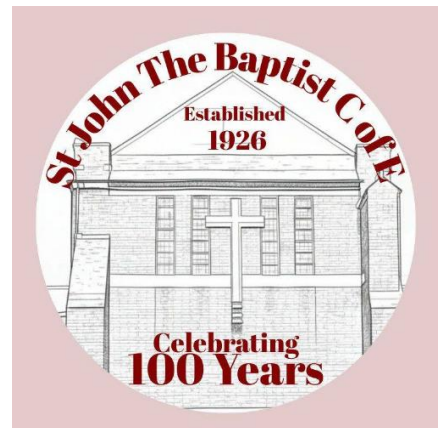


ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATFORD & DOWNHAM ANNUAL REPORT 2026



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Agenda for AGM 2026

1. Apologies
2. Approval of minutes of the Vestry Meeting 2025
3. Nomination of up to 4* representatives for Deanery Synod
4. Nomination and Election of Church Wardens
(church wardens are automatically members of the PCC and DCC)
5. Nomination and election of 4 Members to the PCC
(PCC members are automatically members of the DCC)
6. Nomination and election of up to 6 Members to the DCC
7. Presentation of the Electoral Roll numbers
8. Questions about the Annual Report, including accounts.
9. Date for next AGM: 25th April
10. Reminder of date of APCM- 17th May at St Barnabas
11. Closing Prayer
12. DCC members to remain to fix date of 1st meeting (2nd June?).

*These are the maximum number for our whole parish. Should the total nominated by all four churches exceed 4 there will be an election at the APCM.

**Annual Parish Council (Vestry) Meeting and
Annual General Meeting of the District Church Council**

Minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 6 April 2025

1	Apologies	Gill Joseph, Catherine Hall, Julie Rochefort, David Harding, Sandy Mawford, Jemmy Barrington
2	Nomination and Election of Church Wardens	Frankie Turner elected as per nomination form Julie: to be elected at a future meeting Thanks were expressed for their hard work throughout the year. All were in agreement.
5	Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting	That the Minutes of the meeting be accepted as a representation by those present. Proposed by Frankie Turner and seconded by Sue Coombe. All were in agreement
6	Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting	None
7	Nomination and election of 6 members of the DCC	Nominations were received for Amos Eka, Shea Hollis and John Grosvenor. All were elected to the DCC. David Harding was not present and will be appointed at the next meeting of the DCC. (Churchwardens, Deanery Synod representatives, Reader, Rector and Curate are also on the District Church Council).
8	Nomination and election of members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)	No nominations

9	Presentation of the Accounts	<p>Amos Eka, Treasurer presented the Accounts.</p> <p>Questions relating to the accounts-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Sandy Mawford via Frankie Turner: Looking at the Mission & Charities monies raised from last year, will this be added to this year's accounts? • Gillan Spencer clarified it was last year's only. • Sandy asked who are Sunnybank Trust. Amos • explained it was some outstanding money and PCC nominated two charities to donate to. • Sandy asked if Hall expense/ utilities are no longer a church expense? Amos replied once lease is resolved the Foodbank will be paying and back charged. • Sandy asked If Shelley & Dee debt being paid. Rev'd Peter responded that DCC agreed to write this off. • Sandy Asked are all users paying for heating? Rev'd Peter replied that most are, and from September all will be • Gillian stated that the money collected for Crisis is not showing in the accounts and the club have not received acknowledgment. Amos explained it is accounted for in money in/out and he will chase up acknowledgment. • Gillian asked how much do we actually have in the bank? Amos answered roughly
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		<p>£40,000 restricted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilian then asked are we building up a reserve for work at Southend Lane? Amos stated that is the plan but fortunately the house is in good condition currently. • Sue Coombes asked if the rent will be increased. Amos responded that there is room for increase but we don't want to go too high as there has been a fair amount of work needed. Rev'd Peter added that we hope to use it for a future curate. Gillian agreed it will be better to keep the current tennant there. • Sue Wardell asked how the Parish Giving Scheme is going. Amos shared that 14 people have signed up. Gift Aid automatically has given an extra £500 just from those. <p>Proposal to accept the Accounts: Frankie Turner, Seconded by Cynthia Harding The Accounts were accepted.</p> <p>Rev'd Peter thanked Amos for his hard work and there was a round of applause in agreement.</p>
10	Presentation of the Electoral Roll numbers	82 Rev'd Peter stated that this was much more than we expected post-covid and thanked Alice Eka and Frankie Turner for taking on the Electoral Roll.
11	Annual Reports	Questions on the Reports (excepting the

		<p>Accounts)</p> <p>RE:Safeguarding</p> <p>Sandy stated that several DBS are out of date and asked what happening with these. Cynthia replied that they are waiting to be approved as Julie Rochefort is the only person who can do it.</p> <p>Proposal to accept the Reports: Gillian Spencer, Seconded by Amos Eka</p> <p>The Reports were accepted.</p> <p>Rev'd Peter thanked everyone who leads on an area or runs a group for their contributions, time and service.</p>
12	Date of the next meeting	The 2026 AGM will be on Sunday 19 th April

Rector

It has been a privilege and a joy to serve at St John's over this past year.

