

St John's Church Belmont

A Church of England &
Methodist Church



Parish Profile 2020

**The peace of the Lord be with you
Greetings from the parish of St John's, Belmont**

Thank you for reading this Parish Profile. We will describe our Parish, our Church and its people, community and buildings as well as our hopes and vision for the future. You will find information about our resources, finances, the Anglican/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), the Vicarage and broadly we hope enough information to give you a good feel for what life is like at St John's. We will outline what we are looking for in our new Vicar.

We will pray for you (and your family), provide support and encouragement in your personal development and wellbeing and help you to get settled into our parish and community.



Church East End

1.0 Summary

St John's is blessed in many ways and has much to commend it:

- A warm welcoming Church both in the friendliness of its congregation and in its beautiful architecture.
- A well thought through Mission Action Plan (MAP) for the future (Section 3.0).
- Its successful ecumenical partnership.
- A very supportive congregation and much lay involvement in services and pastoral care.
- A range of active organisations and activities.
- Its choral music and tradition.
- An attractive vicarage, adjacent to the Church.

But St John's has an ageing congregation with the need to introduce younger families as church members. There is good scope to do so. However, this is so important and crucial to the future well-being and growth of the parish that the new Vicar must expect to spend 40-50% of his/her time on this work.

2.0 What we are looking for in our new Vicar

In searching for a new Vicar, we are open to applications from both male and female clergy. Applications from newly commissioned Curates will be considered as well as those from experienced clergy. St John's follows a 'middle of the road' tradition of Worship.

We regard it as important that you can:

- Develop the considerable outreach potential in the local community for growth of young families as church members.
- In conjunction with the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC): support, help implement and further develop our MAP.
- Convey Christ's message in a straightforward meaningful way and share your personal experiences to help us in our own Christian journey.
- Embrace our Anglican/Methodist partnership by participating in Sutton Methodist Circuit staff events and leadership team meetings.
- Be a good communicator and outgoing with a sense of humour and enthusiasm.

In addition, we would like you to:

- Try to balance the needs of an ageing congregation with the energy and drive to grow younger generations.
- Be supportive of St John's Choral music.
- Not be shy to introduce new ideas and embrace the challenges that our changing society brings while preserving traditional values.
- Integrate with the Belmont community and help make the Church a centre of Belmont life for the whole community.

We want them to be kind and caring. Someone who can do magic tricks and is funny. Maybe someone who has children who can play with us. Someone who wants to do more with us as well as Sunday Club.

Sunday Club

3.0 Mission Action Plan

This plan was updated during the Vacancy. It is intended to be an organic document that grows and changes; it is not meant to be rigid or fixed.

3.1 Review – taking place during Vacancy

Our Strengths "Isn't it good that..."	<p>Visitors say that we are welcoming and friendly, but turning that into new people joining the church is our challenge.</p> <p>During the Vacancy, we are very fortunate to have a seconded C of E priest, a retired Methodist Minister, the Chaplain of the Royal Marsden Hospital and our Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary (SPA) to provide great support.</p> <p>The merger of the Anglican and Methodist traditions is a real strength.</p> <p>We have excellent buildings – especially the Community Hall – that are well used and known by the community.</p> <p>The church is open all day and it is often used for private prayer, a peaceful place to sit or light votive candles.</p> <p>Music - a strong choral tradition, an enthusiastic choir and our Musical Director leads us at services, festivals, and other church events and special occasions.</p> <p>"Flower Bunch" – provides beautiful decorations for services, festivals and is a source of outreach for weddings.</p>
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	<p>Our congregation – members take on many roles including visiting, reading, and intercessions. Holy Communion is taken to local nursing homes, adults with learning disabilities and housebound individuals. Once a month, a mid-morning, weekday Holy Communion service is held, with transport provided. A hot meal follows the service.</p> <p>The church has a strong core of committed Christians who live and worship in this area. Although over 65% of our members live out of the parish, they are still concerned with and committed to the parish, and there is a lot of goodwill towards St John's from the local community.</p> <p>Grade II Listed Status granted in 2018, reflecting the merit of the church building. This may help us with grant proposals.</p> <p>Links with Royal Marsden Hospital (RMH) – the Vicar was Hon. Chaplain, providing Saturday emergency telephone cover; the church is used for their Annual Service; we support RMH through the biennial Belmont Festival.</p>
<p>Our Weaknesses "Isn't it a pity that..."</p>	<p>These mainly centre on recognition that we are, on the whole, an ageing and declining congregation, with all the issues these factors bring.</p> <p>Generally, people seem to be reluctant to attend in-depth teaching sessions on such subjects as theology, spirituality and prayer when these are set up.</p> <p>The age profile of the congregation results in few wanting to attend evening functions or commit to planned events.</p> <p>Financial situation – dwindling income from ageing and reducing congregation. Fund raising is necessary for our buildings that require money to be spent on them. We are currently paying for repairs not done in the past. The Community Hall now needs updating and cost of running it is greater than income achieved from lettings.</p> <p>Grade II Listed Status was granted in 2018. While it reflects the merit of the church building, it may increase costs to the repairs of the Church and grants are not always available to Churches in what is considered a wealthy area.</p> <p>Decline in non-members using the Church for baptisms, weddings and funerals.</p>

