington Deanery. Each meeting is attended by perhaps a quarter of those eligible. The meetings are generally held in different local churches. Apart from formal business (such as election of the lay vice chair at my first meeting) which is short and rapidly dealt with, and apart from "Any Other Business" when points are raised (for example regarding the churches' progress regarding environmental awareness, such as our Bronze Award), the business of the meeting is a presentation of something which may be of interest. For example, last Summer's meeting at St Andrew's, Whitehall Park included a presentation by Choices, a charity in Caledonian Road, which provides counselling support for unplanned pregnancy and pregnancy loss, and the most recent meeting, at St Luke's, West Holloway, included presentations by members of that church regarding its initiative concerning artwork inspired by the Gospel. Barnsbury Parish is entitled to nominate two members of Deanery Synod so if any others in our Parish are interested in joining please contact the Rector.

Roland Jones, Deanery Synod Rep