For me, highlights include:



-Our parish Confirmation, which was one of Bishop Alastair's first as Bishop of Woolwich.

-Rev'd Brown completing his curacy with us, and our continuing to benefit from his ministry.

-On that note, being able to share my preaching ministry at St John's with Brown, Reader Alice, and Reader-in-training Cynthia, all of whom share their different faith journeys and experiences of God with us.

-Dear Elsie's 100th Birthday. What a blessing it was for her to make it to that age still smiling and laughing.



-Our Lent and Holy Week themed around Sister Julian of Norwich's writings.



-The three(!) Pet Services that were held, particularly the one filmed by Channel 5's Dogs Behaving Very Badly.

As well as church-based activities, it's been lovely to build on my links with the School, the Foodbank, the Ex-servicemen's Club, 1921 Lewisham Air Cadet's Squadron, and to represent St John's at various Council events in the Civic Centre. I was also invited to speak to a park full of Muslims, to mark Eid (somewhat nerve-wracking!).

In the coming year I'm also looking at building up links with one of the local coffee shops in Downham, and with the Green Man.

My grateful thanks to all who work so hard to make St John's a place where people feel welcomed and supported.

*Rev'd Peter,
Rector*

Churchwardens

No.	Item
1	<p>Mission and Vision, including Services to the Community</p> <p>1. - Lease of Hall to Transform Network – update</p> <p>Rev'd Peter was contacted by our Diocesan lawyer informing that the lease document had been signed by the Diocese but that on receipt of the final documentation the Foodbank's lawyers have now requested:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. a change to the outline plan of the hall and grounds area covered by the lease, as they contend that the line drawn around the area is 'too thick'; and:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. our solicitor (a different lawyer than the one who originally dealt with the lease) has advised that we should include an additional document within accompanying papers ('Tenancy At Will'). In process of contacting lawyer to obtain explanation on why now considered necessary, and why we were not previously advised about this issue.</p>
2	<p>Buildings – maintenance and repairs</p> <p>2.1 - Works undertaken since last report in June 2025</p> <p>2.1.1 - Annual gas boiler service and safety checks (church x 2 large gas boilers; hall x 1 gas boiler) – undertaken Thursday 25th September.</p> <p>2.1.2 - Hall – electric water heater in kitchen was not working. This was removed in early October 2025 and the hot water supply to the hall kitchen rerouted to run from the other electric water heater in that building which also supplies the toilet block.</p> <p>2.2 - Outstanding Planned Works / Routine Maintenance</p> <p>2.2.1 - Portable Appliance Testing (annual safety check of portable electrical equipment) – outstanding. In process of contacting another contractor.</p> <p>2.2.2 - Painting parking spaces for foodbank managers and van on driveway near hall. (Awaiting faculty). Quotation (old so this may increase) for painting each parking space = £300.</p> <p>2.2.3 – Hall Roof - One leak persists and has now been traced to tracking down from defective ridge tiles. Quotation to repair and add lead flashing where necessary:</p> <p>2.2.4 - Trimming / removing self-seeded trees (no tree preservation order exists to our knowledge) growing very close to south front of hall; advice received that highly likely to adversely affect the foundations of the building. Quotation to cut to ground and dispose: £960 incl: VAT</p>

No.	Item
	<p>2.2.5 – Entrance Ramps / Automatic Doors – awaiting faculty from Diocese.</p> <p>2.2.6 – Church lighting and alternative heating to replace current aging / failing systems – alternatives being investigated by Rev'd Peter.</p> <p>2.3 - 59 Southend Lane Maintenance reported separately by Amos E</p>
3	Any Other Issues
	<p>3.1 – Accident / Incident Reports</p> <p>The joints of one of the display boards (used as moveable partitions / screens) in the narthex had come apart and were blown down onto a member of the congregation by a gust of wind when entrance door was opened two Sundays ago. Initial bang on head and should experienced (by SW), but no lasting adverse effect. Accident form completed. Wardens in process of sourcing replacement screen.</p> <p>3.2 - For updates at next report:</p> <p>3.2.1 Centenary of Church – Events Planning (Lead: Frankie Turner)</p> <p>3.2.2 Review of request to install an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in the grounds of St John's.</p> <p>3.2.3 Changing of Hall Insurance to 'Landlord specific' cover. (Julie R) To be discussed with Ecclesiastical insurers.</p> <p>3.2.4 Claim back past energy costs used by Foodbank for Hall. Amounts have been calculated – to be discussed with Foodbank manager.</p> <p>3.3 - Risk Register</p> <p>A 'wish list' of other works required / planned should / when funds become available is contained within St John's DCC Risk Register; the spreadsheet is available to DCC members on request from Julie R.</p>

