

ST JOHN WITH ST MARY – PARISH PROFILE

INTRODUCTION BY THE BISHOP

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the post of Rector of Devizes, St John & St Mary: part of the See of Ramsbury in the Diocese of Salisbury. This is a super incumbency in the heart of Devizes, recently voted one of the happiest places to live in Britain by The Guardian.

This role will suit a priest in the central or broad-church tradition of the Church of England, who has the imagination and drive to connect our liturgical and spiritual traditions with the renewed curiosity about Christian heritage that we find here.

I am looking for devoted and visionary clergy, who can inspire and lead our churches in Making Jesus known – our diocesan vision. While this can appear a timeless landscape, our parishes are constantly changing and face all the challenges and opportunities of life in the 2020s. Because of this, the church must renew its mission and traditions for the contemporary situation.

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we place a high value on the encouragement and pastoral support of our parish clergy and, should God guide you to serve here, you will become part of a committed and collaborative team.

The Ramsbury office is soon to move to Devizes (along with my home!) so the new incumbent will be close to the heart of things in the north of the diocese. Please contact the Archdeacon of Wilts, Ven Louise Ellis, or my PA Lynne Archer, if you need any assistance with your enquiry - and be assured of my prayers as you seek the Lord's will for your future

Andrew Ramsbury



INTRODUCTION BY RURAL DEAN

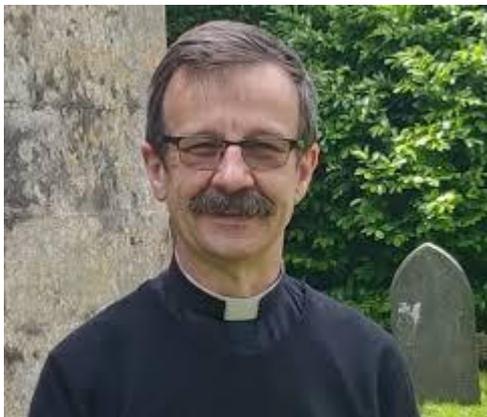
Devizes sits at the centre of the deanery that bears its name and thus the churches in Devizes play a significant part in the life of the deanery. The contrast between the three Anglican churches in Devizes mean that each can develop its complementary tradition within the town.

The benefices of the deanery have a long history of trying to work closely together; there are many things that we can do as a deanery that would be difficult to do separately. For example, Devizes plays a significant part in the lives of our young people as many of the children and teenagers who live in our villages attend school in Devizes and come into the town for social and sporting activities. Thus, Devizes is the natural focus for youth work.

At the moment many of the deanery benefices are in vacancy following retirements and people moving on to new stages in their ministry. So we look forward to welcoming new clergy to the chapter and working together on the direction of the deanery into the future. Presently many aspects of deanery life are up in the air but my hope and prayer is that through regular chapter meetings we can all get to know each other better and identify those areas where it is productive to work collaboratively on our common goals. We do have a deanery mission plan but with new people joining the deanery this is a natural time to review and revise this.

Devizes deanery is in a point of transition but this is an exciting time and the new Rector of St John and Mary is in the position to play a key part in helping develop the life of the deanery.

Richard Curtis Team Rector of the Cannings and Redhorn Benefice Rural Dean of Devizes Deanery



WELCOME

Welcome to our Parish Profile. As you read through this profile, we hope that you might prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to be the next rector of St John with St Mary Devizes. The role is a deeply rewarding one but not without its challenges.

OUR PARISH

The congregation of St John with St Mary is a friendly and inclusive Church of England community in the Diocese of Salisbury. Our church is a welcoming place for all regardless of sexuality, ethnicity, age, background or other aspects of personal identity and we support the ordination of women.

Positioned within the heart of Devizes, a growing and flourishing market town in central Wiltshire, it is one of three Anglican churches in the town, the other two being St James, Southbroom, an open evangelical church, and St Peter's, which is placed under the episcopal, sacramental and pastoral care of the Bishop of Oswestry.

With around 89 people on the electoral roll, we are a diverse group of people of all ages, who believe that God is calling us as a church to embrace everyone, whatever their views, traditions or backgrounds. Everyone is welcome wherever they are on their journey. We seek to support, encourage and strengthen our community, and deepen our faith in God.



St John's



St Mary's

© Tony Scorer

Dating back over 900 years when it was built to serve the garrison of Devizes Castle, St John's still has a special place in the life of the town today.

Recognised as the town's civic church, it actively engages in the life of the local community and public affairs, seeking to balance worship and Christian teaching with a visible, positive role in civic society – participating in public services, supporting local organisations and encouraging partnerships in the community.

Its position next to the Town Hall makes it central to many of the town's activities, hosting various public services, such as the annual Civic Service when people come together to celebrate the work of the Town Council and all who contribute to making Devizes a pleasant and lively place to live. The Rector is usually the Mayor's Chaplain.

It plays a central role in Remembrance Day when civilians of all ages, youth groups, civic leaders, councillors with military and service representatives gather around the war memorial at the church gates to remember those lost to war and pray for peace.

The building is also used for concerts, notably for the organ recital in the Devizes Arts Festival, performances by local music making societies, fund raising talks and houses the fantastical light creations made for the Devizes Christmas Lantern parade.

