



Parish Profile

St Mary's, Worplesdon & St Alban's, Wood Street Village

From Bishop Andrew



The Diocese of Guildford is a warm and friendly place to be, with a strong cohort of gifted and passionate laity and clergy, some excellent church schools, and plenty of beautiful countryside to enjoy on a day off!

Our vision as a diocese is to see lives and communities transformed through the love of Christ; and, to that end, we have recently refreshed our Diocesan Strategy Transforming Church, Transforming Lives, with a particular focus on Growing Disciples, Growing Diversity and Growing Community. Although our congregations are generally rather larger than average, we are all too conscious that we are only reaching a tiny proportion of our parish populations, and are particularly keen to become more effective in passing on the baton of faith to younger generations.

Our team of Mission Enablers are committed to working with every parish in fleshing out that vision in an appropriate way, going with the grain of the church's history and tradition, whilst also suggesting new ways to 'proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation'. The pandemic, while presenting many challenges, has helped to forge new relationships between many of our churches, creating a spirit of 'us and us' more than 'them and us', and opening up new approaches to partnership and inter-church collaboration.

If you share our vision for transformation, and have a track record in growing disciples, growing diversity and growing community, we'd love to hear from you!

The Right Revd Andrew Watson

Bishop of Guildford

From the Archdeacon of Surrey and Area Dean of Guildford



The Parish of Worplesdon are looking to appoint someone to lead them into the next season with vision, prayer, courage and love. What comes across in the pages that follow is a real hunger for more – more of Jesus, more confidence in sharing faith, more prayer, and more engagement with children, young people and families.

This is a really exciting post for someone who is up for growing the church in numbers, depth and impact in a semi-rural context. With two churches of quite different styles – both architecturally and in the style of worship that they offer – there is great opportunity to work with the strengths of both. In addition, there is also the opportunity to increase the presence of the church in the community of Fairlands, a third centre of population within the parish, and to look at pioneering new expressions of church in that area.

I think you can be assured of a warm welcome at St Mary's and St Alban's, where the people are highly committed and want to work with their new Rector to discern the vision and priorities for the season ahead.

To support this, the finances are sound, and there is good governance in place. I hope that you would want, with them, to grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ, and to make more disciples of all ages and backgrounds in the local communities.

I hope you will enjoy reading what follows, and that you will prayerfully seek to discern whether God is calling you to the Parish of Worplesdon, and to the Diocese of Guildford. If you would value an informal conversation about the post, please don't hesitate to contact me by emailing

catharine.mabuza@cofeguildford.org.uk or by calling 07785 990208.

Please be assured of my prayers for all those reading this Profile.

The Venerable Catharine Mabuza
Archdeacon of Surrey
September 2024



Thank you for considering the role of Incumbent in Worplesdon in the Deanery and Diocese of Guildford. Please be assured of our prayers from across the deanery for all those who put out their fleeces in discerning if God is calling you to this rather wonderful corner of the kingdom. Guildford Deanery is a richly diverse place which includes the beauty of the Surrey Hills as well as the dump. It is diverse in geography and population, and also in ecclesiology! We rejoice and celebrate that and work well together from across the traditions in the places we are all called to serve. If God calls you here, you would be joining an active and positive Chapter who would support and encourage you as a partner in the Gospel.

Fr Neil Roberts
Area Dean of Guildford

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A Message from the Churchwardens

People have been worshipping in Worplesdon Parish for many centuries. Indeed, there has been a site of worship at St Mary's since at least 1086 AD or perhaps even earlier! Equally and importantly, worship and getting to know Jesus and the Holy Spirit has been central to St Alban's and Wood Street Village too, although the current church is comparatively recent having been built in 1967.

We are very grateful for all that God has done here over the past few years. There are many positives to celebrate and strength upon which we can build and we now want to work with our new Rector to grow a thriving intergenerational church with the love of Jesus and the fire of the Holy Spirit at its core. We and the PCC are united in our desire to fully support our new Rector to discern God's will and implement whatever changes may be required to achieve this.

We need and want a Rector who can make this happen, who will push us forward and lead us onwards. We need someone to ignite, embolden, challenge but above all to nurture us and our faith. We need someone to grow us and to encourage discipleship and to lead us through this ongoing change. This is a role where you could make a real difference.

As you read through our profile, we hope that you will get a good impression of who we are, where we are and the many opportunities we have to achieve much more in God's name. We hope that with careful prayer from us and you, you are inspired to come with God's guiding hand to join and lead us. We are excited at the prospect.

Lastly, but most importantly, as wardens working with a strong and united PCC, we will do everything we can to support, help and work with you to discern and realise the future to which God is calling us.

Carol, Joanna & David



Photo taken at the Archdeacon's Visitation 2024

Contact us: wardens@worplesdonparish.com

'Reflecting the love of God in all we say and do'

Reasons to Celebrate

Our vacancy workshop identified much to celebrate in our parish.

Our Team

Our team of service leaders, ordained and lay, is strong and committed. We have been enabled and empowered.

People are willing to get behind good ideas and 'do stuff'.

We have dedicated volunteers.

Our Worship

We have the best of both worlds with our variety of worship, contemporary and traditional. We enjoy coming together to grow our faith through our small groups.

We're trying to be more prayerful and to discern God's will for our parish.

Our Church Family

We are committed and caring.

We are welcoming and supportive.

We have a strong core of people – we need to nurture them

Our Opportunities

We are excited to do what is needed to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and grow our church.

Our Buildings

We have two beautiful and very different churches. Both are structurally sound and well maintained. Both are places of peace and beauty.

Our Youth Club

is thriving. We have some great volunteers from the congregation helping run the club.

Our TASA* group is valued by its members. We offer safe spaces for young people.

*Teens at St Alban's



Our Parish Future - Where we are going



Our hopes and prayers for the future

When we asked the congregation what they value about the parish the common words used were: Family, Fellowship, Friendly, Supportive, Community, Caring, Worship.

When the PCC and others came together during our vacancy workshop to consider God's purpose and direction for our parish moving forward, some clear priorities were expressed. There is much opportunity in our parish to make a difference.

Deepening and growing our discipleship

We want inspiration, encouragement and clear Biblical preaching and teaching to help us be renewed and to grow spiritually. We want to be more open to the power of the Holy Spirit and more passionate about what we believe so that we encourage others to come to know Jesus.

We would like to develop a stronger and more supportive corporate prayer life to help us discern God's will for our parish and our lives.

Growing young people and families

Like many churches we want to grow our congregation especially families and young people so they may find God's plan in their lives.

We want to create an uplifting experience in all services that inspires the existing congregation and encourages new people.

Outreach into the community

We want to be more outward looking and to extend our ministry to the local community so that we can share God's love with those around us.

We would like to develop our pastoral care across all age groups within both our congregation and the parish.

Developing our gifts

We long to see the Holy Spirit move in power in our church and in our lives and to exercise the gifts of the Spirit. We want to encourage and nurture our congregation to recognise their gifts so they may use them in service both inside and outside the church.