Frankie Turner & Julie Rochefort
Churchwardens

Safeguarding

There have been only three concerns reported this year one of which is ongoing.

Anne-Marie has done sterling work on the DBS checks which are now up to date with 3 outstanding at present 2 being new additions to the Children's Church team.

Members of the DCC are updating their Safeguarding Training record completing any levels as needed.

*Cynthia Harding,
Safeguarding Officer*

Music Department

Choir:

The choir continues to demonstrate strong commitment and dedication to supporting worship at St John's, maintaining a high standard week by week.

Lunchtime Recital Series:

The recital series remains a real success, attracting a wide and appreciative audience and featuring performers of an excellent standard. At present, donations (including refreshments) are shared between performers and the church, though there is ongoing discussion about directing all proceeds towards supporting St John's music programme in future.

Instruments:

1. Organ

The organ is now in a seriously deteriorating condition and requires major repair. It has become increasingly unreliable and difficult to play, and its issues are no longer minor or manageable.

Ongoing faults include:

- Stops failing to operate properly
- Worn electronic contacts
- Pitch sitting nearly a semitone too high, making it unsuitable for use with other instruments and placing strain on both choir and congregation
- A lack of significant maintenance since its installation in 1982, resulting in clear and accelerating decline

While we have managed to reduce costs by carrying out some tuning work ourselves, this is not a sustainable solution. The instrument is now at a point where failure could occur at any time, and substantial investment will be required to restore it to proper working condition. This must now be considered a priority.

2. Pianos

Both pianos remain in good condition.

3. Harmonium

Also in good condition.

Centenary Concert:

Alongside these challenges, we are preparing for a major choral and orchestral concert to celebrate the centenary of St John's Church. This will be a significant and exciting occasion for the church and wider community, but it will come at considerable cost, expected to exceed £2,500.

Careful planning will therefore be essential to ensure its success.

*Jack Stone
Director of Music*

Mission Action Plan Team

The Mission Action Plan (MAP) team has now been meeting for over three years, having been formed after the Mission Day in February 2023. As such, in the coming year, we will be looking to begin the MAP review process with the eventual outcome of a new plan with renewed focus areas and aims.

However, in the meantime, we continue to focus on the three key priorities identified at that time: Community Outreach and Hub, Growing the number of Children & Young People, and Sharing the Gospel. In those three years, much progress has been made across the areas.

Community Outreach Our partnership with Lewisham Foodbank is a vital part of local life; as well as serving many members of our community with their basic needs, we are now seeing increasing numbers of foodbank visitors asking for prayer and pastoral support. Others have begun attending services and events. We are in the early stages of planning a joint venture at the Green Man which will combine both community, missional outreach with practical support with Foodbank voucher provision which will further serve the community. The Pet Blessing, while always popular, leapt to new heights this year with the help of Rev'd Peter's dog and the Channel 5 TV show Dogs Behaving Badly! As well as bringing many first-timers into St John's for filming, it was a delight to see our church looking wonderful on television. The Music recitals continue to bring newcomers into the church and this past year's seasonal events like the Christmas fair have been very successful at opening the doors to the community. The Senior Social Club & First Friday Club and Pram Club continue to attract and serve different sectors of our community during the week and Rev'd Peter/ Cynthia are looking to increase involvement with Pram Club once more. School connections are deepening all the time, with regular school visits and church member involvement in many areas of school life. Our Foundation Governors have had key roles in the processes surrounding the changes of Senior Leadership since Elizabeth Derham left at Christmas.

Grow number of Children & Young People The Youth group has now been back up and running for a year and a half and are grateful for the use of the Rectory Meeting Room. Numbers remain relatively low and we believe this is in part due to the difficulty in consistency in running the group. Shea and David are currently still running the group on their own with no further volunteers, which means the group cannot run properly if either of them is unable to attend. Youth Church desperately need one or two volunteers to maintain it, especially due to the various health issues that have been keeping Shea and David from being at church as much as they would like. Meanwhile, there are plans to apply for a Diocesan Youth grant to do some updating, decorating and equipping of the Meeting Room which will support the group's growth and identity.