Its involvement reflects the church's aim to be a Christian presence integrated within the wider social and civic fabric rather than isolated from it.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

Our aspirations are for a vibrant and spiritual congregation reaching out to the wider community, which recognises that the church exists not only for those who are its members but also for those who are not. We are keen to find new ways to achieve that ambition and in doing so enable the church to grow and flourish in God's name.

In preparing this parish profile we circulated a questionnaire to parishioners asking how they viewed St John's today and what they wanted it to look like in five years' time.

Not surprisingly there was a wide range of answers, but a picture emerged of a church community that is currently looking for a shared vision and uncertain of its direction - as one person put 'in a holding position'.

However, there was a recognition that those attending St John's are caring and friendly people with a tradition of looking out for and supporting others.

The collective view of what we'd like to be in five years' time is both challenging and encouraging - many parishioners expressed a desire to see St John's become more vibrant and open, extending its outreach, deepening its connections with the local community and fostering a welcoming environment for newcomers.



© Gail Foster

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

In celebrating and valuing what we currently do, we recognise that to develop as a church and achieve our potential we need to recognise the challenges and be open to change.

Our main challenges include:

Like many churches a significant majority of our parishioners are retired and many are over 70, but nevertheless we regularly welcome new members. While those in retirement can and do offer many hours to the community, there are fewer able-bodied people who can contribute to the physical aspects of running the church. Those younger people of working age on our electoral roll have pressures on their leisure time and it has become increasingly difficult to find volunteers to help with regular maintenance, both inside the building and in the churchyard.

We clearly need to grow as a community both in the physical sense of the number of worshippers, including families and children, and spiritually. In an increasingly uncertain world, the need for a clear and robust spiritual identity becomes more important. We need to offer something that addresses people's need for spiritual depth and integrity. By presenting a coherent model for spiritual practice, growth and transformation, we would hope to attract more worshippers across all ages.

Our choral tradition, together with the new organ, offers exciting opportunities to explore musical outreach among all ages, and for teaching and visiting musicians. Whilst preserving our existing worship styles, we recognise the need also to develop a programme that addresses the needs of different groups.

With budgets increasingly under pressure there is a need to re-build a sound financial base that provides a stable footing for the church's future mission. A significant proportion of our regular income comes from a relatively small number of givers, which isn't sustainable in the longer term, so our focus should be considering alternative ways to generate additional funds through personal giving and fund-raising, whilst being mindful of what the parish should give out to others in need.

In our quest for a renewed vision, it will be essential to harness the shared energy and enthusiasm of the congregation and attract a wider age range of worshippers. By actively involving parishioners in decision-making processes, encouraging more volunteers and providing opportunities for spiritual growth, St John's can transform from a church in 'a holding position' to a dynamic and flourishing community.

To achieve these objectives our next Rector will need to be sensitive to the different priorities and views within our church community and work with us to unify them into a shared vision that reflects and supports them all.

OUR NEW RECTOR

We're not expecting a miracle maker and understand that no individual can offer all the skills and qualities that any parish seeks in a future incumbent.

Whilst we would expect the next Rector to be supportive of our churchmanship, styles of worship and choral tradition, we are open to new ideas that can nurture the growth of church membership of all ages, by understanding and relating to the needs of different generations.

KEY PERSONAL QUALITIES

A person of prayer

A visible, confident, inclusive and approachable leader

A good listener with a willingness and ability to build relationships

Consultative but decisive

Commitment to reaching out to the local community, helping us to connect further with our town

Sense of humour

Clear communicator and preacher

Mindful of pastoral needs

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, COMPETENCIES

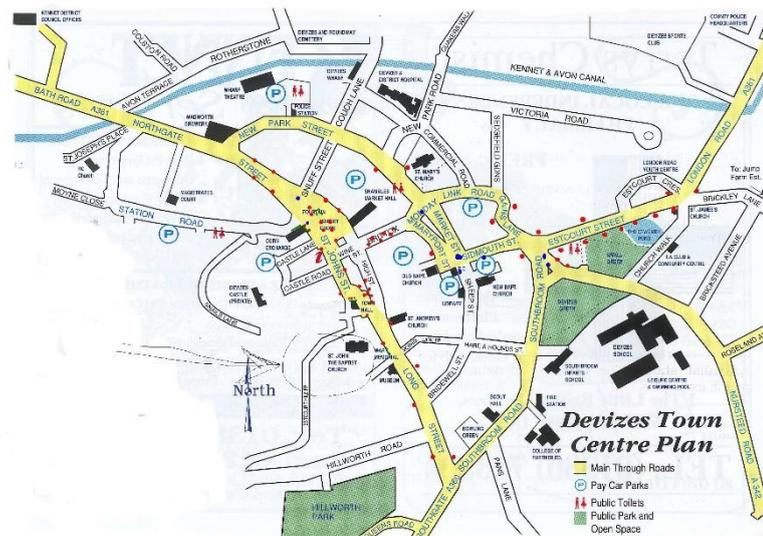
Willingness to work collaboratively with others and delegate where appropriate

Computer literate and social media-aware, able to use IT creatively

Knowledge of financial management, mission planning and development

Build on existing relationships with community leaders and other churches, continuing the links we have through Devizes Churches Together.