We want to continue to encourage and support our lay ministry and nurture candidates for vocational training.



The Challenges ahead

Following our vacancy workshop and after much prayer and discussion we recognise that there are things that need sorting and things missing. Most of all we seek revival. The common challenge is for us to develop as Christians and as a church to be led by the Holy Spirit and be relevant for the 21st century.

Re-energising our faith, deepening and growing our discipleship

- Our discovery groups are valued by those who attend. We want more people to be able to experience small groups and the opportunity to explore our faith that they offer.
- We are **not confident** as individuals in sharing our faith, telling our stories or inviting people to church.
- Prayer initiatives have not always been well supported in the past and there is opportunity to develop **a more active and confident prayer life** both individually and corporately.
- We'd like more biblical teaching and to find more ways to engage with the bible which connect with everyday life.
- **We need to move out of our 'comfort zone' and be bold.** We want help with how to do that.
- We are keen to **develop our worship** so we serve the needs of those who may be seeking a more informal and accessible style of worship while sensitively meeting the needs of all members of our existing congregation especially those who prefer the more traditional and may be reluctant to change.

Growing our congregation and growing diversity

- While we are initially welcoming, **we need to build relationships with new people** so that they return and feel encouraged to become full and fruitful members of our church.
- With fewer weddings and baptisms than in the past our opportunities to encourage new people have reduced. The challenge is to reverse this.
- We want to be **imaginative with the many opportunities we do have** – our youth group and TASA, new housing estates, schools, pre-schools, the college and other youth organisations in the parish, churchyard visitors and walkers – building up this part of our church family and helping families and young people to find their way to faith.
- **We need to invest in young people.** We seek a Rector with specific gifts in this area. Currently, new young families attending our churches may be put off and go elsewhere as there are not many other families at our services.
- We have opportunities to **develop our pastoral care** and support system both within our congregation and the wider community.

Growing our community

- We'd like to **improve our identity and presence** in our villages. St Alban's is geographically better placed to do this and has a church hall. St Mary's is rather tucked away on the hill. We'd like to make the space it offers more usable and engage more with those who walk through our churchyard.
- While we have a good on-line presence through our website and social media we need to work harder with our internal and external communication.
- How can we develop our involvement with the community and support for the church with a view to sharing God's love?

Finances

- We are in a strong position with healthy reserves but as we go deeper in discipleship, we pray that we will see giving increase and will be able to grow our outward giving.

We hope you are enthused by what you have read so far. The following pages seek to explain more about our parish, what we do and the foundation we have to build on. We are excited by what God may be calling us to do next and supporting a new Rector to lead us.



Who God might bring as our next Rector

At our vacancy workshop we spent much time thinking and praying about who God might bring to our parish. We have also asked members of our congregation and our young people for their views. The following characteristics and experience emerged as consensus. We seek someone who is:

- **Spirit filled and servant led** who will lead us deeper in our faith through prayer and worship.
- A stimulating **preacher, teacher and communicator** with an ability to connect the bible to day to day life and its challenges in imaginative and relevant ways.
- Young in outlook with a **big heart for children and young people**.
- Experienced in helping to grow congregations, who has ideas on **revival**, is bold in discerning God's will for us and can help us develop together a **vision** for growth.
- Able to **encourage, energise and support** us to embrace the change of opening our hearts to and exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- **Passionate** about working in the community and **building relationships and partnerships** with schools, colleges and community groups. Always looking for ways of creating stepping stones to faith as well as energising the wealth of talent and resources in the parish.
- **Enthusiastic and inspiring** through their actions and conversations and **a motivational leader**.
- **Warm, engaging, fun and approachable** with a strong pastoral heart who can support and build teams and sensitively and resiliently manage change.

We understand this is a lot to ask of one person! We're open to applicants who don't feel they quite tick all the boxes yet but are excited about the opportunities here in our parish!

What we can offer you

We believe that there is **lots of opportunity to make a difference** in this role, particularly:

- Reviving and re-energising our faithful congregations to become more Christ centered.
- Developing the potential in the parish of growth of families and young people so we become a thriving intergenerational church.
- Engaging with our community to bring more people into the family of Jesus.

This is your opportunity to bring creativity and joy to the role while being supported both prayerfully and practically by a committed team. **We are receptive to whatever is needed to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and grow our faith and our church.** You could bring your people skills to the fore in creating a vision and strategy, enabling and manage change while encouraging and nurturing people along the way.

Our churches are well maintained, our finances are sound (see appendix) and our churchwardens and PCC strong, united and excited to work with you.

You'd be living and working in a beautiful part of the country. Your home would be modern and comfortable with easy access to walks and the heathland as well as transport links.

We look forward to your application.

Our Congregation

Our congregation comes from a wide range of church traditions. Being blessed with two churches in our parish provides us with the opportunity to offer different styles of service. Those who like a more informal service attend St Alban's and those who prefer the more traditional service tend to attend St Mary's.

Our average combined weekly attendance at both St Mary's and St Alban's is between 45 and 60. Most of the congregation choose to worship at one church, whereas some split their time between both but we do come together regularly with a United Service on the 5th Sunday, as well as at our Patronal Services.

We have 152 members on the electoral roll, with approximately 60% of those living within the parish and others living very close by. Our age profile is increasing, and the demographic reflects an older, white, middle class make up.

Changing attendance habits since Covid means we now have a small number of families who regularly worship but before the pandemic, our family services and events were well attended. Growing our families and young people's involvement is a huge area of opportunity for us and one we want to prioritise.

There are several housing estates in the parish, some having recently been built. We long to engage with families and grow a strong intergenerational church of followers of Jesus.

Our congregation may be relatively small, but we are friendly and want to be closer to God, though many of us are at different stages of our faith. In recent years some of our congregation have stepped up to support the parish in lay leadership, organising and setting up services, operating our audio / visual equipment and training as pastoral assistants.

Whilst our team of volunteers give their time in very practical ways, there is some hesitation in sharing faith with others and there is a strong desire amongst many of us to engage at a deeper level with the work of the Holy Spirit and to be able to share that with others. We are excited by what God may be calling us to do next.



