

**The Parish Church of
St John the Baptist, Tisbury**
reflecting Jesus Christ...



**A
CELEBRATION
OF CHURCH
LIFE
2016**

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The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Tisbury. Charity No. 1142581

www.tisburyparishchurch.org

Introduction

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist serves the Wiltshire village of Tisbury (pop: 3,000 approx) in the Nadder Valley Benefice. Residents are widely varied in age, social background and employment status. Tisbury retains a strong rural character. During 2016 we were served – for much of the year – by a clergy team consisting of a Rector and two Team Vicars, supported by an Associate Priest and several supernumerary clergy, as well as a Licensed Lay Minister.

St John's, which can hold in excess of 300 people, dates from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and is in good repair. There are either two or three church services each Sunday, and the monthly cycle of worship encompasses a range of worship styles reflecting the varied needs of the combined congregation. These include eucharists and a traditional choral evensong as well as a more contemporary family service and contemplative worship. There are currently bible study groups and other opportunities to explore faith. A dedicated team leads occasional youth events, and there is scope for greater involvement of young people in the worship and wider life of the church. The church is renowned for its musical tradition, with a committed group of experienced singers and players making up the church choir and instrumental band. There is also a team of bell ringers.



Plans are well advanced for major development of the church building to make it more welcoming, comfortable and warmer, and to enable more flexible use of the space. During 2016 a renovation of the North Porch was carried out – thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor.

There is considerable involvement and support given by local residents to the church and its mission. The Hinton Hall (church hall) nearby provides a well-used meeting and function space for church and secular groups. The building houses a well-established parish office staffed by competent volunteers led by a paid part-time Administrator who is also responsible for the content of the website. There are good links with the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches in Tisbury. The congregations regularly joining together for worship and social events including a monthly healing service, a Remembrance Sunday service and the annual village carol service. Focus, our own monthly magazine for village community, contains details of services of all three churches, along with reports and features from secular community groups.

The village has St John's School, a Church of England Primary School. There are close links between church and school; four church members serve as governors. A current church initiative at the school is a Bible education project called *Open the Book* and the church is used regularly by the school to mark festivals such as Harvest and Christmas.



The Parish of St John's provides a wealth of challenges and opportunities for spiritual growth. The congregation has shown itself ready to take on change and is looking to the future, reaching out joyfully towards newcomers and the young. It strives to play a full part in the developing life of the benefice.

From the more detailed reports that follow, we hope you will conclude that despite the varied challenges of running a church in an increasingly secularised society, there is a committed Christian community in Tisbury that aims to live up to its strapline – *reflecting Jesus Christ*.

Worship at St John's

The monthly pattern of Sunday services during 2016 has remained unchanged, consisting of a said service of Holy Communion at 8.00 am on the second and fourth Sundays. There is a 9.30 am sung Parish Communion each Sunday except for the first Sunday of the month when there is a Family Service, with lively music provided by the Church Band.

There is a Sunday evening service at 6.00 pm each week, each with a different style. The pattern is as follows:



1st Sunday

Holy Communion –

congregational singing with hymns

2nd Sunday

Questioning Faith, which explores aspects of the Christian faith

3rd Sunday **Choral Evensong** led by the church choir

4th Sunday **Prayer and Praise** – a contemplative service with more modern songs

There are said services of Holy Communion on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Music in Worship

Music plays an important part in the worshipping life of St John's. Between them, a choir and church band of experienced and able musicians led by a Director of Music and a Bandmaster, reflect a wide variety of musical styles in the monthly service pattern. Contemplative music such as that from the Taizé and Iona communities is sung congregationally at one of the evening services.



The band leads the singing of contemporary worship songs and hymns for our monthly family service. During 2016 it also provided music for a couple of external events including a healing service in Salisbury Cathedral and a significant celebration for the local pub, which as it happens

acts as the "vestry" for the choir following its weekly rehearsal!

The choir's main function is to lead the congregational singing at the regular Sunday morning Eucharist. It performs a choral item during the distribution of communion.



The choir also sings a monthly Choral Evensong which is

substantial in its musical content. A highlight during 2016 has been to sing for a special Choral Evensong to celebrate the renovation of the north porch and to re-launch the Development Appeal.