OUR LOCATION



Devizes is a medium-sized market town set in rural Wiltshire on the edge of Salisbury Plain with a colourful medieval past, a wealth of history and architectural heritage with more than 500 listed buildings. The town received a charter in 1141 permitting regular markets.



Thursday Market
Day

A settlement for Roman, Saxon and Norman invaders, it boasted an 11th Century castle, which today exists as a Victorian reconstruction, and just outside the town lies the site of the Civil War's Battle of Roundway Down.

It is regularly in the top 10 of the country's favourite market towns with a good choice of retail outlets, a theatre and a vibrant weekly market.

Among its best known visitor attractions are:

- Devizes Museum, which is home to the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society and boasts a nationally important Bronze Age collection taken from the barrows surrounding Stonehenge and Avebury.
- Caen Hill locks, with its flight of 29 locks on the Kennet and Avon canal: a popular challenge for those visiting on boats!



Caen Hill Locks

Today Devizes has a population of about 19,000 with a wide range of housing, new and old. It has good road links to major routes and, although not serviced by rail, there are stations within easy reach in the nearby towns. A campaign to reinstate a parkway station at nearby Lydney is gathering momentum.

The Food and Drink Festival, Arts Festival, Carnival, a Beer and Cider Festival and a Winter Festival Lantern Parade are among the annual events that each offer a wide range of events for all ages – and there are numerous groups and organisations making it a lively place to live.

WORSHIP

SUMMARY

The parish of St John with St Mary is rooted within the sacramental/liturgical/choral tradition of the Church of England. Our core services maintain a traditional Anglican style of worship that supports a serious, yet sensible, approach to liturgy and the sacraments. We preach largely to the lectionary and follow the cyclical patterns and rhythms of the liturgical seasons. Our services are embedded within *'Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England'* and *'The Book of Common Prayer'*. Integral to our liturgy is a strong choral dimension with, for example, our main Sunday morning Parish Eucharist (10.30 a.m.) being supported by our choir, who lead the congregational singing in music drawn from the full breadth of the English choral tradition.



© Gail Foster

SERVICES AT ST JOHN'S

Sunday

8.00 am BCP Holy Communion

10.30 am Parish Communion - refreshments are provided after the service

Thursday

10.00 am Holy Communion [*suspended during the vacancy*]

12-12.15pm Prayers for the parish during the vacancy

Previously the Rector has led 8.30am Morning Prayer most weekdays.

The sacrament is reserved in the Beauchamp Chapel and the sacraments of Anointing and Absolution are available. Vestments, clerical/choir dress are used for all main acts of worship. Lay eucharistic assistants, servers, readers and intercessors assist in the leading of worship, making this an important contribution from the laity.

Christmas Service cards are delivered throughout the parish during Advent.

SERVICES AT ST MARY'S

Tuesday

6.30 pm Holy Communion

OCCASIONAL SERVICES

BAPTISMS

Baptisms usually take place at 3.00pm on a Sunday afternoon, very occasionally they are during the 10.30am Parish Eucharist. A welcoming and 'open policy' for baptisms is offered and initial requests are taken by the Parish Administrator. In 2024 there were 5 baptisms at St John's.

WEDDINGS

Weddings are arranged by the clergy in consultation with the couple, following their registration of interest with the Parish Administrator. During 2024 only 2 weddings took place in St John's.

FUNERALS

In 2024 the clergy conducted 6 funerals. In addition, there were 3 memorial services in St John's.

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Lieutenant General Sir Maurice Johnston, a former Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, took place in St. John's in March 2025, with representatives of the royal family in attendance.

The current Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire wishes to hold the 2025 annual Wiltshire carol service at St. John's in December.



Remembrance
Sunday 2024

OUR RESOURCES

OUR PERSONNEL

Parish Administrator, Book Keeper and Hon-Treasurer – Catherine Brown

Catherine is the first point of contact for anyone with enquiries about the church. She is the key contact between the Rector, the Churchwardens, parishioners and the wider community. Her responsibilities include printing the service booklets and sheets for special events, the weekly ebulletin and pew sheet, taking bookings for baptisms and weddings, liaising with funeral directors and bookings for hiring the parish rooms. In addition, Catherine manages Kevin Cox, who keeps the Parish Rooms clean for those hiring the building.

She divides her 18 hours working for the parish between the office in the Parish Rooms next to St John's and her home.

Catherine was appointed as the parish administrator in 2011. Her association with St John's dates back to the mid-1980s – she and Ian, were married in the church in 1988 and their four children have all been baptised in St John's, the eldest two confirmed, and the youngest two have taken their first Holy Communion here, her daughter was married here in 2022. She started teaching Sunday School in 1987 and has been involved in the Children's Church in its many guises since then. She studied for her Bishop's Certificate in 1995, and is a member of UCAN having gained her certificate of Parish Administration in 2024.



