**Reports for the**

**Annual District Church Meeting of**

# St John the Baptist, Keynsham



Picture courtesy of Tony Nicholson

**Tuesday 30th April 2024**

**at 7.30pm**

**St John’s Church is:**

* **Building Community**
* **Growing in Worship**
* **And reaching out with the Love of Jesus Christ**

Published: April 2024

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| **THE TEAM VICAR’S REPORT** |

**The first and most important thing to communicate is gratitude.**

There is a lot to be grateful for this year. God is good and faithful even if circumstances change. We have seen a lot of change over this last year, yet God is faithful and we have seen Him at work at St John’s.

**Thank you**

It is good at this annual checkpoint to thank the countless members of staff and volunteers….and each year to offer a particular thanks to a notable contributor.

This year I would specially like to draw attention to the amazing organisational skills of **Lesley Organ** who has worked so tirelessly in creating a rota for all the services across the parish, ensuring we have priests for all the communion services. I was so relieved when Lesley said she would take that one. And that involves more than simply putting names down, Lesley has made sure that those visiting clergy are briefed in advance and that everything is in place ready for them when they take a service. Thank you.

Thank you also to **Claire Lowe** who is still holding so much of the children’s ministry together. We did not manage to appoint a Children and Families Worker, which meant that Claire has had another year of responsibility. Her leadership is hugely valued and there is a committed team of leaders and helpers.

A big thank you to **Pip Lovell** who is so dedicated to the Youth work, and always so willing and able to be involved, and of course thanks to her volunteer team too.

In June, **Alison & Paul Thurlow** organized a weekend away for families at Greatwood. About 60 people went and had an amazing time. As well as the weekend, they have organized several events for families during the year, such as fun in the park and boardgames.

The children and youth ministries are central to our church life, and this includes the choir Minims, (5–6-year-olds), Choristers (7–12-year-olds). Thank you everyone involved.

**Sam Shackleton** has been with us for over a year now as music director and his musical leadership both alongside **Alison Howell** organist with the choir and with the contemporary musical leaders goes from strength to strength. Thank you Sam.

Thank you too to our Churchwardens: **Steve Scott** and **Lesley Organ,** anddeputy wardens **Julian Anderson** and **Julia Nicholson**. They do so much behind the scenes it is difficult for any, but those who have been churchwardens themselves, to know the burden they carry for us all. Thank you. A special thank you to Julian who will step down at the AGM.

During this past year we gained a couple of members of staff: **Graham Mitchell** is our new caretaker and **Lin Fry** our new Office Manager. Both go above and beyond their job descriptions. We are very fortunate that they have joined us, as indeed we are to have **Vanessa Body** our Facilities Manager, in the office and overseeing the booking of the premises etc.

Another person to thank for their considerable work on the Church’s behalf is **Anne Hewett**, our church treasurer. Our sincere thanks for all her work as treasurer on our behalf. It is not insignificant!

In December we hosted the Christmas Tree Festival again which was a huge success with more than 2000 people visiting the church across the weekend. Thank you to the team working so hard making it happen! The vicar even dressed up as a Christmas Tree for the service.

Thank you to all who have served on the **St John’s District Church Council this year** and for our very able secretary **Deborah Hall** and lay-chair **Tim Edwards**. The DCC is the crucial democratic body where the life of St John’s is regulated and where the major decisions are made. Why not join and be part of the decision-making process?

**Thank you also to our retired clergy within (Margret Snook, Trevor Stubbs and Anne-Marie Bird) and from outside the parish and our Readers - Rachel Hall, June Lowe, Paul Thurlow and Rachel Shaw** (and other lay leaders of services and preachers at services). Your involvement is hugely appreciated……

AND there are so many others… to name a few: the pastoral care team, flower arrangers, the volunteers who ring bells, count money, assist in the Parish Office, lead homegroups, assist in prayer ministry, cater at socials, lead intercessions, offer after service coffee. Thank you, volunteers, mentioned and unmentioned.

**The Past Year**

During this last year we have navigated some significant things:

* For another year we have been amazed to find that despite setting a budget which included an element of faith, and despite additional costs, at the end of the year it doesn’t look as bad as expected.
* We said several goodbyes last year. **Judy Walker**, our Office Manager, left in May. In July we said goodbye to **Nigel Williams** and his family as Nigel finished his curacy with us to move to his first post to the neighbouring benefice. In September we said goodbye and congratulations to team rector **Stephen M’Caw** who retired and a week later got married. We are grateful for his ministry in Keynsham over the last 13 years. We also said goodbye to **Steve Spiteri**, our caretaker. We are incredibly grateful for their hard work over the years.
* We were told in the autumn that we couldn’t use our boiler anymore and after a lot of discussions, we decided to move the services into the hall as the church was just too cold. Palm Sunday (9.15am) and then Easter Sunday (joint service) saw us all move back into the church building.
* I am sure you can think of some other things too we have navigated together this year!