The annual village Carol Service is also a key annual project for the choir. For the first time in recent years, we invited members of the local community to join the choir for the singing of carols; an approach which paid off given the capacity attendance and the resonance of the occasion beyond the church walls!

It must not be forgotten that our services are acts of worship for the music makers as well as those in the pews. The Director of Music would like to acknowledge the enormous commitment given by all those whose singing or playing does so much to uplift our worship. Deo gracias!

Stuart Robinson
Director of Music

Mission and Pastoral

Mission is an ongoing practice within our church family. As members of this family we are committed to supporting each other and reaching out in many ways to the community.

Within the church we worship together; at the Sunday morning service there is coffee after the service each week, a moment to chat, support and encourage. Importantly too, it's a time to invite newcomers to meet with us. There is also the opportunity for individual prayer. Bible study takes place weekly in two Home Groups and usually other times of study during Lent and Advent.

There is a team of Lay Pastoral Assistants (see below) working in the community. The occasional afternoon tea is now a feature of mission, and Nosh and Natter is our monthly gathering for a light lunch. These are times of showing God's love and gently sharing our Faith.



Mission takes place through baptisms, weddings and funerals, through preparation by clergy with occasional lay assistance. It is important that as members of the church family we are available to relate at these services. Our All Souls' Service, Carol Service and all Christmas services, Harvest Service (this year with lunch) and Easter Services (with breakfast) are huge opportunities for sharing our faith.

Overseas we are committed to supporting the church and people of South Sudan in Cueibet and Kajo Keji in particular.

Mission is part of our individual Christian journey, just where we are, in our road, village, in the queue at the local Co-op and much more!! I do believe we're all doing just that, but we don't always recognise this as mission. That's the lovely thing about being members of a church family.

Ann Hare

Lay Pastoral Assistants

St John's, Tisbury has twelve licensed Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs) who continue to serve the church and the community in various ways. They visit and support people who are sick, housebound or lonely, whether they be church members, neighbours or those who contact us to ask for a visit. Home communion is taken regularly to members of our church who are no longer able to get to a service.



A new venture in 2016 was the launch of a series of tea parties held in the Hinton Hall, primarily designed for those who live alone and would like some company, but all are welcome. Scones and cakes baked by the LPAs are provided along with tea and coffee, and no charge is made. Two tea parties have been held so far, one in the autumn of 2016 and another in

January 2017. They have been very well attended and the atmosphere has been very congenial. Another is planned for the summer.

The Diocese provides continuing ministerial development and our LPAs have attended events ranging from 'Getting to know you' to a Quiet Day. The Revd Mark Hayter (Associate Priest) has now taken over the co-ordinating of all the LPAs throughout the Nadder Valley.

Judy Anderson

Licensed Lay Minister

Family and Youth Work



The Youth Ministry Team now consists of three church members. The team's main energy focus is on the monthly family services. We feel it is important to make sure these services on the first Sunday of the month continue to a high standard, and we

strive to increase the number of young families attending. The lively church band helps to make this informal service popular with families and the young at heart.

Despite fluctuating numbers, our services in 2016 have been well received, with an overall theme of *Prayer and how we pray*. The services celebrating Rogation and Harvest were linked, reflecting the themes of 'asking' and then saying 'thank you'. There were also successful services with themes such as *Faith as big as a mustard seed*, *Zachariah and Elizabeth*, *St John the Baptist* and *Finding pieces of the puzzle*.

During 2017 we will endeavour to increase the number of those attending family services, and build up more of a base of young families for the church. Once we have a larger number of church families, we can consider what other activities/groups could be of benefit.

Rebecca McDonald

Other initiatives for young people

In the summer of 2016 we held a successful two-day workshop for children up to the age of 12, entitled *Kings, Queens and Giants*. We looked at some examples of leaders in the Old Testament and observed how, through their trust in God, they achieved great things. It was great fun and well supported, and children learnt more about how to talk to God.