Director of Music - Dr Joe Scarffe,

A musician and educator with experience in performance, teaching, and research. Joe began his musical training as an Organ Scholar at Dauntsey's School, where he developed his technical skills and interest in liturgical music. After his gap year as a choral scholar at Portsmouth Cathedral he went on to study at Dartington, where he ran the madrigal society and also performed with ensembles such as Counterpoint within Exeter and Exeter Cathedral.

Joe then attended Queen's University Belfast, where he was a lay clerk and played the organ at Belfast Cathedral where he gained valuable experience in accompaniment and choral collaboration, as well as exposure to a wide variety of repertoire.

While pursuing a PhD at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, he taught singing and organ at the Junior Conservatoire and was a Lay Clerk at St. Chad's Basilica in Birmingham, where he sang at the Pantheon and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



© Gail Foster

Our Director of Music Joe Scarffe
with our Organist Barry Payne

CLERGY WITH PERMISSION TO OFFICIATE

We have the benefit of several retired clergy as regular members of our congregation. The Rev Canon Chris Burdon and the Rev Andrew Sinclair have both helped to maintain our services during the vacancy.

Part-time Associate Priest at St John's with St Mary's Devizes - Rev'd Caroline Spindlow

Caroline is licensed at St John's but has a brief to support the Devizes Deanery where there is a need. This takes her around many different churches as well as St John's and St Mary's. She has been with the St John's team for nearly 2 years. She is also the Ministry Resources Officer for the diocese – a job which she loves – and entails ensuring the curates across the diocese have flourishing curacies. She looks forward to being able to support the new Rector and be part of their team.



LAY ASSISTANCE

We have a small band of readers, intercessors, a sacristan, servers, two trained Lay Pastoral Assistants, one of whom is an Anna Chaplain.

LLM – Chris Cox

A retired mental health nurse, Chris was licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister in 2018.

With his faith and ministry strongly rooted within the Christian mystical and contemplative tradition, Chris is keen to develop as a contemplative minister and promote contemplative practice. He feels that “there is a need to explore and embrace a Christian spirituality that speaks to people’s need for depth and meaning”.

Among other things, Chris is a part of our pastoral team and facilitates our ‘Reflection’ group.



Anna Chaplain - Claire Arden

A regular worshipper at St John's for the past 27 years, Claire felt she was called to become an Anna Chaplain, who are trained to support older people, their families and carers emotionally and spiritually. Already an LPA, Eucharist Assistant and Server, she was commissioned as a chaplain by the Bishop of Ramsbury in 2024 after completing her training, which she has continued with a Spiritual Care Course. Claire works on the tills at Morrison's supermarket in Devizes and sees that as part of her chaplaincy ministry.



OUR BUILDINGS

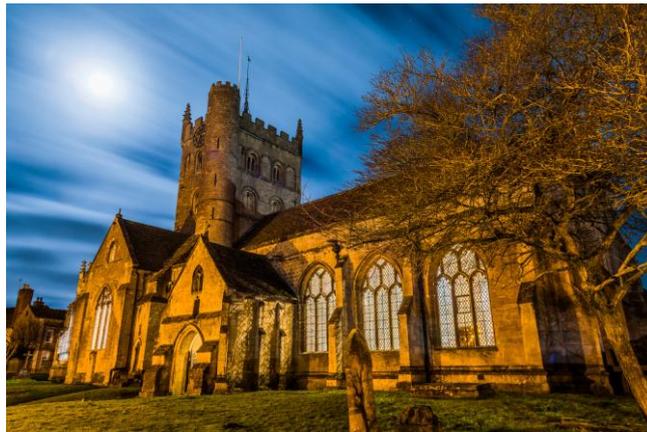
The Benefice is in central Devizes and has two churches, which are both in the Devizes Town Conservation Area, detached Parish Rooms and a Rectory within walking distance of both churches. There is also a semi-detached house in the benefice used as accommodation for a Curate.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

This Grade 1 listed Norman church is the main site of worship in the benefice. The building is in good condition with a considerable amount of external stonework renovation recently completed. Solar panels were installed on the south roof a few years ago and generate some income for the church.

The building has very considerable financial backing for fabric repairs and maintenance from the Glanville Trust.

Reordering has been under consideration for some time and as a first step we have removed three rows of pews at the west end to create a more open space for socialising with refreshments after services. A faculty to make the removal permanent is currently awaiting a decision from the DAC. We hope eventually to include a kitchenette and toilets.



© Gerry Lynch

CCTV cameras

We have installed four CCTV cameras to provide additional security when the church is open for visitors. The cameras cover all entrances and can be programmed to record sound, but this can be turned off when confidential or sensitive matters are discussed.

They are controlled using WiFi connection to an application that runs on a smartphone that can be seen by a number of authorised users, which means that we can monitor access, and the cameras are turned on when movement is detected.

Images stored on the cameras can be played back and viewed against selected time.

The camera data is stored on the Ring database, and is purged after a suitable period.

Online card machine

We have a WiFi connected SumUp terminal, which allows donations to be credited to our main account, routed to specific areas of interest to donors. These currently include the Organ Fund and General Maintenance.

This is a useful source of income that is broken down in the Treasurer's report to the PCC.