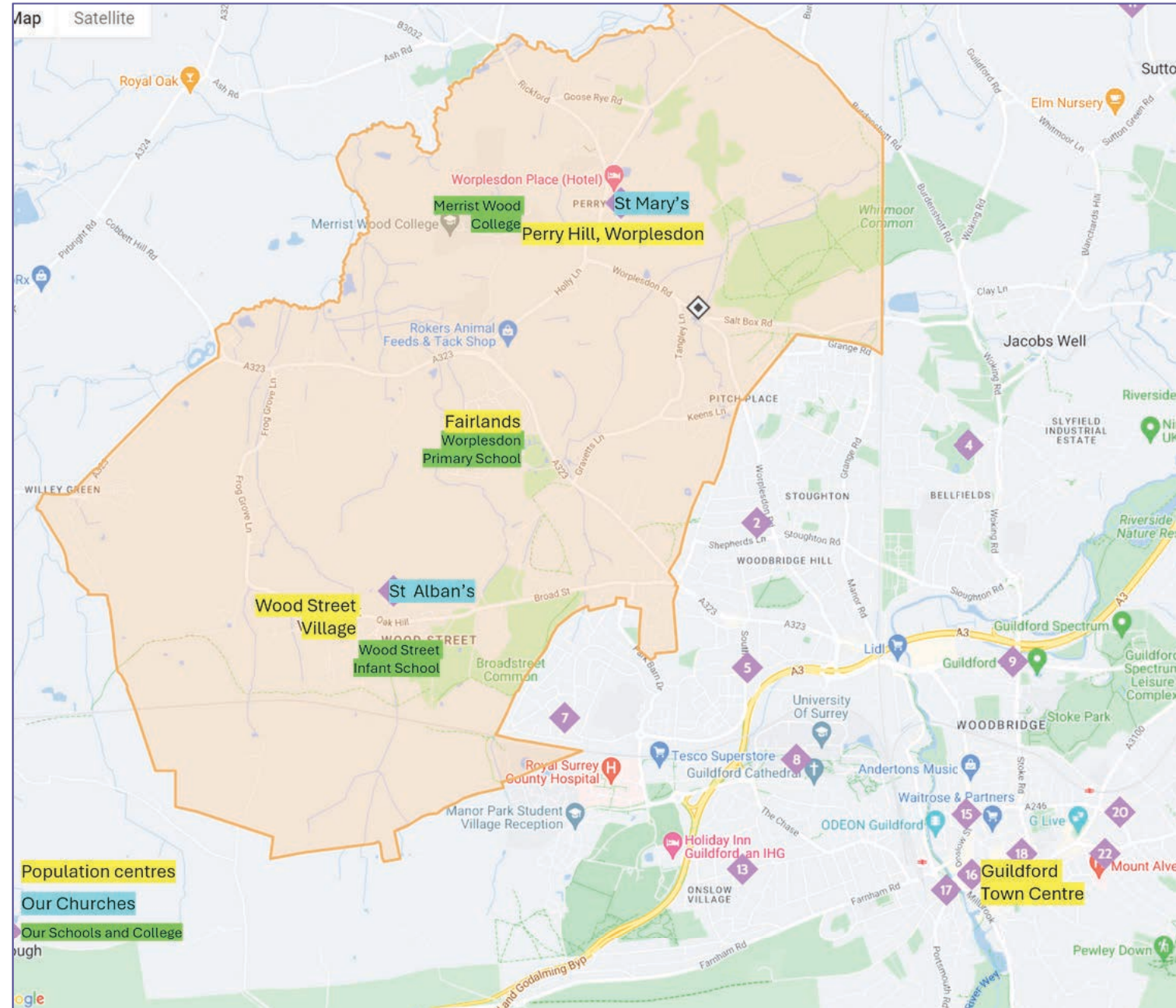
Our Parish

Worplesdon is a semi-rural parish in Surrey about 3 miles north-west of Guildford. We are in the Guildford Deanery which is one of the largest in the diocese and is active and supportive with many thriving churches from the full range of traditions.

We're only 30 minutes from London by train, with easy access to Worplesdon, Guildford and Woking railway stations. We're close to the A3, M3 and M25 and equidistant between Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

Guildford is a lively university town with a population of around 150,000. Its castle, cathedral, historic churches, theatres, cinemas and nightclubs as well as a good shopping centre make it a great place to live. There are excellent schools (state and private) in the area and the Royal Surrey Hospital is only 10 minutes drive from the Rectory.

We're close to the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, nearer to home, the Thames Basin Heathland and Sites of Special Scientific Interest provide easy access to beautiful walks and wildlife, with the opportunity for reflection and thanksgiving for the glory of God's creation.



Our Parish

Our Communities

The parish covers approximately 8 square miles with a population of around 9,000 people in 3,600 households and consists of 3 main communities:

- Worplesdon
- Fairlands
- Wood Street Village

While often perceived to be a relatively affluent area with low unemployment and high home ownership, Worplesdon Parish in its entirety has a mix of social and age groups and a share of social challenges. Wealth is little protection against loneliness. Side by side with those more well off, the parish has struggling families and older people living on little more than basic state pensions.

Several relatively new housing estates have been built which provides us with outreach opportunities and the possibility of sharing God's message of love with more people. We know that more can be done here and want a leader who can make this happen.

There are small mobile home parks within the parish and we have good relationships with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community who feel welcomed at St Mary's for weddings and funerals.

There are two care homes, three pre school nurseries, an infant and primary school as well as a further education college in the parish. We have connections with all of these but want these connections to bear more fruit for Jesus.

The old United Reformed Church building in Worplesdon is now used as a mosque which is a further opportunity for connection.

The Armenian Church of Surrey Sussex and Hampshire hold services in St Mary's occasionally.

We would like to work more collaboratively with both our neighbouring parishes of Emmanuel Stoughton and Pirbright and Wyke.





St Mary's, Worplesdon

St Mary's has evolved over many years to meet the needs of the parish. The PCC is united in wanting to support a new incumbent to lead us through change and increase the utilisation of this beautiful building.

There has been a church on the site since 1086, and at one time, St Mary's was linked to the Dominican Friary in Guildford. The views from the tower extend far beyond the boundaries of the parish. Visiting bell ringers come from a wide area to experience the fine peal of 8 bells.

St Mary's is in excellent repair so this would not be a concern for a new Rector. Thanks to some amazingly generous gifts and legacies as well as general fund expenditure, the roof has been replaced, the tower repointed, electrical wiring and lights completely renewed, the chancel reordered to make space, the interior redecorated, new gas boilers installed and the bells refurbished. The installation of a three-camera, live streaming system enables outreach to those who can't make it to church.

However, it's the future that's important. The PCC recognises there's an opportunity to make better use of our beautiful building, both on Sundays and by holding more community events.

This will involve completion of our current kitchen and toilet improvement project to include disabled facilities. We have planning permission and faculty and have raised half of the £140k needed.

We also have ideas for future phases to add a café area and to make the space more flexible – even removal of pews (which the PCC supports)! Changing a Grade 1 Listed Building is expensive and can meet resistance, but the PCC is united in being up for the challenge.



'St Mary's is steeped in history with an ambiance which has survived to this day'
Parish Survey 2024



St Mary's Churchyard

Anecdotally it is the resting place for over 4,000 souls and has views to the North Downs and Guildford Cathedral.

Thanks to a gift of land about 15 years ago, the churchyard is still open with all the challenges that brings. We also have a new Garden of Remembrance. The churchyard is maintained with invaluable help from our volunteers from the local community service team who visit every week and help with grass and hedge cutting and other tidying. We also receive a contribution from Worplesdon Civil Parish Council towards contract grass cutting in the churchyard.