In contrast, Children's Church numbers are generally very healthy and is now run with a full set of volunteers and leaders, with the newest volunteers now getting their DBS checks through after a government system problem which affected the Dioceses leading to a backlog. The group have welcomed some new families over the last year and have also run some well attended special events like the Light Party on All Hallows Eve. The All-Age service in the 4th Sunday is now a well-established pattern and Cynthia and Rev'd Peter generally preach for these.

Sharing the Gospel One of the biggest new initiatives to come out of 2023's new Mission Action Plan was the launch of the monthly Saturday afternoon Café Church. The aim of this was to reach local people for whom Mass on a Sunday or Wednesday might be a bit daunting or formal. While those who have been attending have cherished it, the sessions have not been reaching new/ many people, with attendees being either from St Johns or other churches in the team. The difficult

decision has been made to stop running the Saturday sessions and move our focus to a session that takes place in the Green Man, an actual Café! That way, we reach the community where they already are, rather than asking them to make that first step into us. Wednesday Bible Studies, the Lent Course and special appeal services like the Pet Service (extra this year thanks to Channel 5!) have run in addition to our regular Masses and those for Feast days and notable occasions. Streaming Sunday Mass on social media and midweek services support those unable to attend on Sunday, and we are currently looking at expanding our YouTube offering for increased reach and accessibility.

Shea Hollis

MAP Team Coordinator

Senior Social Club

Another successful year for the SSC. Up to 45 local and church members attend each month and enjoy an afternoon of good company, lots of chat, quizzes and an afternoon tea to rival any local offerings. We have 65 men and women on our records.

We still charge just £1.50 and use our reserves to cover the rest of the expenses, approximately £45 each month.

Our present balance held within the Church funds is £9,049 with £378 in our petty cash.

We have a free raffle and give birthday presents to our members.

Due to space constraints we only publicise the club within our four church's and by word of mouth, but we would never turn away any newcomers. Any unexplained absence is followed up with a phone call.

Our risk assessment is reviewed annually, our accounts available for inspection and members details/contacts are updated each year.

SSC paid £300 to the Church 2025 (as in previous years) towards heating and lighting during the winter months. This amount is reviewed annually.

This club only works as well as it does because the tasks involved are shared between these wonderful people: Sandy, Sue C., Sue W., Linda, Carolyn, Gillian and John. So it's a big thank-you to them all.

Gillian Spencer

First Friday Lunch Club

A popular event run on the simple lines of offering a safe welcoming place to come and share our lunches, just have a chat or a game of cards or scrabble. We offer tea, coffee, soup, crisps, biscuits and often a seasonal treat. Participants, usually 20-25 pay £1 each month. We are committed to send £20 each month (via the church account) to Centre Point a charity assisting and providing accommodation to the young homeless in our city. A total of £200 was sent in 2025, any extra money collected over the next months will also be donated at the end of 2026. First Friday club also paid for the flowers distributed on Mothering Sunday this year.

Gillian Spencer

Online Mission

Our online presence continues share all that happens inside St John's virtually. This has several purposes; to reach those who are unable to attend in person, to share what happens inside for those who feel perhaps daunted to come in, to promote and advertise upcoming events and services, to share news and to support in the growth in faith of those following online.

Rev'd Peter has been posting almost daily on both Facebook and Instagram. He uses a scheduling tool to allow him to plan ahead and to share the posts at the same time each day. These posts reflect the daily Office, Saints Days and other feats and special events. The consistency with this posting has greatly benefited our social media algorithms- Meta like consistency! This means our posts show up on more profile feeds and we reach more people. Interactions (comments, reactions and shares) with our Facebook page have increased 46% over the last year, on Instagram this is up by 100%.

However, despite this regular posting having a huge impact on our reach, the chart below shows that it is the real people posts, events and special occasions that make the biggest impact. It is also worth noting that the large percentage jumps are skewed somewhat by the very high numbers reacting to the sad news of the death of Fr Martin. This is the sort of post that thankfully we will not be sharing every year and therefore next year's figures are likely to much lower (for context the highest reach on last year's chart was 479).