Members of the church community continued during the year to act out Bible stories in the fortnightly *Open the Book* initiative at St John's School. These interactive assemblies help children to understand Bible stories and put them in context. There are four governors at the school who worship at St John's and who support the school in developing its Christian distinctiveness, an aspect recognised in a recent school inspection. The number of parents attending school services at Christmas, Easter and Harvest has continued to grow to almost 'standing room only'.

Safeguarding

St John's follows the latest practices in safeguarding for under-age and vulnerable people. The PCC seeks to provide a safe, caring and consistent environment so that our children, young people and vulnerable adults may thrive in a happy and loving Christian atmosphere. A Safeguarding Officer has been appointed for the purpose.

All those working on behalf of the church with either children (anyone under 18) or a vulnerable adult are reminded they must obtain clearance from the government's Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The Safeguarding Officer oversees the clearance of anyone working with young people and vulnerable adults, and arranges training opportunities when necessary.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, and the Safeguarding Officer and clergy can and should be approached at any time by a member of the church with concerns about something affecting the safety of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Anthony Lovell-Wood

Safeguarding Officer



The Church Building

Development Project

There has been a great deal of activity during 2016. It included work to the North Porch and the launch of our appeal and the project with a service on 17th September led by the Rt Revd Humphrey Southern, our former Team Rector, who had himself initiated the predecessor of the current development plans.

Bishop Humphrey blessed the work to the North Porch. The porch has been enhanced by improvements to the entrance, the removal of the inappropriate 20th century outer doors, and the installation of glass doors half way along the porch. This has been mostly funded by one generous donor, and not only makes for a much more welcoming way into the building (it is planned to leave the inner doors open in good weather) but is also a tangible sign of the start of the development plan.



At the time of writing the main plan awaits final consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. Although a generally favourable view emerged from that committee's December meeting, there are a number of matters requiring detailed attention by our architect. These should have been finalised by the time of the Annual Parish Church Meeting.

The plan requires alterations to the windows on the south side of the building, in order to make room for the extension. Kind donors (her family in memory of the late Juliet Bowen) have funded this work.

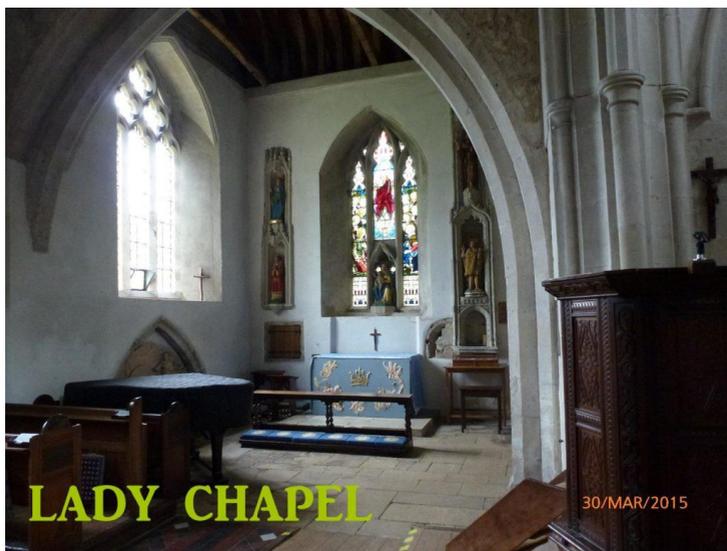
Other kind donors have offered to pay for a new, moveable altar for the nave. Matthew Burt, the distinguished local furniture maker, is working on a design for us. The costs of moving the stone altar to the Lady Chapel should be met out of the existing restricted altar fund. It may be that the new altar can be installed before the main work is done or can be afforded. This would be a further tangible sign of progress.

We are anxious to reinstate the Lady Chapel ceiling, not least because the lack of a ceiling is a serious cause of draughts. This also might be an early piece of work. As for the rest of Stage One (the toilet and boiler house extension on the south side of the church, and the improved heating), we are currently evaluating the indicative costing provided by our architect.

We have been hugely encouraged and enthused by the Revd Andrew Staley during the eight years of his incumbency and thank him for his spiritual leadership and pastoral care.

Sam Wiggs

Chairman, Development Committee



Maintenance and Fabric

During 2016 further designs and ideas were discussed by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) towards the provision of a new Garden of Remembrance. We are reaching the stage in a few years' time when the available spaces in the existing garden will have been used up.