We have also been blessed with a recent legacy specifically for churchyard work. This will enable us to develop the pathways and carry out tree surgery which is needed to ensure health and safety and also to reduce some of the trees which currently, and sadly, make the church rather invisible from the main road.

A public footpath and The Fox Way run through the churchyard which means we have a regular footfall of walkers through our grounds. We see this as an opportunity and want to find more ways of welcoming and involving the walkers and those visiting the graves of loved ones.



St Alban's, Wood Street Village

While very different to the historic church of St Mary's, St Alban's is a well-loved church at the centre of the village community.

Situated prominently behind an ancient oak tree on the top of Oak Hill in the centre of the village, the church was built and consecrated by Bishop Reindorp in 1967.

From an aerial view the church roof lines are designed in the shape of a star with a central pointed spire and a bell, which is rung every Sunday calling people to worship. The main entrance is at the side. With high gabled ceilings and long feature windows on both sides the church exudes brightness.

Again, the buildings are in good repair and well maintained which will allow the new incumbent to focus not on the buildings but on the people – creating a truly Christ centered church where all are helped to enter into a life transforming relationship with Jesus.

Recently fully redecorated and refurbished with new carpets throughout, there are no fixed pews, we have interlocking chairs positioned in a horseshoe facing the altar. There is seating for just over 100 people and the versatility of the space allows us to host events including most recently the Worplesdon Young Musician of the Year competition and choral concerts.

There is a small church room to the side used for meetings and by the teen and youth groups. Our cloakrooms, refitted in 2017, comply with accessibility regulations. The church hall with a fully fitted kitchen is a good community space.

The hall is available to hire and brings in valuable revenue for the church. It is the home for the local Beavers, the monthly Parish Lunch, the Wood Street Youth Group, Wood Street Village Association and Horticultural Club and much more.

The front of the church has a large starburst positioned high on the front elevation which is attractively illuminated at night. A small garden with seasonal flowers fronts the village war memorial with flagpole.

All in all, it is a wonderful space to worship, pray, reflect and celebrate.

Eco Church

Both St Alban's and St Mary's participate in the Eco Church scheme and are currently bronze rated. We are actively working towards silver.



Our Team

We have a committed and able team of staff and volunteers who work effectively together to lead worship and co-ordinate all that is needed to support the Rector in running the parish. The new incumbent will probably want to build this team still further, growing new volunteers and identifying new candidates for formal ministry training.

Ministers with Permission to Officiate

We are grateful to have two retired clergy who have permission to officiate – Tom Weil and Martin Wright. Both play an active role in leading our services as well as helping with the day to day running of the church during the vacancy.

Tom supports services in both churches and also runs our website as well as sharing his deep wisdom on a range of areas. Martin supports the more traditional services at St Mary's and also communion services at St Alban's.

As an accomplished musician and singer, Martin also leads our choir and singers at the main church festivals.



Tom



Martin

Our Administrator

Michaela Kelly, our Parish Administrator, is our only paid employee. Michaela is responsible for the smooth running of the church which she does extremely well with a wonderful balance of efficiency and pastoral support.



In a volunteer capacity Michaela also runs our TASA group and lay leads services.

Support Team

Our wonderfully supportive organist Mike, who in his day job is a talented professional musician, plays at regular services as well as funerals and weddings.

We also have an excellent cleaning team of William at St Mary's and Louise at St Alban's.

Mike, William and Louise are self-employed contractors, paid on invoice.

Our Volunteers

The Rector and staff team are well supported by many hard working, committed and caring volunteers including our churchwardens, worship leaders, choir and singers, vergers, flower arrangers, coffee servers, Treasurer, Chair of Finance Committee, PCC and PCC Secretary, Parish Safeguarding Officer, grass cutters and many others.

We rely heavily on this dedicated group. One of the challenges ahead is to grow our congregation and encourage more people to be involved and committed in supporting the running of the parish.



What We Do

Services

Our current pattern of services is described below. We have made some progress in introducing accessible, contemporary worship particularly at St Alban's, and are now praying for a Rector who can lead us further in this area and help us exercise the gifts of the Spirit.

We hold two services each Sunday, one at each church both starting at 10:30am meaning services are either clergy or lay led as the Rector can't be in two places at once!

Sermons and reflections at both churches are currently planned around the lectionary.

Refreshments are served after each service and people are encouraged to stay and enjoy fellowship which often lasts longer than the service.

Our current service pattern is:

St Mary's

1st Sunday – Morning Prayer – Lay led

This is by far the biggest change we have made at this church and it has been embraced by the congregation with attendance numbers increasing.

2nd Sunday – Family Holy Communion

3rd Sunday – Celtic Holy Communion

4th Sunday – Family Holy Communion

5th Sunday – United Worship with

communion (alternating between churches)

St Alban's

1st Sunday – Communion Worship for All

2nd Sunday – Worship for All – Lay led

with baptism welcomes and anniversaries

3rd Sunday – Worship for All – Lay led

4th Sunday – Worship for All – Lay led

5th Sunday – United Worship with

communion (alternating between churches)



Services

We enjoy our celebrations of the major festivals. Services at Christmas include a traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, the Christmas Eve Crib Service at St Alban's and Midnight Communion at St Mary's. On Christmas Morning we offer a Communion service at St Mary's and Communion for All at St Alban's where we find out what presents the children have received.



During Holy Week we have a reflective service of Compline on the first 3 weekdays and a Maundy Thursday evening Communion. We offer a reflective 'At the Foot of the Cross' service on Good Friday morning at St Alban's followed by 'The Last Hour', a service of readings and prayers at St Mary's. On Easter Day we celebrate the risen Lord with communion services at both St Mary's and St Alban's.

Baptisms now take place within the morning services at St Mary's with the families invited to St Alban's on the 2nd Sunday for their welcome, with gifts of a candle and bible. Baptism is open to all who live in the parish and for those with a connection to the parish by request.

We offer weddings at both churches. The number of weddings has declined in the last 2-3 years, which we put down to the fact that there are so many venues available now that offer 'the whole package' and the challenge of making Christianity relevant.



There is a significant funeral ministry with referrals from local funeral directors, as well as for any deceased from the congregation. Burial within the churchyard is possible, as is the interment of ashes.

On the Sunday evening nearest to All Souls Day, we have a commemorative service with an opportunity for the bereaved, both recent and past, to remember their loved ones.

Worship

Music and singing play a big part in our worship.

We are blessed to have a strong core group of singers who form a more formal robed choir at St Mary's and a wonderful group who sing at St Alban's. These two groups join together at our combined services and festivals.

Hymns are chosen for all services by two of our choir members. We have a professional musician who regularly plays the organ at St Mary's, backed up by occasional musicians when necessary.

At St Alban's, with the introduction of our audio visual system, most of our music is played from recordings. The 2024 winner of the Worplesdon Young Musician of the Year plays the piano once a month which has enhanced the overall atmosphere of the service with live music once again.

At St Mary's we can now offer live streaming of services. This was developed during the Covid pandemic and has been popular when there is a service of particular importance, including weddings and funerals.