<p>Our Opportunities “Wouldn’t it be good if we could.....”</p>	<p>Develop services and inspiring activities to attract young families and young people.</p> <p>Encourage young people to be involved - e.g. youth-led service/ junior choir; let young people use their musical skills; Messy church; give a role.</p> <p>Embrace all people to achieve a wider spread of ages across the generations; attract more middle-aged people as they may potentially have more available time and energy to take on roles within Church.</p> <p>Improve our Communications and Publicity, including using social media – Facebook and Twitter to engage with the local community. Update our Website and make greater use of technology.</p> <p>Promote stronger links with local schools – Avenue Academy (Primary); Harris Academy (Secondary); Seaton House (Independent Primary) which is situated just outside the parish, but the school uses the Church; also the uniformed organisations.</p> <p>Develop use of the area at back of the Church – could give more flexibility in services; could give new opportunities as a community space.</p> <p>Engage more with the local community in Belmont so the Church is seen as integral to the village spirit and a focal point of the Parish. Promote more contact with families after baptism/marriage.</p> <p>New groups – e.g. breakfast/working group; discussion group; men’s group; re-establish social/contact groups; regular coffee morning group?</p> <p>Quick Fixes – relatively simple things to bring about good changes so people can feel new things are happening - e.g. set up Sunday Club corner; brighten fundraising screens and external notice boards; utilise and re-arrange book shelf corner (currently for kneelers & wheelchairs)</p>
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3.2 Conclusions

Our Mission Statement Our purpose and reason to be here.	<p>St John's Church exists to share our faith in Christ and the love of God, by loving and helping our neighbours in the local community.</p> <p>We will work to: make our Church a vibrant place of worship; support each other; reach out with courage to people of all ages in Belmont and make them feel welcome to come to St John's in good times and in bad, for support, fellowship and spiritual growth.</p>
Our Vision Statement for our future	We want to be a vibrant Church with a growing, friendly, mixed-age congregation, sharing our faith with the local community in practical ways.
Our Priority Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Vacancy papers, Parish Profile and a re-energised MAP, with a practical plan to put our mission and values into action • Improve our Communications & Publicity • Increase our numbers especially young people and families • Improve our financial position • Clarify and cost major works