ST MARY THE VIRGIN

Constructed around the same time as St John's, St Mary the Virgin is also a Grade 1 Listed Building - historically, St John's was known as the castle church and St Mary's was the town church. However, the population demographic in the town changed over time and the PCC applied for redundancy in 2006 due to lack of a viable congregation.



© Tony Scorer

A major fire at St John's stayed proposals for its closure and there is now a vision in the parish to see each church with a distinctive role. While the main worship function remains at St John's, the aim is to develop St Mary's for wider performance, educational and community use, whilst retaining a worship space.

The plans are being headed up by St Mary's Devizes Trust, which is working with the PCC and Diocese to make them a reality.

SMDT's refurbishment proposal at this stage is to specify, cost and procure work, services and product to create the minimum of facilities and structure to enable a rolling six-month programme of performing, community and educational events; to create facilities suitable for paying audiences, that are safe, that are usable by hirers and for initial community engagement and social support. However, this proposal is entirely dependent on the Diocese granting a suitable grant- friendly lease that will enable SMDT to apply to various charities and funding agencies to finance the work.

With the support of the PCC and the Bishop of Ramsbury the lease of St Mary's to SMDT is currently being considered by the Diocese.

Major roof works were completed in 2024 funded by the Poor Lands Charity, which provides the church with a regular income from substantial reserves.



Concert at
St Mary's

©Tony Scorer

ECO CHURCH PROJECT

The parish is engaged with the 'Eco Church Project', a scheme for churches in England and Wales to demonstrate that they are caring for the environment. In 2022 the parish achieved an Eco bronze award. As part of this we have a number of recycling initiatives, including used greetings cards for churches in Sudan and South Sudan, stamps for Oxfam and computer ink cartridges, which recently raised over £400 for Christian Aid.

LIVING CHURCHYARDS

The scheme has two main objectives - firstly, to manage the churchyards in a way that encourages, sustains and conserves flowers, trees, insects, birds and animals, and secondly, to develop the churchyards as a public contemplative space for quiet reflection and the enjoyment of nature. Our Living Churchyard Conservation Management Plan was developed with the assistance of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and is being built on to progress our aim of enhancing biodiversity within the churchyards and improve its amenity value for the people of Devizes. Being in the centre of the town St John's churchyard has a large amount of through pedestrian traffic and its amenity value is appreciated.

The churchyard volunteer group has continued to maintain and enhance the borders at St John's with pollinator friendly plants, planted wildflower plugs along the south side of the church and created a wildflower bed at St Mary's. It has also held workshops such as fabric pumpkin-making and a popular Christmas wreath-making in order to self-fund all their activities and enhance our churchyards.

St John's
Churchyard
Volunteers



© Shirley Unwin

FAIRTRADE CHURCH

Our supplies for refreshments and our Communion wine are sourced from accredited Fairtrade companies.

THE RECTORY

Built in the 1980s and purchased by the Diocese around 10 years ago, the detached property provides a spacious home with modern facilities, including cavity wall insulation.

Ground floor accommodation comprises a kitchen breakfast room, dining room and living room with patio doors on to the garden and study. Upstairs there are three double bedrooms (two with en-suite) and a single bedroom and family bathroom with a further two attic bedrooms.

There is a detached study, with a toilet and kitchen facilities, well suited to holding occasional meetings, making the Rectory itself a more private space.

Some ten minutes' walk from either church, it benefits from a large garden with ample parking and a double garage.



CURATE'S HOUSE

A smaller, three-bedroom semi-detached property, close to the Rectory, provides accommodation for a curate.

PARISH ROOMS

This building is detached from St John's but closely adjacent.

Facilities include three lavatories and a shower, with external access to the toilets for users of the church. The Parish Administrator's office is also based in an adjoining room.

Use of the hall by community groups and for private events has steadily declined over the past few years and it is now in need of considerable repair work. The future of the Rooms is under consideration and initial inquiries have been made with a view to a possible sale.



© Gerry Lynch

CHOIR AND CHORAL LITURGY

St. John's has a fine tradition of choral music with a choir of over 20 children and adults making a unique contribution to the weekly worship. Music is drawn from the full breadth of the English tradition from the 16th century to the present day.

Over the years, the choir has gained a reputation for excellence across the diocese and further afield and efforts to recruit more young singers are ongoing through outreach to local schools.

This year St John's is entering an exciting new chapter in its musical life, supported by a new Music Director, a newly installed pipe organ and two key grants. These initiatives aim to preserve and grow the church's music tradition by fostering new talent and celebrating the capabilities of the restored organ.

A grant for organ tuition has been secured from Wiltshire Council to fund organ lessons for young people in the Devizes area offering them professional instruction and aims to nurture the next generation of church organists.

In addition separate funding has been acquired to commission a new piece of music for the choir and the organ. The composition by a local composer will celebrate the organ's restoration and its role as a centrepiece of the church's musical life.



Palm
Sunday
Procession

© Gail
Foster

OUR NEWLY INSTALLED ORGAN

For the past 15 years the church has managed with an electronic organ intended as a stop gap after its pipe organ was badly damaged in a fire, but with out-of-date software its future life was limited.