We have a very able technical team, which has really helped our services grow and develop. At St Alban's the service is displayed on screens and, without the need for as much paper, allows us to adapt our services and really bring them to life as well as improving our sustainability.



Evangelism and Discipleship

We, as a parish in Worplesdon, have come from a traditional worship background. However, more recently St Alban's has been excited to move towards a relaxed, informal style which has meant that anyone who is new or not regular to our church can follow the pattern of service easily especially now audio visual display screens have been installed.

St Mary's continues to offer a more traditional style of worship, but has recently become more open to less formal styles of worship and this is something that many of us would like to continue.

We have, within both churches, a faithful group of regular worshippers and within that lay-led members work tirelessly serving to prepare and lead our Sunday services, preaching, writing prayers, acting as chalice assistants and leading in worship. There is a strong team leading services at St Alban's where most services are lay-led.

Prayer by Zoom is available twice a week on Monday and Thursday mornings, set up during the Covid pandemic.

A Parish WhatsApp Group continues to exist which was also created as a way of keeping in touch and supporting each other and was a true blessing during the time of isolation for those living alone.

Discovery Groups run during the week offering study, prayer and pastoral support.



Visiting our Schools

A lay member of our team continues to visit both schools, Wood Street Infant School and Worplesdon Primary School during the vacancy.

Our previous Rector was Chaplain at Merrist Wood College, and we continue to have contact with them during the vacancy.

Our Goals

We recognise that in order to bring our communities to our churches we need to make changes in our evangelism and discipleship and the PCC is united and wholehearted in our commitment to support a new Rector in this work.

We have two quite diverse churches with different needs but with a common goal: understanding the need not only to grow within ourselves but also to bring our community into our churches...or perhaps we 'go out' to meet with our community? Either way we recognise the need for solid foundational bible teaching. We'd like to be taught how to develop our prayer life.

We want to be a parish that clearly shows the love of Jesus wherever we go, and to do that we need to know Jesus better, to work with and be guided by the Holy Spirit that we might share our faith with passion and conviction.

Youth and Children

Children and families are incredibly important to our parish but we recognise we have much to do to become a thriving intergenerational church.



In the past, we have been blessed with many families attending regular services, our extremely popular Holiday Club and participating in our Crib Service. For many years our Administrator, Michaela, ran the Edward Bear Club for pre-schoolers, held at St Mary's. Edward would invite the children on a journey with God, sharing his stories and finishing with lots of fun music. This was the perfect introduction to church for our baptism families.



At St Alban's, Becky, one of our congregation members, ran the Baby & Toddler group for 20 years, starting when her own girls were young and continuing with it for the enjoyment of many families in the parish, until having to close because of Covid. We would love to be able to offer more opportunities for children in the parish again.

Our photos on the right are from previous Holiday Clubs where 50 children would regularly attend year after year. Since the pandemic, we have been unable to run a Holiday Club due to the lack of children and many other holiday programmes available. We want to be able to offer this again. We know this is a big challenge, but hope a new Rector will be able to lead and support us in this important outreach.

Children are welcome at both our churches, we have a dedicated children's corner with a good variety of toys, books, and colouring. We aim to create an informal atmosphere to make children feel welcome, and encourage them to explore the church, and enjoy watching them dance to our joyful music.

We offer further opportunities for families with services catered to children specifically, including the At the Foot of the Cross service on Good Friday and the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, where children participate in readings and laying of props.

On Mothering Sunday and Remembrance Sunday, we invite the local Uniformed groups and in 2023 the local Guides painted rocks and we used these within the service and to decorate our memorial.



Youth and Children

We are incredibly proud to be offering more outreach to the older youth within the Parish. With the full support of the Rector, Jackie and Rob, along with a group of wonderful multi-generational volunteers, launched the Wood Street Youth Club in 2023.

Jackie and Rob recognised a need within the community, for somewhere children can engage with others, have fun and start to feel part of a community. We pride ourselves on offering a safe space for children with Autism, ADHD and other special educational needs and disabilities.

On average we host between 16 to 20 children, aged 10-16, the majority of these having no other church connection. Whilst this group is not worship led, we offer enriching activities and opportunities to build positive relationships, with a faithful heart and listening ear for anyone who needs it.

We are very proud of the reputation our Youth Club holds within the community and recently received a generous donation from a local village group to purchase new equipment and we have plans to involve the club with more community events over the coming year.

The leaders and the PCC are united in our wish to develop our youth offering within the parish and have discussed with the diocese how to spread the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to the young people. This includes an idea to offer a Youth Alpha course to run alongside the current youth group, starting in 2025. This is a new and developing area of growth for us and we seek a Rector to fully support and help lead us in this vital work.



Be and Share

Children aged 8 and above have the opportunity to attend pre-communion exploration and discussion classes, leading to their first communion. The course aims to bring them closer to understanding communion and their role in the Church. The sessions are fun and interactive and in 2022 we were delighted to support 5 children through this.

TASA (Teens at St Alban's)

Our TASA group has been running for 7 years after moving from St Mary's where we met for 5 years up in the Bell Tower.

We meet during the service on the 1st Sunday each month. This gives us all the opportunity to take communion, including those children who have attended the Be and Share course.

Each session has a central Christian theme relevant to our young people, which always sparks lively discussion and interesting questions. We pride ourselves on our great snacks (doughnuts, cold pizza and popcorn are the most popular) which we realise is the main reason our teens come along!



Pastoral Care

We have 6 lay members in our Pastoral care volunteer team, 3 of whom were trained this year. In Worplesdon, we have 2 large care homes which our team visit, Worplesdon View and Silverbirch. The homes are a mixture of respite, full and dementia care. Our team visit a couple of times each month and we are made very welcome.



Two members of the team conduct a service, usually lasting 35 minutes, consisting of hymns, readings, prayers and the giving of Holy Communion. Numbers of communicants are growing averaging 20 people and the service is held in the care home's dining room. When our service finishes the residents at Worplesdon View gather to watch Sunday's episode of 'Songs of Praise'. We then have the opportunity to visit the dementia floor where the team will do a reading and say together The Lord's Prayer.

We are effectively developing new outreach congregations here.

"Thank you so much to our local church in Worplesdon who always take the time to come in and pray with our residents, it really means a lot to them!"



Home Communion

As well as the care home visits, our team make house calls to those parishioners who for whatever reason are no longer able to attend church, helping them feel connected. During the home visits we read the bible, pray together and give Holy Communion. There is time to catch up and find out if there are other needs that the team can fill.

The pastoral team is relatively small and there are only a few people on our home visit rota but caring for each other in our congregation and community is something that we would like to build on with help and guidance from the new Rector.



Safeguarding

We work hard to create and maintain a strong safeguarding culture in our churches by working and operating in new, safer ways, and by completing training as required so that our churches and activities can be safe, supportive, nurturing and caring places for all God's people.