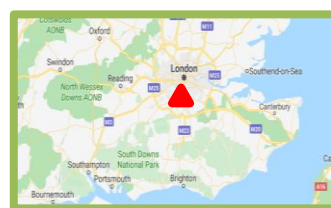
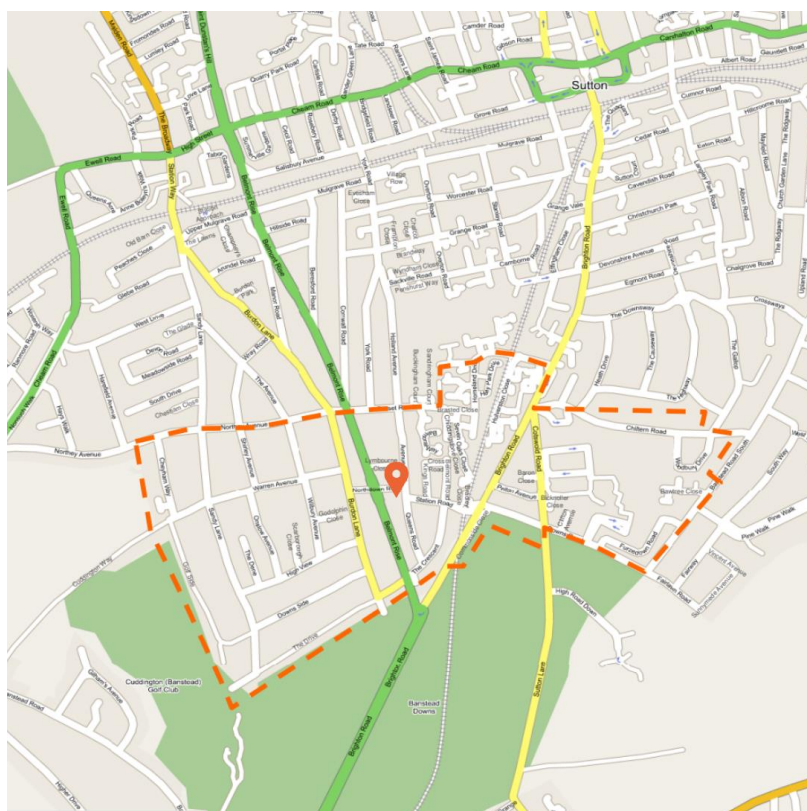
3.3 Plan

Actions		Who	When
a	Carry out consultation with congregation re. Profile & "Vision for our Future Church" (MAP).	EP & PW; MD & DK	DONE
b	Complete Vacancy papers ready for advertising.	EP & PW; MD & DK	Dec 2019 - Jan 2020
c	Develop new website. Twitter account now operational. Begin to use social media to advertise our events.	DM, EP, PW EM	ASAP DONE Underway
d	Spreadsheet for building works including rolling maintenance plan. Prioritise order of works.	PW, ECC	ASAP
e	Lent and Advent courses for 2020	AD & AR	2020

f	Contact local Head Teachers, O.C. of Air Cadets and leaders of Scouts & Guides to discuss their possible increased involvement in St John's.	EP & PW	January 2020 onwards
g	Start a children's choir; encourage children to use musical instruments; prepare to take part in services and events.	Choir members	Rehearsals underway
h	Start a fresh expression of church to reach those with little or no experience or knowledge of the Christian faith.	TBA	After appointment of new Vicar
i	Quick fixes – set up Sunday Club corner; re-plan Bookstall use; review South Porch; fundraising noticeboard.	EP; PW; EM + others	January 2020 onwards

4.0 About the parish

The Parish was originally carved from the ancient parishes of Cheam and Sutton. Its Patron is still the Rector of Cheam, although the Church itself is an Anglican/Methodist LEP and has a joint framework for its worship and decisions.



The Parish is diverse with a great variety of housing. The area west of the A217 consists mainly of detached houses and includes some private roads. In Belmont itself, there are two roads of 19th century workers' cottages, bungalows, semis and houses of all sizes. The eastern side is classic 1930s suburbia.

Parish Map

In the north of the Parish, on the way into Sutton, there is the Shanklin Village, whose properties are mostly owned by the London Borough of Sutton. It consists mainly of flats and maisonettes built in stages. Parts of it suffer from deprivation and social problems. Shanklin stands out from neighbouring areas visually and by being hard to access and to find one's way round. It has its own community centre, shop, and playgrounds; many residents there are either elderly or young families. Although it may be difficult, our Church needs to explore possibilities of outreach there.

Minority ethnic groups make up 24% of the parish population. General levels of unemployment are low. There are many elderly people in the area, including several nursing homes. The population as at 2011 was 6,200, but probably now nearer to 6,500.

Sutton Council has been Liberal Democrat dominated for many years; but for some time the Belmont Ward has had three Conservative Councillors who hold their monthly surgeries in the Community Hall.

The parish also includes a branch of the Royal Marsden (Cancer) Hospital.