Recognising that a traditional pipe organ would enhance the choral tradition of St John's it was decided to look for a suitable replacement, which was eventually found at the Trinity United Reformed Church in Plymouth, which was closing and generously donated the instrument.

For the past two years renowned organ builder Lance Foy and his team have painstakingly re-built the instrument, which will have its official inauguration at a Devizes Arts Festival concert this summer.

Donations have funded most of the £80,000 installation and fund-raising efforts are continuing to complete the project costs.



BELL RINGERS

Our team of ringers describe themselves as an enthusiastic group of friends, who aim to improve their striking and method ringing for services and special occasions but also act as a caring social group. Their focus in 2022 was to implement significant maintenance work to the bells. They regularly welcome visiting groups of ringers from all over the country.



FLOWER GUILD

The dedicated group of 13 flower arrangers enhance our worship space by using their skills to create arrangements for all seasons. They rely on donations to fund the flowers helped by organising a coffee morning.



CHURCH GROUPS

Most recently the weekly **Bible Study** group has been studying the epistles of James and Peter.

A gently contemplative '**Reflection**' group, which meets monthly, provides opportunities to experience a time of shared silence, reflect on a reading in a supportive environment and support one another as we reflect together on our spiritual journeys.

Started in July 2024, **Room to Breathe** aims to provide a quiet space in St John's from 12noon to 2.00pm each Tuesday, primarily for the people who work in our shops and offices in the Town Centre. Two volunteers are there to welcome people and it is advertised regularly on Devizes Issues and our Facebook page. There are several occasional regulars and a good number of visitors.

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

There are currently nine elected members, including the Health and Safety Officer, plus one co-opted, three Deanery Synod representatives, one of whom is the Treasurer, and a minute Secretary. We also have a Parish Safeguarding Officer.

The PCC met seven times in 2024.

Sub-groups include:

The **Buildings and Ground sub-committee**, which is responsible for overseeing our properties and implementing the Quinquennial Inspection work.

The **Pastoral Care team** meets to identify and support members of the congregation requiring 'authorised' visits in relation to personal or spiritual matters and/or home communion. Our philosophy is to be a Christian friend who will listen, share and walk alongside in times of need.



© Shirley Unwin

St John's
Churchyard
Volunteers



Wiltshire
Historic
Churches
Annual Ride
and Stride

©Tony Scorer

COMMUNITY

OMNES AD UNUM (LATIN “ALL FOR ONE”)

Formed in March 2015 under the aegis of (but independent of) St John's the organisation brings together members of the congregation and the wider community to raise money for the church and local good causes. Its founding principle was that at least half of the profits from its events are distributed to a charity or charities, while the remainder goes to St John's. Since it was established, its profits have benefited local charities and community organisations to the extent of more than £220K.

Its activities include a Christmas Tree Festival with trees sponsored and decorated by local organisations, individuals, businesses, shops, schools, clubs and societies; a Christmas Day lunch for vulnerable and lonely people; a Christmas draw; an Autumn Fair and a programme of talks from a mix of speakers.

The Sunday teas, held in the Parish Rooms every other month, provide a welcoming place for the elderly, lonely or those living alone to come and enjoy the company of others whilst enjoying delicious food made and served by volunteers. Over the past three years some have rebuilt friendships from the past while others have made new friends.

WESSEX INSPIRATIONAL LEARNING LIMITED [WILL]

Based in Devizes WILL is a not-for-profit limited liability company, which aims to provide stimulating learning and experience opportunities for people of all ages through partnerships in their local communities. With links to the proposed regeneration of the market town's historic St Mary's Church, it supports the plans to provide a large, flexible space and facilities in the building for performance, exhibitions and meetings.

It aims to act as a conduit between grant-making bodies, stakeholders and organisations that can offer creative activities and interactions to broaden life experiences, improve wellbeing and expand horizons.

By making connections with established groups, it will seek to encourage involvement in a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the arts, the sciences and the environment. To date a number of talks on a variety of topics and a day of school workshops from ZooLab for local nursery and primary schools have been well received with further events planned throughout the year.

CHURCHES TOGETHER DEVIZES (CTD)

The PCC supports the re-launch of CTD and looks forward to being involved in future initiatives.



St John's Civic
Connections

© Gail Foster

FELLOWSHIP

PARISH LUNCHES

The lunches, which are held several times annually in the Parish Rooms, have become an established event in the parish social calendar bringing together over 40 people to share a meal and conversation after the Sunday service. Over the past year they have raised over £1,012 for church funds.



© Gail Foster

COFFEE MORNINGS

A new initiative for 2024, the coffee mornings have proved a popular activity providing an opportunity to share time and fellowship over coffee and home baked cakes whilst raising over £1,200 towards the church's regular expenses.



© Gail Foster

SUMMER FETE

The Summer Fun Day in June was a new venture aimed at bringing people into St John's as well as raising funds - both were achieved with the event bringing in over £800. The bells rang out and the choir invited visitors to sing with them in the church where there was a display of vestments and climbing the tower proved a popular activity. Stalls in the parish rooms selling plants and flower posies, pickles and cakes did brisk business while the bottle tombola sold out!