Jenny, our experienced Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), leads us in this area and is well supported by the clergy, wardens and PCC. We see safeguarding as the responsibility of the whole church community and central to our faith.

We're committed to following the national Church of England guidelines contained in 'Promoting a Safer Church' and we have in place the policies and procedures required for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Our PSO keeps track of all the groups and activities in our buildings and uses the Parish Dashboard (we have a score of 96%) and Safeguarding Hub to record all the necessary information and to ensure training and DBS checks are kept up to date and the appropriate policies are presented to the PCC.

We celebrated Safeguarding Sunday in both churches with the message that John Wesley had a wonderful way of summing up the words of Jesus when he said, 'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can'. For us safeguarding is doing that with a heart for God, doing that with a heart for the vulnerable and doing that in the safest possible way.



Our Local Community

A well-known and respected modern-day theologian said 'Christianity is Community' and these three words inspire us as we aim to 'Grow Community' and in our desire to bring people to know and love Jesus in a way that transforms their lives.

As a parish we are active in Worplesdon and Wood Street Village, both practically with our buildings, and in our presence. We would like to be more active in Fairlands.

Our Schools

We retain our links with both Wood Street Infant and Worplesdon Primary School during the vacancy with a member of the lay team giving an assembly each term.

We have been invited to give talks on Baptism to support the Year 5 curriculum and continue to build on our relationships within the school community.

Both schools celebrate Harvest and Christmas within our churches, with Worplesdon Primary School going to St Mary's Church, and Wood Street Infant School to St Alban's Church. These school services in our parish are a wonderful way to welcome not only the children to our churches, but their parents and families too.



Parish Lunch

Our Parish Lunch is well attended each month where local parishioners enjoy a home cooked two-course lunch and good company.



Coffee Mornings & Men's Breakfast

The monthly Saturday coffee morning at the Worplesdon Place is enjoyed by many, including our four-legged friends.

For those who enjoy a more hearty breakfast, our Men's Group meet for a cooked breakfast 4-5 times a year for fellowship and friendship.



Holiday at Home (for the over 55's)

During the summer we provide our annual Holiday at Home for local residents. Held at St Alban's, we start the day with tea, coffee and cake before settling in to a day of crafts, entertainment and games. A two-course lunch is enjoyed by all, before more fun in the afternoon. This is well attended and a lifeline for some of our most vulnerable residents.



Our Local Community

A Musical Parish

The versatility of St Alban's Church allows us the opportunity to host a variety of community events. In the past 2 years we have held the Worplesdon Young Musician of the Year competition, as well as a concert from the Laudamus Choir.

This year we are delighted to host our first Parish Concert featuring competition finalists and other musical talents across the parish.



Worplesdon

We have direct links with the Sidney Sime Gallery, located in the Worplesdon Memorial Hall. A famous local artist, illustrator and caricaturist, Sidney Sime, lived in the parish and is buried in St Mary's Churchyard.



The gallery and church hold combined workshops and others that focus on youth and disabled children. The Sime Gallery supports us with the Easter Trail at St Mary's and holds an annual BBQ. St Mary's is also the venue for The Annual Sime Lecture.



Wood Street Village

The parish has many links with local community groups including the Wood Street Village Association. For many years we have supported the annual Wood Street Village Show, providing refreshments and running the Tea Tent.

Many of our volunteers are involved in the Village including the Wood Street Village Cricket Club, the Maypole Dancers and the Wood Street Village Art Club. We try to ensure there is a link to the church whether attending meetings, participating in events or handing out prizes at the Junior Cricket Awards.



Our Local Community

Fairlands

The Fairlands estate is the mid-point of the parish, located geographically between Worplesdon and Wood Street Village.

Importantly, the Parish Medical Centre is located here and has an active Patient Participation Group, which includes a member of our PCC.

There is a large community centre and many organisations use the facilities and the adjacent recreation area. The Fairlands & Gravetts Lane Community Association hold quarterly meetings which the previous Rector attended, and this link is being maintained during the vacancy with a resident PCC member.

We recognise that the Church has less presence in the Fairlands community and we would like to address this.



Church Community

Other church led initiatives include the annual Quiz Night, held in the memorial hall, extremely popular and a good fundraiser for church funds. Furthermore, we have for many years run a highly successful Burns Night, with all the usual festive celebrations promoting fun and earning revenue for the parish.



In the past we have enjoyed hosting larger festivals in the grounds of St Mary's, including parachuting teddy bears. These were always well attended community events, sometimes run in support of specific charities. We would like to attempt events such as these again, with the right Rector able to lead us.



Our website was relaunched last year and is regularly kept updated with news and upcoming events.

Most recently we reinstated our Parish Newsletter that we aim to produce 6 times a year.

PARISH OF WORPLESDON NEWSLETTER

ST MARY'S CHURCH
PERRY HILL
WORPLESDON
GUILDFORD
SURREY
GU3 3RE

CHURCH OFFICE
PERRY HILL
WORPLESDON
GUILDFORD
SURREY
GU3 3RE
01483 233091

ST ALBAN'S CHURCH
96 OAK HILL
WOOD STREET VILLAGE
GUILDFORD
SURREY
GU3 3ES

WELCOME TO THE PARISH

We are a friendly, open and welcoming church community, with enjoyable worship and a relaxed atmosphere. We believe that God calls us to be at the heart of the area, serving the needs of the whole parish including the communities of Worplesdon, Wood Street and Fairlands. This means that we try to reflect the love of God in all that we say and do, growing closer to each other as caring friends and neighbours.

New members are always welcome and we hope that you will find a spiritual home here.
All are truly welcome.

Global Mission

Worplesdon Parish has a big heart and we support charities with prayer and resources as we are able. A growing congregation would enable greater outreach.

In the past we have supported chosen charities in the UK and overseas with regular giving but as the financial circumstances became more challenging the PCC made the incredibly tough decision to change our approach. **The good news is that the finance committee has estimated that just 4 additional events per year and a growth in Planned Giving of just 10% would enable the parish to develop its charitable outward giving once more.**

The current situation is that we encourage individuals to support causes important to them either financially or with their time and service. Members of the congregation have supported Besom, The Guildford Street Angels and Fairtrade.

In appreciation of the financial and prayerful support which enabled us to refurbish the toilet facilities in the Church hall at St Alban's we made donations to the Toilet Twinning Association and to Water Aid.



Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine the PCC decided to forego rental income from 24 The Oval, our property in Wood Street Village, and make it available to a Ukrainian family (a mother and her three young boys) for a year. The property was unfurnished and the family arrived in the UK with just a small rucksack each.

Members of the congregation were amazing in donating furniture, bedding, clothes, toys and food and supported the family with a huge welcome and friendship during their time in the parish.

The church also regularly supports:

- Christian Aid Week
- The Children's Society through donations at our Christingle Service and from carol singing around the parish at Christmas time (including in local pubs, the care homes and private houses by invitation)
- The North Guildford Food Bank – with regular donations from parishioners in collection boxes in both churches
- The Royal British Legion at our Remembrance services

Our Good Samaritan Fund run by the Rector supports families and individuals in need in our parish.