The East Window Committee also met a number of times concerning the replacement of the stained glass by Clutterbuck, as a result of movement by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) on what they would be prepared to consider.

General repairs were carried out as necessary during the year as well as the more significant items listed below.

Church building:



The following maintenance was carried out externally:

- The lights round the church were all changed to LED bulbs.

The following maintenance was carried out internally:

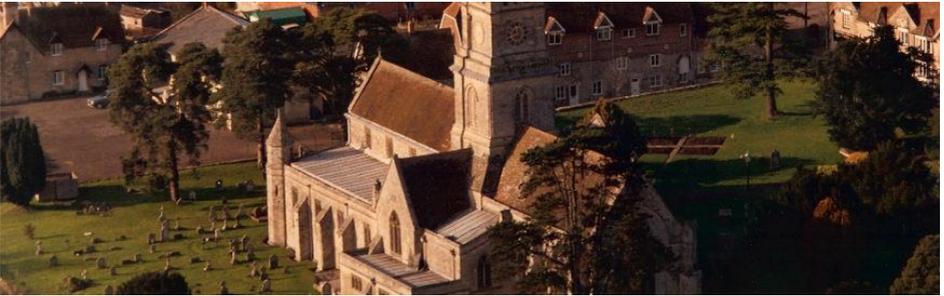
- The church clock was taken apart to solve the constant stopping.
-
- Lock repairs were carried out in the vestry and to the north door, the latter being part of the changes to the north porch.
- The wrought iron gates to the north porch were sandblasted and repainted as part of the changes to the north porch.



Churchyard:

The parishioners who look after the churchyard have done great work during the year to keep it looking neat and tidy, and they also undertook the lopping of the maple tree.

Anthony Lovell-Wood
Chairman, Fabric Committee



Our Churchwardens

***Bill Liddiard and
Anthony Lovell-Wood***



Other Church Activities

Events Group

Members of the Events Group have continued to show films in the Victoria Hall and now in the Nadder Centre over the past year. These are very much community events, and we are now in our twelfth year! There has been a series of different kinds of films from *45 years* to *Our kind of Traitor*. We were keen to put any funds toward the restoration of the east window and we can say over 2016 we have taken over £1,000.

A group of us also ran the Christmas Fair in November which was very successful making over £1000 for the General Fund.

Elizabeth Young

Events Organiser

The Patronal Festival Fête: 25th June 2016

This is one the social highlights of the year and falls as close as possible to 24th June, the Feast of the Nativity of St John – our patron saint. There was a good community atmosphere, with help from our local cubs, brownies, cadets, the Community Choir and the Carnival Committee. The many stalls and sideshows were all well supported and it was good to welcome the alpacas back. The Tisbury Duck Race was once again a star attraction with 150 ducks bobbing down the Nadder, to be captured by the cadets and Doctor John. More activities in church encouraged people to listen to our Church Band or Maxwell Steer playing the organ. You could also fly a paper aeroplane, hunt for a Tis Ted or admire the Art Exhibition. The weather was mostly kind with the barbecue, teas and ices all selling out!



I would like to thank the organising committee for making this year's fête such a success. We made a profit of over £4,200 which is a wonderful result, making all that hard work worthwhile. Plans are already taking shape for the 2017 fête which takes place on Saturday 24th June.

Bill Liddiard

Chairman, Fête Committee

Flowers in St John's Church



I would like to thank my team of 18 ladies who help to keep St John's such a welcoming and well-loved church. Many people remark that the church is always open, and always looks so beautiful. We have flowers in church every week except in during the seasons of Lent and Advent, and the team gathers together to decorate for festivals at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. We are all busy people and I would like to acknowledge the

generosity of time and money spent by my Flower Team. I think we should follow the example of the *Holy Mowers* and rename ourselves the *Holy Petals* – what do you think?

Trish Liddiard

Website and Social Media

www.tisburyparishchurch.org

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsChurchTisbury/>

2016 saw our website's first full year of operation. It reflects life at St John's through a number of contrasting sections labelled About us, What's On, Worship and Faith, Young people, Music, Just Visiting, Community and Family Events.