DEVIZES FOOD BANK

There are collections for the Food Bank during Lent, Harvest and Advent. (a member of our congregation and PCC is also a Trustee of Devizes Food Bank)

LINKS WITH SCHOOLS

Whilst there is no school in our benefice, contact with the town's schools is maintained through the Bible Society's programme of **Open the Book**. Several parishioners join with members of other churches, both Anglican and Free, to offer this weekly inter-active programme in three schools.

St John's is a popular choice of venue for school carol services and children from schools in the area enjoy decorating their Christmas tree entry in the annual Christmas Tree Festival. There is also contact with children's groups, such as the Cubs and Beavers, who attend the annual Remembrance Service and occasionally ask for a guided tour of the church when doing their faith badge. Families pack the church for the Christmas Eve crib service.

FINANCES

We have recently been able to pay all outstanding monies for 2024 Diocesan Share, but we are very likely to be in deficit for 2025 at the end of the year.

Our average weekly income is £1232.25

Investments as at 31st December 2024:

General Fund £70k

Restricted Funds as at 31st December 2024:

Bells Restricted Fund £9k

St Mary's Restricted Organ Fund £8000

St John's Restricted Organ Fund £12368

Designated Funds as at 31st December 2024

Choir Fund £1265

Living Churchyard £2047

Generating income and giving out

We need to look at ways in which we can generate additional income through personal giving and fund-raising while being mindful of what the parish should give out to others in need.

Our average weekly income via the plate is £120.00

As mentioned previously we are extremely fortunate to have access to two large restrictive funds which are called upon to contribute to the maintenance of the two church buildings:

- St Mary's repairs and maintenance costs can be reclaimed from the Poor Lands Charity
- The Glanville Trust is available for funding repairs and additions to the fabric of St John's

We claim VAT back from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme as appropriate and Gift Aid is claimed where possible.

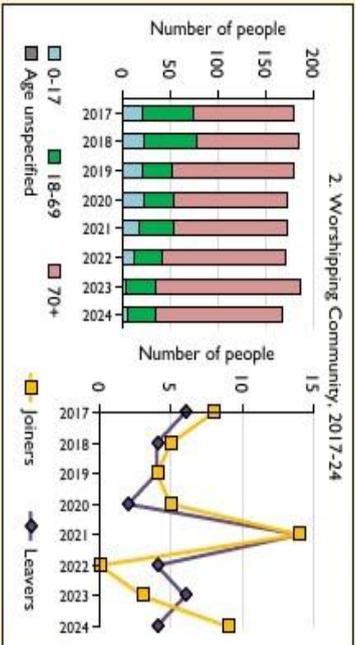
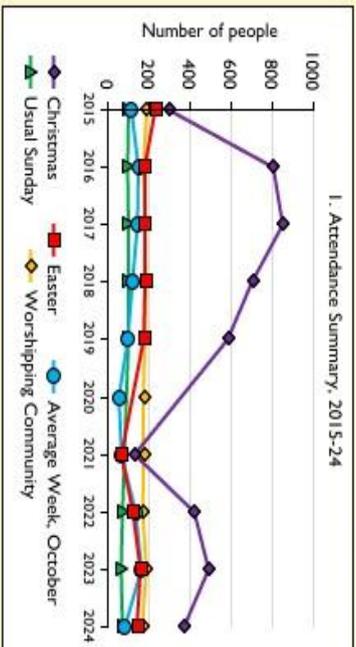
STEWARDSHIP

We have 60 parishioners who have joined the Parish Giving Scheme, giving the church a regular income. Recent Stewardship campaigns have provided only modest increases in giving from existing and new regular contributors, although individuals have given generously to the organ appeal.

100 CLUB

This new initiative was launched at the end of 2024 to help the parish meet its regular outgoings and to date 30 members have signed up paying £60 annually for entry into a monthly draw with cash prizes of £50, £30 and £10. Their support is bringing in a regular £60 monthly income to help cover essential costs, but the hope is that more parishioners will join over the coming year.