We also have specific collections in response to worldwide disasters.



**The
Children's
Society**

Appendices



The Rectory

The Rectory, built in 1986, stands on a generous plot, to the front of St Mary's Church. Adjoining its garage is the Parish Office.

The house is spacious and has the advantage of a separate area containing the incumbent's office, cloakroom and storage cupboard allowing privacy from the house.

Through an inner hall door the Rectory ground floor contains two reception rooms and a large family kitchen.

Upstairs, there are 4 good sized bedrooms with storage and 2 bathrooms.

At the rear of the property is a generously sized secure garden with mature shrubs, lawn and room for a vegetable patch.

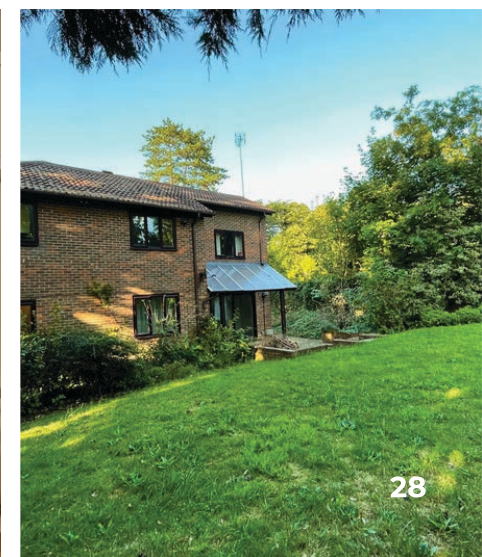
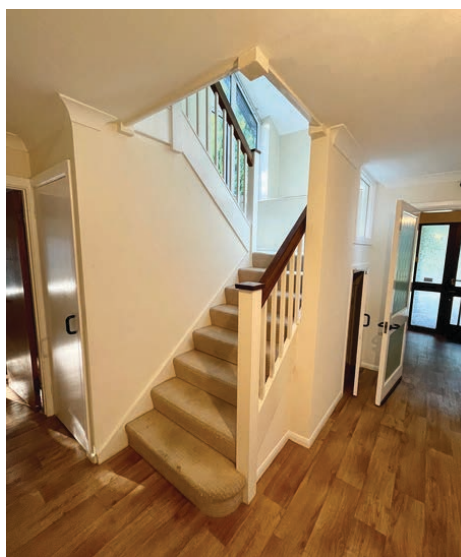
There are also 2 covered patio areas, one of which leads directly to the Parish Office through a private gate and also a rear entrance into the large garage.

The Parish Office has its own front door and contains office space, toilet and loft storage.

We also have a separate storage area behind the parish office for all our gardening equipment.



The Rectory is situated within walking distance of the Worplesdon Memorial Hall and grounds, which is home to the local tennis, football and cricket clubs and other activities within the hall.



Finance

Although our expenditure slightly exceeds income, we have healthy reserves currently at £219,000 at the time of writing – equivalent to 15 months expenditure – which we are open to investing in building a team which can drive growth.

The parish is in a stable financial position although, like many, we have experienced expenditure slightly exceeding regular income during the last couple of years due to eyewatering increases in fuel costs and reduced rental income from 24 The Oval (when the Ukrainian family lived there).

St Alban's Hall is a fantastic asset but income from regular bookings has reduced since Covid. We are trying to remedy this to increase income but don't want to drive out community groups by demanding high rents.

We have always paid our Parish Share – which makes up almost 50% of total expenditure.

Long term giving has remained stable over the past few years. 75% of giving is through the Parish Giving Scheme. We have not undertaken a stewardship review since before Covid mainly because we have been seeking financial support for the refurbishment projects at both churches and are very conscious of the cost of living issues parishioners have experienced. We would fully support a new incumbent to lead a stewardship campaign.

We have benefited from 4 legacies in the last three years which have been put towards the refurbishment of St Alban's, the toilet project at St Mary's and the churchyard.

In addition, Worplesdon Parish PCC owns 2 houses. The background to this is that the curate's house behind St Alban's Church was too large for single people and required significant investment to bring it to an acceptable standard. The decision was taken after much prayer and consideration to sell the property and use the funds to purchase 2 smaller houses.

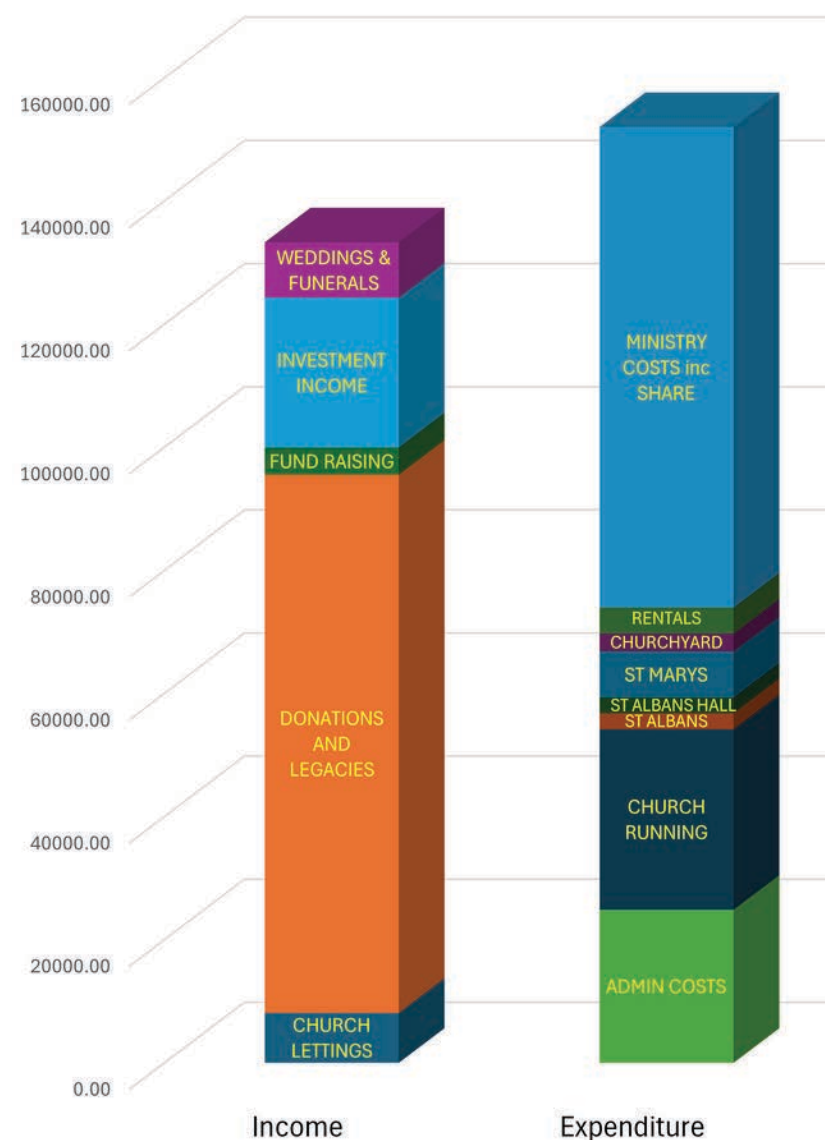
- **24 The Oval, in Wood Street Village, a 3 bedroom end of terrace which could be used for a Youth Worker or other staff member (neither of which we currently have so it is currently rented).**
- 125 Wooteys Way, Alton, a 2 bedroom maisonette. Rental contributes to General Fund income.

