



Churchwarden Report 2024

Over the past year, Fr Robert and the PCC have continued to focus on bringing our congregation back together through love, friendship, and faith. Rowland Linder joined us in September as a Parish Intern, all the way from the University of Chicago. She has done amazing work both with her focus on youth within our parish and also more broadly in supporting Fr Robert and St Martin's, which has proved particularly valuable whilst we have continued without a Curate. Many of you donated to support Rowland's Internship with us and thank you to everyone who contributed. We would like to thank Fr Robert for all his dedication, hard work and leadership over the past year, along with his family for all their work and support. I'm sure Fr Robert is looking forward to soon being able to welcome Joe as our new Curate in a few weeks' time and please do, as always, make every effort to help him settle in and feel at home with us.

There has been plenty going on this past year and in particular a significant amount of refurbishment work has been undertaken and completed on our Church Hall. This project started in November 2023 after receiving a grant from HS2 and was finally completed in November 2024. Without the HS2 funding, the Church Hall would have continued to deteriorate and cease to be an attractive place for community groups to use. We hope that our valuable hall facility will now remain available, attractive and cost effective for the next 25 years to all the 20 or so different community groups that regularly use it. The Church Hall repair and improvement work has been welcomed by the community groups and by the congregation of the Church who have suffered several years of disruption from the local HS2 works. The project has been actively monitored and project managed by volunteers throughout the delivery of each of the eight main components; to ensure all works have been planned appropriately, that contractors could access the Hall as required and that all work has been performed / completed in line with our expectations and to a high standard. In particular, I would like to thank Ian Keys for leading this project so successfully and, of course, for having successfully undertaken the significant HS2 grant application process all the way back in 2023. In addition to the HS2 project, we also significantly improved the Hall lighting with new and more efficient LED units.

We were also delighted to host the BBC for a week during the year whilst they were filming David Mitchell's new detective series 'Ludwig'. It was great to see St Martin's in the finished production, but unusual to see a murder scene in the church! The income generated provided a significant contribution to our financial resources and we would particularly like to thank Ruth Bitok for a heroic contribution to tidying up and cleaning after the crew had left, as it turned out that the BBC are not quite as good as Disney had been the year before at leaving things as they found them!

During 2024 we held a successful Giving Campaign and we are grateful for the support this received, but our income remains significantly below pre-Covid levels, meaning we continue to pay only a proportion of the Common Fund cost of our own priestly ministry. Whilst we have had incremental contributions over the past two years from filming and the curate's house being let to independent tenants, with Joe our Curate designate position arriving in June and filming income is one-off in nature, our income will inevitably drop without these revenues coming in. Consequently, please do continue to consider your giving and contribution during the coming year.

The Church continues to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation and provide outreach to those who need support. In particular I would like to highlight:

- Excellent support continued for the Hillingdon Foodbank.
- Continued participation of young people in Children's Church and a big thank you must go to Vicky Golby for her leadership, along with support from Rowland Linder and Isabel Parfitt.
- The Friday Toddlers group continued to flourish during 2024 providing a valued service for the benefit of the local community. Sue Hammond has stepped in early 2024 and has put in considerable effort alongside a small team of volunteers to ensure the group continues to run smoothly.



- Our Flower Arrangers have continued to provide delightful displays every week in Church and particularly over Christmas and Easter.
- Our Director of Music, Viktoria Goncharova, ensured that high quality organ music was provided at the Sunday and Festival Services, with a choir at the main Sunday Masses throughout the year.
- Organised social events continued throughout 2024 and both the Quiz evening with Fish & Chips, and the Christmas Dinner at Browns Restaurant were thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. The Springtime Afternoon Tea event was a delightful occasion and popular with all who attended. The annual Harvest Supper and Bingo evening was also a fun occasion.
- The Martinmas Fair was a great success raising over £5,000 and a huge thank you goes to the amazing team for all their hard work and organisation. The Fayre is a key annual event in our calendar and is critical for both fundraising and increasing our profile within the community.

A special mention must also go to:

- Thursday Lunches have continued throughout 2024 and deliver an essential and popular service within the local community. Our sincere thanks go to Sweelin Cunliffe, her husband Derek and her dedicated team for providing both high-quality food and companionship.
- The Church continued to have committed teams of lay people who assisted as choristers, servers, sidespersons, readers, intercessors and liturgical ministers. We would welcome more recruits so do please come forward if you would like to volunteer.
- Alan Seymour continued to manage the Sacristy and Serving teams during the year.
- Derek Cunliffe has done a huge amount of work keeping the Church grounds neat and tidy throughout the year.
- Julien Chong for his painting and all the other minor jobs he has undertaken around the Hall and Church.
- To Deborah Nicholes for preparing the Easter Garden, to Sarah Jacob for preparing the Christmas Crib and to all those who donated towards the cost of the magnificent Christmas Tree (which due to a fortuitous error was bigger and better than ever) which lit up our Christmas celebrations.
- Gill Dargue, our Parish Administrator, continued to look after clergy, congregation members, visitors, telephone enquiries, Churchwardens, hall hirers, contractors etc. in her positive and caring way as well as producing the bulletin every week. As always, we are very grateful for all the effort she puts in and the support she gives Fr Robert in particular.
- Danny Dartnail who has brought our parish accounting into the 21st century and has put in a great deal of time to keep us on the straight and narrow financially.
- Those who quietly undertake a plethora of other jobs and minor repairs.

Finally, a personal thank you to everyone that had faith in electing Jacqueline and me to serve as Churchwardens over the past year and a huge thank you to everyone who contributes so much of their time and efforts to maintaining both the fabric and worshiping life of our Church and the local community.

Peter Golby



On behalf of the Churchwardens