Top Ten Posts by Reach March 25-March 26

Rank	Content	Format	Date	Reach	Reactions
1	Announcement of the death of Fr Martin	Multiple image	Jan 26	15.3k	71
2	Carol Service Promotional Poster	Single image	Dec 25	1.7.k	2
3	Pre-Christmas Fair photos (after the fair)	Multiple images	Nov 25	866	23
4	Details of Fr Martin's Requiem Mass and Funeral	Single image	Jan 26	775	21
5	School Quiz night photos and result	Multiple images	Feb 26	710	16
6	Zimmer Harp Recital	Video	Dec 25	566	11
7	Harvest Festival donors	Video	Oct 25	525	16
8	Zoie & Michael's Wedding	Single image	Mar 26	521	3
9	Senior Social Club Christmas Party	Multiple images	Dec 25	500	22
10	Pre-Christmas Fair Poster	Single image	Nov 25	396	0

As you can see from the above, we love seeing faces we recognise, celebrating their special occasions and enjoying the everyday moments together. To this point, we welcome UGC 'User Generated Content'. This means that our congregation, visitors and groups share posts featuring us, which we can interact with and repost, or simply send us their content to share. Please rest

assured that content containing people's faces and names and posts with children are never shared without permission.

In addition to our social media output, on Facebook and Instagram, I am continuing to produce leaflets and posters to match the online promotional material for events. This worked especially well for the Christmas Fair. Similarly, the postcards printed to be shared with friends and neighbours for Christmas services were so popular we decided to do the same for Easter.

We continue to livestream Sunday Mass and occasional special services. This is managed in the main by Amos Eka (for which I am extremely grateful). While the numbers accessing the Mass livestream are relatively low, it is still an important part of our outreach and a useful part of our Funeral provision, especially for those with distant families. We are exploring livestreaming directly to YouTube but need to increase our number of subscribers to allow for this.

As ever, I ask that everyone that uses social media please do continue to engage with us- if you see a post from us, give it a like, make a comment, share it or tag someone you know who might be interested. Every interaction helps our message spread further, and the aim for the Online Missioner role has always been to openly share what goes on inside beyond our doors, so that more may venture in and feel God's presence.

*Shea Hollis,
Online Missioner*

St John's School

St John's School has had a very eventful year, with a successful OFSTED inspection, and with the departure of our much-loved headteacher, Mrs Derham.

The school continue to attend church once every half-term, Frankie and Rev'd Peter lead worship with the children most weeks, and Peter ran the annual 1st Communion Classes.

The falling birth-rate and the number of families moving out of London to Kent has had a big impact in schools across South London, and our school has not avoided the financial impact, so it is important to keep them in our prayers.

My thanks to all those who serve as governors, on behalf of our DCC for the time and energy they have out in to support the school.

Bishop Alastair at the School Harvest service



*Rev'd Peter,
Rector*

Sacristan Report 2025

I am pleased to report that we have been able to provide servers at every Sunday service and all additional services. At Midnight mass and our Easter Vigil services we also provided acolytes. Tony Miller has continued to support us with his wealth of knowledge, as well as assisting with setting up and clearing away. Many thanks Tony.

I have a very committed team of 6 regular servers; six adults and one member of our Children's Church. It is these seven to whom I owe a huge amount of thanks. Without their commitment and flexibility, I would be unable to provide servers every week. Many thanks to Maisie, Amos, Mamline, Anne-Marie, Robert, and Amerah.

It is with sadness that we are having to say goodbye to Hayden as a regular server due to her moving out of the parish. May I take this opportunity to thank Jaimie for her service and commitment.

It would be lovely to recruit one or two more crucifers so that each server is only committed to a duty once a month. Maybe Rev'd Peter could put a note on the service sheet?

We also now have a team of three regular Eucharistic Ministers: Myself, Mamline, and John, with Alice in reserve if needed.

Sandy Mawford

Special Projects Fund 2025

This fund is made up from any fairs, raffles, table sales, donations from Wednesday coffee and one off donations. The money is ring fenced within the church accounts and used to buy specific items needed by the church or to be put towards any special projects within the church that need funding. By using the money in this way it is easy for the congregation to actually see where their generous contributions are being spent.

This past year we have raised £1386.00 at our summer fair and £1549.50 at the Pre Christmas fayre, there were also deposits from the Wednesday coffee and a couple of one off donations given, which were paid into the church account. Money raised by Wednesday coffee donations has been kept in the safe to use as 'petty cash'. We currently have an approximate total of £5200.00, the exact total amount can be seen in the treasurer's report. This fund is going to be used to Redecorate the Forster Chapel in time for our centenary celebrations in June.

Going forward, and after consultation with Rev'd Peter once the Forster Chapel is finished any left over funds will be used towards our next project, which is replacing the sanctuary area carpet and re-introducing the isle carpet within the main body of the church.

May I take this opportunity to thank the committed team who help to run the fund raising events and both the congregation and our local community for their support and generous donations which have enabled us to set up this fund.

Sandy Mawford