A growing congregation will enable greater outreach and charitable giving.

Ros, our excellent treasurer, maintains up to date and accurate records using ExpensePlus, the dedicated charity accounting software, tracking income and expenditure against budget. This reduces time spent on routine finance matters at PCC.

A full copy of our audited accounts is available on request or on the Charity Commission website (Charity number 1128100).

Projected Parish Income and Expenditure 2024



Governance

We have a track record of good governance which will support the leadership of a new incumbent.

Our PCC of 21 covers both churches and includes the Rector, 3 Churchwardens, 1 Churchwarden Emeritus, 12 elected members (currently including the Treasurer and the Parish Safeguarding Officer), 3 Deanery Synod members, the Chair of Finance (co-opted) and the PCC Secretary.

Monthly meetings – except in August and December – are chaired by the Rector with good attendance at all meetings.

The PCC has the following sub committees / groups consisting of volunteers from the PCC and wider congregation. Others are created as and when the need arises. These groups report to the PCC on a regular basis:

- Finance Committee and smaller Grant Application Group
- Property Group
- Outreach Group

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer provides a report to every PCC meeting. We also review our Church Development Plan at each meeting though recognise this needs review and revival.

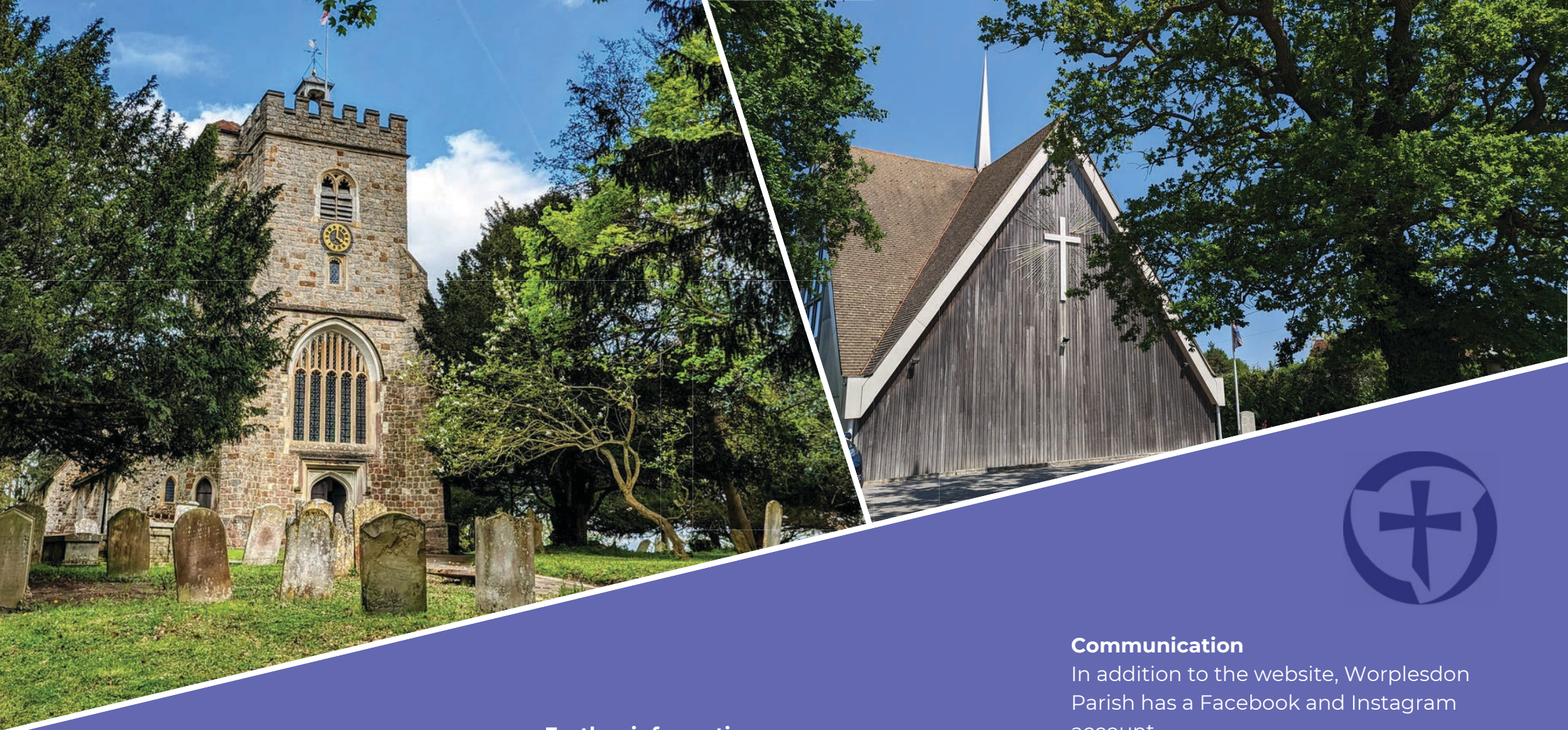
The Standing Committee consists of the Rector, Churchwardens, Treasurer, PCC Secretary and, during the Vacancy, the acting Chair of the PCC. This meets as required between PCC meetings and agrees the PCC agenda.

From an IT perspective, we have a Microsoft 365 system which, as well as email and secure document back up, enables collaboration in particular, on the production of the screen-based church services for St Alban's. There is no doubt that use of this system can be developed further.

This formal governance structure only tells part of the story of our parish! We have many gifted people who lead on specific areas of the life of our churches and dedicate many hours of their time in service and who are excited by what God may be calling us to do next. We are most grateful to everyone who supports the parish.



Worplesdon PCC



To prepare for this profile a short questionnaire was circulated to our congregation and a vision workshop was held with the PCC.

This profile takes account of that feedback and quotations throughout are taken from the responses we received.

Further information

Further information about Worplesdon Parish can be found on our website – www.worplesdonparish.com

Any requests for additional information should be addressed to the Parish Administrator, Michaela Kelly at churchoffice@worplesdonparish.com and marked for the Vacancy Management Team.

Communication

In addition to the website, Worplesdon Parish has a Facebook and Instagram account.

facebook.com/worplesdonparishpage
instagram: @worplesdonparish

Social media is overseen by our staff team.

Approval

This document was approved by the Parochial Church Council of Worplesdon Parish at a meeting held on 12 September 2024.