Attractions of Belmont from residents of nearly 40 years:

- Belmont sits at the border between the London Borough of Sutton and Surrey.
- To the south of Belmont is the large open space of the Banstead Downs and two golf courses. The Downs are common land.
- Although it is a suburban area with easy access to London and other areas by public transport, Belmont has the ambience of a village.
- The heart of Belmont is Station Road. It has a range of local shops and restaurants. A revitalised café gets regular custom from the local community and a new specialist butcher is proving popular.
- St John's stands at the head of Station Road and is a key feature of the Village.
- The Vicar of Belmont is a valued member of the village community.
- Belmont is a mixed community. There are many large houses but also terraced houses and modern small blocks of flats.
- Sutton schools are sought-after. Belmont has a large primary school (Avenue Academy) as well as a new secondary school (Harris Academy).
- Also Seaton House (independent primary, just outside the Parish but the school uses the Church).
- Local social clubs include the Conservative Club, the Downs Lawn Tennis Club and the Bowls Club.
- The Belmont Branch of the Royal British Legion organises a well-attended parade on Remembrance Sunday and is now growing and more active throughout the year. The Vicar is Honorary Chaplain of the Branch.

5.0 About the Church

5.1 The Anglican/Methodist LEP

The Methodists' 1915 Church building, close to St John's, had become unsafe and in 1983 a church-sharing agreement was made to use St John's, and the Methodist building was sold for redevelopment. The developing union between local Anglicans and Methodists has been a significant part of our more recent history. Ministers and congregations of the two churches worked increasingly



Remembrance

closely over the next twenty years. When a new joint constitution was agreed in 2008 it made St John's a "Church of England and Methodist Church". Under an even newer constitution in 2011, Anglicans and Methodists in Belmont truly became one Church: finance, organisation, management, decision-making, all merged within an ecumenical partnership and a single congregation committed to sharing the best of both traditions. Although the number of Methodists in the congregation is now quite small, it makes little difference as we are happily unified.

5.2 The People

Kinds of People who worship. St John's tends to have a relatively elderly congregation. Many of them began worshipping many years ago when living in the parish and have moved out into the neighbouring areas. They have however remained loyal and continue to worship here. Like other churches, with current sociological patterns, it has been difficult to encourage the younger generation with families to make a visit to church as part of their Sunday ritual. There are however great openings for ministry and growth among children and younger people.



Ryan's Christening

Laity Involvement. Many lay people are involved in acting as sidespersons, welcoming to services, Church cleaning, cleaning of brasses, the washing of linen, flower arranging and the serving of refreshments after morning services. Lay members of the congregation also read the lessons, lead eucharistic intercessions and some are authorised to administer communion. Various churchgoers take an active part in "spreading the word" through the parish by giving home communion to housebound parishioners and to two nursing homes, Chegworth and Southdown.

SPAs. Southwark Diocese train and authorise Pastoral Auxiliaries, (usually known as SPAs) who are lay ministers that commit an amount of their time to applied caring in a voluntary capacity. We have such a SPA in our Parish, Cathy Parker, who provides valuable pastoral care, both inside St John's Church and outside in the community. This aids the work of the Vicar with whom she works closely. Cathy is also Administrator of the Church Office.

Church Choir. St John's has a traditional robed choir with a well-maintained pipe organ to accompany. Music has always been a very important feature and the choir is known for producing a high standard. The choir forms a strong, enthusiastic and committed social group and sings at the 9.30 sung Communion Service and performs one, if not two motets or anthems.



Evensong Choir

There is also a monthly Choral Evensong (BCP); as part of their outreach they welcome other singers to join them, enabling more ambitious music to be sung. The Advent Carol Service and the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols are traditional and important services in the life of St John's and are both well attended. In addition the choir also sings at the Remembrance/Civic Service at the Belmont War Memorial and at two nursing homes during Christmas and Easter.

Recently the choir and its Director of Music, James Pedrick, organised a "Hymnathon" to raise money for the repair of the chancel lights. People really enjoyed singing along (and the refreshments of course) and sufficient funds were raised. It is now trying to encourage children to join the choir. It also sings carols in the village when the Christmas lights are switched on.

The Sunday Club meets in the Community Hall during the 9.30 service. At the end of the service, the congregation love to hear the children report back on what they have been discussing. They give an excellent verbal and visual summary, interesting and enlightening.