The output of the website is maintained on a weekly basis by a small production team overseen by church's Standing Committee which acts as its editorial board. The site is maintained on a daily basis, with the home page reflecting forthcoming services and events at St John's. During the year the team has devised a total of 132 different posts.



Since July 2016 we have been monitoring the number of hits; the site has been visited by surfers from all over the world including China, New Zealand and Uganda. Up to the time of writing (March 2017) there have been 11,582 page views, with the peak in January 2017 at the time of the departure of the Revd Andrew Staley. Around 27% are returning visitors while 72% are new visitors. The church's Facebook pages are also important in reflecting life at St John's and in drawing attention to newly-published material on the website. Facebook pages are updated several times during the week. We are noticing a slow growth in the numbers engaging with the page. We do not have a Twitter account as yet, but this will be explored during 2017.

We suspect that while many congregation members use the internet and have an email address, we could do more to encourage people to

look at the website and the church's pages on Facebook. To this end, a series of free seminars are being considered for church members and those on the Electoral roll.

Stuart Robison

Parish Administrator

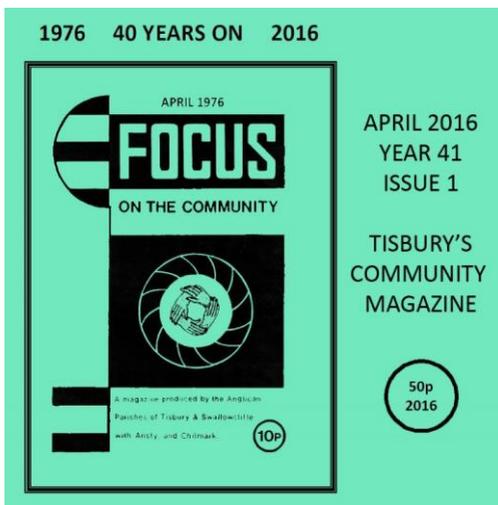
Coffee and Fellowship

I would like to thank the team of ladies who provide coffee, tea, biscuits, flapjack and cake after our 9.30 am Sunday services throughout the year. Meeting after the service provides a time to gather informally over refreshments and enjoy the company of others, exchange news and ideas, and welcome visitors to our church.

Trish Liddiard

Focus activities

Focus is our monthly community magazine produced and compiled entirely by a group of volunteers under the auspices of St John's Church, supported by subscriptions and revenue from advertisements. The magazine celebrated 40 years as a publication in 2016 having been started in 1976. The occasion was marked by the publication of articles from the 1976 edition periodically throughout the year, and by a



celebratory party to which all present and past editors, printers, publishers, team members, contributors, distributors and the post office and newsagent were invited. Some 80 people attended.

The magazine is published by a team consisting of two editors, two publishers, who set-up the copy, two printers and a team of 25 collators and distributors. 670 copies are printed each month, of which some 300 are distributed to regular subscribers. The remainder go on sale in the Tisbury Post Office, Tisbury News and the Pick Your Own in Ansty.

Hank Bowen

Chairman, Focus Committee

Hinton Hall



In addition to its function as our church hall, the Hinton Hall is used by a number of Tisbury societies and groups including art, craft and exercise. Our facilities are also used for private hire by individuals for celebratory events. Ten societies use the

hall usually once a week/month, and a further 16 societies and groups use the hall on a quarterly basis. Other events, including post funeral and celebratory social, amount to some 30 events a year. The Hall is well used with approx ten events each week.

Hank Bowen

Chairman, Hinton Hall Committee

And finally...

Quite apart from the work reported above, there are many others who contribute week in, week out to church life at St John's – cleaners, servers, sidesmen (customary title), bell ringers, readers, chalice bearers and so on. Without their quiet devotion to the work of the parish, we would not be blessed with such a cohesive and committed community seeking to *reflect Jesus Christ*.



Approved by the Parochial Church Council on 5 April 2017
and signed on its behalf by Revd Dr Graham Southgate
(Team Rector and Chairman)



The service celebrating the mission and leadership of Revd Andrew Staley in January 2017 was attended by over 300 members of the Nadder Valley villages.