SMM Dashboard for the Parish of Devizes: St John in the Deanery of DEVIZES



Parish Census and deprivation summary

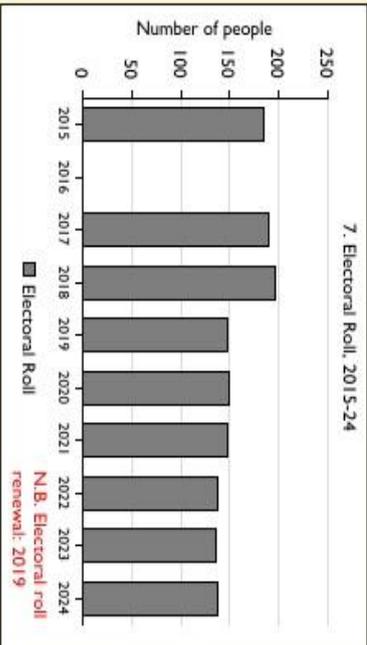
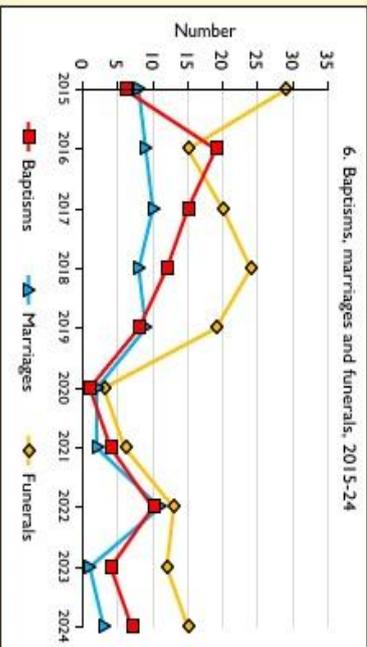
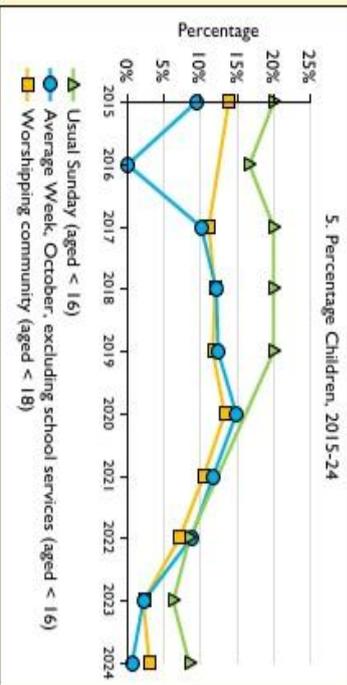
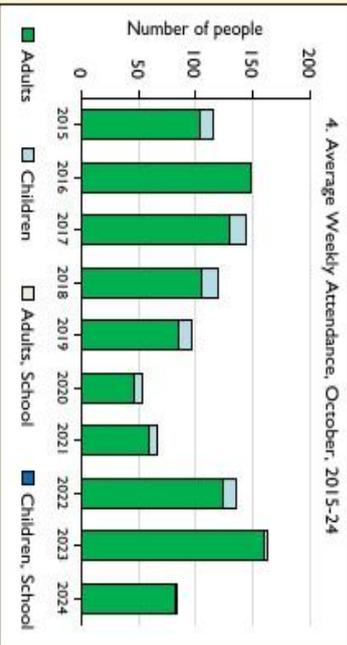
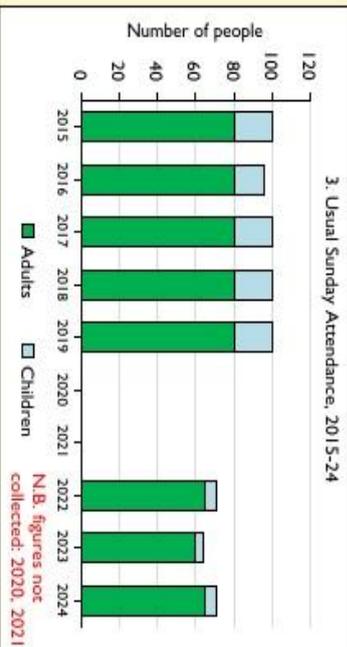
Parish population (2021): 4085

	Parish	Diocese	National
% aged 0-19	17%	21%	23%
% aged 20-44	23%	26%	33%
% aged 45-69	35%	34%	31%
% aged 70 & over	25%	19%	14%
% Christian	54%	50%	46%
% non-Christian religion	2%	2%	11%

Parish deprivation rank (IMD 2019): 3451
 (1=most deprived parish in the Church of England, 12,178=least deprived)

For more detailed census & deprivation info, see <https://paragis1/RaSqCS>
<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/data-services/> and
<https://www.cdf.org.uk/chnealight/>

Number of churches in parish (2024): 2 **Parish Code: 340534**



Variations in attendance from year to year may be the result of changes in the number of churches that submitted returns, or changes in parish/benefice structure. Number of churches included in returns: 2:2015 2:2016 2:2017 2:2018 2:2020 2:2021 2:2022 2:2023 2:2024 2. Produced by Data Services, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ. Date of production: 14/05/2025. Every effort has been made to ensure that data are reliable. We would be pleased to be notified of any significant errors or omissions by email to statistics.unic@churchofengland.org

This dashboard contains figures as submitted by churches currently in the Parish

Attendance statistics: taken from annual Statistics for Mission returns. Average weekly attendance: attendance at Sunday and midweek church services & fresh expressions in October. Figs 1 & 5 do not include attendance at services for schools.

Easter: Easter Eve & Easter Day; Christmas: Christmas Eve & Christmas Day.

Baptisms: all baptisms & thanksgivings.

Marriages: marriages and services of prayer & dedication after civil marriages.

Funerals: those held in church & at crematoria/cemeteries.

Because of pandemic-related church closures, Easter figures were not collected in 2020.

Census data: taken from the 2021 national Census.

Deprivation statistics: IMD taken from the English Indices of Deprivation, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Sept 2019. The above statistics have been mapped onto parish boundaries so are approximations. For more information, see: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/data-services/>



REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Copies of the most recent are available on request from the Parish Administrator
admin@stjohnwithstmary.org.uk

WEB LINKS

www.stjohnwithstmary.org.uk www.stmarydevizestrust.org.uk



Devizes ST John & ST Mary