The Flower Bunch was formed in 2014. Formerly the 'Flower Guild', it has moved with the times and is now a less formal group, aiming to encourage members to venture into new ground such as attempting pedestal arrangements and seasonal designs. The main decoration of the church is at festival time – Easter, Harvest and Christmas; also Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals. Apart from this they arrange flowers on a weekly basis that enhance our beautiful building for those who visit during the week, in addition to Sunday services. They are quite overwhelmed with the support given by the congregation, who donate funds, particularly for the Festivals.



Flower Bunch

The Jumble Sale is a biannual event that has taken place for many years. It can always rely on a regular team of Church members. It attracts large attendances and is a valued fundraiser for the Church. Last year it raised over £4000.



Before the doors open



Jumble Sale Team

5.3 The Community

Church Affiliations. There are many organisations who make use of Church premises and the adjoining Community Hall, including a weekly Parent and Toddler Group, the uniformed organisations including Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Guides, Rangers, Brownies and Rainbows, a ballet school, the Belmont Village Pre-school, local Councillor surgeries and a variety of fitness and exercise groups. The Hall is also used by Church groups such as Mothers' Union, LFToo (a social group for women), Children's Sunday Club, Bible Study Group, a Prayer Group and a Bereavement Group. The Church is the focus for the biennial Belmont Festival.



Lftoo Group enjoying 'Hobson's Choice'

Avenue Primary Academy.

Close links are maintained with the school. For example, 120 children came into church to listen to the Christmas story and a Minister went into school to do Advent assemblies for all seven year groups.

Communication. “The Beacon” is our monthly church magazine that is available in church and is also delivered to subscribers in the community by volunteers. There is also a weekly notice sheet printed which is available throughout the year. This contains details of services and includes events for the coming week and details of readings, anthems, hymns, prayers and notices of all forthcoming church matters.

We have good email communication with most of our church members.

Our website www.stjohnbelmont.org.uk is currently undergoing improvement. We have a Twitter account and hope to establish Facebook shortly.

5.4 The Buildings



Church East end showing Vestry

The fabric and facilities owned by the Church are substantial.



Church North end

The Church built in 1914-15 (but only partially completed) is an impressive Gothic Revival building, with fine proportions, a sense of space, warm colouring, attractive vistas through its arches, and a strong welcoming presence. It was listed as Grade II in 2018 for its outstanding qualities and fittings.

Nave and aisles can seat around 250 people. The open bench pews are oak, and are the original ones from when the Church was consecrated in 1915; they are given much colour by the lines of tapestry kneelers made by members of the congregation.

The west end of the Church was completed in 1967. Until then it had ended with a temporary wall put up in 1915 because funds would stretch no further.



Lady Chapel



The Nave

The gallery above, with the Church office and the Wesley Room opening off it, were added in 1987; all paid for by a generous gift from the Belmont Methodist Church, who began sharing the use of the Church building in the 1980s when their own Church in Belmont became unsafe and its site was sold.

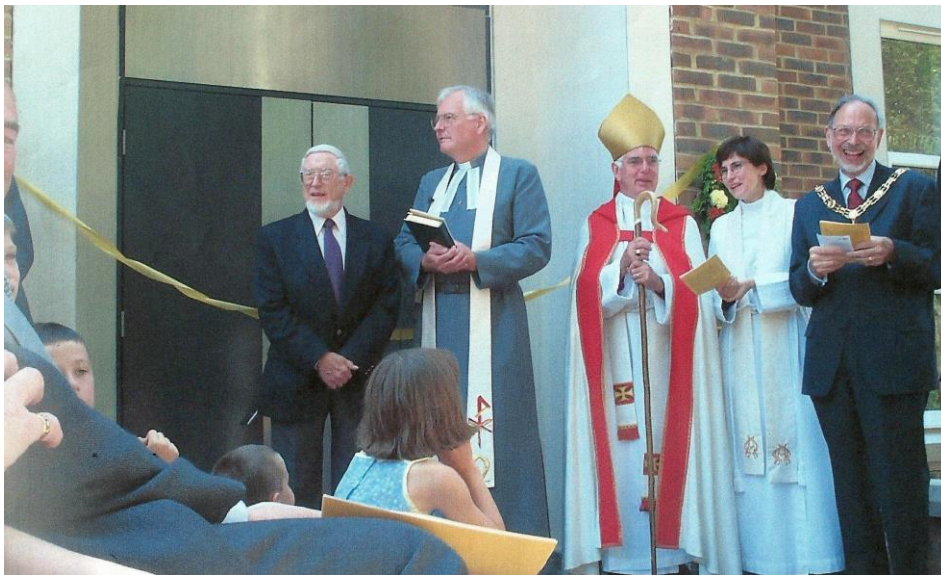
The Meeting Room, reached from the entrance lobbies at the west end of the Church and part of the 1967 additions, can hold about 40 people. The Belmont Village Pre-School uses it on weekday mornings during term-time.

St John's Community Hall is the final part of the church complex. It was opened in 2002, replacing our previous Church hall, which was on a separate site some distance away. It is an attractive building that both echoes and contrasts with the Gothic style of the main Church, and gives us flexible and accessible accommodation.



The Community Hall

The hall was intended from the outset to be a community asset, not just a replacement Church hall, and in the words of the vicar at the time, to have a real practical benefit that would "help St John's fulfil its mission in Belmont". It has been successful in this aim and plays an important role in the local community.



The Community Hall opening



Google Earth picture showing the Church, Community Hall and Vicarage (top left hand corner)

5.5 The Garden

There is a pleasant, modestly sized lawned garden with trees and shrubs surrounding the Church that is used by the public for relaxation. There are no graves, although there are two small Gardens of Remembrance in which ashes are interred. Maintenance of the garden is by volunteer lay people.



Church South side

5.6 The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a pleasant 1920s detached 5 bedroom house with gas central heating and a substantial garden. It has a detached garage and has recently been refurbished. It is adjacent to the Church via a short pathway.



*The
Vicarage*

5.7 Our relationship with other Churches

St John's is part of the Sutton Deanery and there is a friendly Clergy Chapter that meets four times a year. An Ecumenical Sutton Church Leaders' breakfast is held in different churches and community locations once a month. The Church is represented on the Methodist Circuit Meeting and the Vicar is a member of both the Circuit staff (which meets monthly over lunch for mutual support) and the Circuit leadership team that meets three times a year.

The London Borough of Sutton has an 'umbrella charity' called "Community Works", which St John's supports. This brings together the Borough, its Churches and the community and includes Foodbank and Street Pastors.

St John's is also one of the many churches in Sutton that supports "Sutton Schoolwork", a charity that funds two Christian schools' workers. It works with churches to provide a wide programme of faith-based education in Schools.

The Good Friday Procession of Witness in Sutton is organised by "Churches Together in Sutton and Cheam", which also organises other ecumenical services and events during the year. These are just a few examples of the many opportunities within Sutton to work with other churches.

5.8 Finance

The latest complete figures we have are for the year ending 31 December 2018.

Our unrestricted general funds stood at £19k. Annual income was £132k, of which £76k may be described as planned giving, from 73 donors. We are very grateful for the generosity of those regular donors. Their numbers have however declined in recent years, making us ever more reliant on those who remain. A Stewardship campaign is overdue and may present an opportunity to improve this area of the finances.

The Community Hall generated income of £21k, however costs were £33k. It has required continuous repairs to keep it up to the standard expected by hirers. This presents a further opportunity, namely to turn this valuable community facility from being a strain on general reserves, to an asset making a financial contribution.

Recent efforts to 'balance the books' have necessitated a reduction in the amount pledged under the 'Southwark Diocese Parish Support Fund', falling from £67k in 2017 to £47k in subsequent years. Whilst we budget to break even for 2019 and beyond, we are very sensitive to small variations in income and expense.

Our financial position is dominated by an increasing demand for funds to meet the cost of maintenance and repairs. Essential repairs to our West Window are an obvious focus but the buildings as a whole require significant works.

Following the last Quinquennial Report in May 2017, the Church has tried to prioritise the repair work, but these priorities change when other more urgent matters arise. As yet we have completed only the most urgent of repairs detailed in the Report.

We have responded to this challenge by establishing a fundraising programme (named 'Step by Step') that raised £24k by December 2018. These funds are either designated or restricted in nature, helping to separate the day to day from these longer term challenges. We are also applying to various charities for grants to carry out the necessary works as well as fund raising for specific items within our own community. The Summary Accounts (Appendix 6) show the exact position for the funds allocated for Church repairs.



Centenary celebrations

APPENDICES

1. Patterns of Worship

Sunday Services with times:

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (said; BCP)

9.30 a.m. Parish Eucharist (sung; usually Common Worship with Methodist Worship Book options). On four Sundays per year a non-Eucharistic service conducted by a Methodist local preacher. On such occasions the Vicar may be asked to lead worship in another Church in the Circuit. Two parade services annually. Sunday Club meets during this service.

Monthly Holy Communion (said Common Worship) 3rd Friday 11.30 a.m. followed by lunch in the Community Hall.

Choral Evensong (BCP) (first Sunday only) at 5.30 p.m.

Quarterly Healing service (5.30 p.m.)



Friday Communion Lunch

2. Facts & figures

Churchwardens Currently only one

Number on the Electoral roll 105

Average number of Sunday communicants 5/10 at 8.00; 50 at 9.30

Occasional offices: average number per annum

Weddings: 4

Funerals: 11 (7 of which in church)

Baptisms: 14

Confirmation Candidates: 1

3. Parish policy

There are agreed parish policies for:

- Christian Initiation (Baptism and Confirmation): open policy within the parish boundaries. Communion before Confirmation is offered to children – no age requirements.
- All who are baptised are welcome to receive Communion (following Methodist practice).
- Marriage of the Divorced: following C of E guidelines.

4. Summary of significant responsibilities linked to this Incumbency

- Close co-operation with Methodism, via Methodist members of St John's. The previous incumbent was authorised to serve as Methodist Minister and it is hoped that the new Vicar will be willing to be authorised too. Involvement with the local Methodist Circuit (Sutton).
- Saturday chaplaincy emergency telephone cover for the Royal Marsden Hospital.
- Hon Chaplain to the Royal British Legion, Belmont Branch, including the annual Remembrance Service.
- Hon Chaplain to 219 Squadron Air Cadets.

5. Early history of St John's

St John's Church opened in 1915 but its origins were forty years earlier. At that time the local area was the remote rural southern fringe of the ancient parishes of Cheam and Sutton with a small population largely of farm workers. The building of a large asylum nearby (now gone) in 1877 led to some house building for staff living off-site. Sunday School work for this embryonic community began in the 1870s. An inter-denominational Belmont Mission followed by 1880, with a small tin Church. An Anglican mission Church, also a tin tabernacle, was then erected in 1889, promoted by a new Church in south Sutton.

Its work developed well, with a growing local population, and in 1908 a public meeting agreed to build a Parish Church for the area. After a slow start, the architectural partnership of Greenaway and Newberry was chosen in 1913 to design the new building. The foundation stone was laid in July 1914 and the building was consecrated in December 1915. Because of funding shortages it had a temporary west end, not replaced until the 1960s, and lacked the upper stages of its tower, which have never been added. The Belmont Free Church also opened close by in 1915 and in 1928 became the Belmont Methodist Church.



Foundation Stone Laying 1914

Belmont's population expanded greatly from the 1920s, effectively joining it with continuous housing to Cheam and Sutton and beyond to London. St John's developed its Church organisations and its youth and other local community work. It also built a vicarage in 1928, replaced its Church Hall (the ex-mission Church) in 1940, and for its 50th anniversary completed the west end of the Church and added a much-needed meeting room. The west end was improved further in 1987 with a western gallery and upper rooms opening off it for meetings and office space.

6. Summary statement of annual accounts

Financial activities to 30 December 2018

	Unrestricted	Restricted	TOTAL
Income	120,269	12,592	132,861
Expenditure	133,612	6,833	140,445
NET			
INCOME/EXPENDITURE	(13,343)	5,759	(7,584)

Financial position as at 30 December 2018

Funds:

General	18,737
For use on church buildings	28,910
Parent & toddler group	3,974
Other funds	1,078
Community hall - a non cash fund, represented by the Community Hall building	486,353
	539,052