**The Future**

**Looking ahead then,** here are some challenges and opportunities:

* Balancing the church income with expenditure is always a challenge, and this year the faith element in the budget is larger than last year. We’ll be looking at stewardship.
* The quinquennial inspection happened in the autumn and we have just had the report through which didn’t bring anything major to light which is good as we will need to replace the heating in the church.
* The ‘Building for the Future’ steering-group will continue to meet and liaise with the heating group.
* Kick Academy (a CTKS initiative led by John Wilkinson and Martin Burton) started a few weeks and they are looking forward to establish this outreach into the community.
* We are hoping to appoint a new Team Rector later this year.

And a prayer to look ahead:

**God of mission, we are your Church,**

**Christ’s body on earth,**

**Your holy people for your needy world.**

**In our thinking, give us wisdom,**

**In our planning, give us faith to move mountains,**

**In our action, give us the power of your Spirit,**

**That all we do and think and say may be for your glory,**

**And for the growth of the kingdom of your Son,**

**Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

Anika Gardiner – April 2024

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| **ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER’S REPORT** |

**Annual District Church Meeting of St John’s 2024**

St John’s electoral roll 2024 stands at 190 members, 3 more than at the same time last year. This comprises:

* 1 member who has moved away
* 4 members who have sadly passed away
* 8 new members

In summary:

St John’s membership in April 2023: 187

St John’s membership in April 2024: 190

*Ali Cohen – Electoral Roll Officer*

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| **CHURCHWARDENS ANNUAL REPORT**  **(including fabric)** |

First, congratulations, if you are reading this report as you have survived another trip around the sun.

So where shall we start, well as all of you know we are in the middle of an interregnum, it's been a daunting and yet exciting period for us all.  If there is one thing, we all have in common is fear of the unknown, well we have stepped into the unknown and its fine, there have been a few teething troubles along the way but we've all pulled together and solved or sometimes guessed the solution to a problem. So enough of this little introduction let's move forward.

**FINANCE**

I always like to start these reports with finance, like many of you reading this, for me personally it's a minefield of facts and figures, the simple fact for me is I don't understand the figures, but it’s safe to say and history tells me this, we are not in a good position, but we have a budget of faith. We do consider very carefully and agonise at DCC meetings to explain and ask you, the congregation, if you could possibly give extra each month to help with finances. If I'm writing next year’s annual report, I’m sure it will be along the same lines as this year's as it was last year but by the grace of God we survive and will continue too.

You will be pleased to know I won't bore you with figures, I’ll let Anne do that. Although I know that line didn't come out quite how I meant it but I'm sure you know what I mean, so it is with great thanks and gratitude to Anne our treasured treasurer for the extraordinary number of hours she puts into the financial running of St John's.

**FABRIC**

Well, I can only start in one place and that is with the church heating or lack of it. Boiler flue decided to split last October, what we thought would be a simple repair escalated into a heating committee, which in turn involved the Diocese. Now when the Diocese get involved you just know it’s going to take a while before once again, we feel the temperature rise again in St John's.

May I put on record it's not any fault of the good people who have freely given up their time to see this project through to a successful conclusion they also share each and every one of our frustrations too. So to Graham Shaw, Laurie Coleman, Chris O' Hara and Vanessa from the office, thank you all for your time and energy. It may seem like you're climbing a mountain of treacle at present but hopefully by the end of this year you will have reached the summit and you can all bask in our warm wishes and congratulations on a job well done and well thought out.

We have almost completed the new LED lighting. At the time of writing this there are just a few minor adjustments required and the replacement of lights on the west tower which illuminates the clock, which at present has again decided to stop working. The mechanism is really showing its age so perhaps it's not surprising, I'm sure in the not-too-distant future we will have to decide on a repair, or a replacement of the mechanism. Whatever is decided it certainly will not be cheap, but we must stay optimistic, at least the clock is showing the right time twice a day.

Last September we had our Quinquennial, and six months on we are still awaiting the report from our architect. This is nothing to be alarmed about as our architect has this reputation for taking his time, but has promised that we will receive it before our AGM. Thankfully his initial findings did not show any major structural problems that needed repairing.

**SERVICES**

These past few months have been challenging, from 18 months ago having four clergy, now just one from last September. At the time we wondered if it could be possible to maintain the services, we all love and enjoy. A daunting task, but we have been blessed with Lesley Organ our amazing churchwarden to gather from far and wide, Bishops, Archdeacons and retired clergy to maintain and organise alongside Anika, our pattern of services. I know Lesley will not wish me to say this but how could I not give thanks and praise to her for the time, effort and organising that has gone into maintaining our service patterns.

As for our services, I’m happy to say all the Christmas services we offered were very well attended and enjoyed by all. This was the first time we had a joint Crib/Christingle service and it was a great success. Also, for the first time we had a service of reflection for all those who find, for whatever reason, this to be a sad period of time. Although there were just 10 people in attendance it was a moving, worthwhile and profound time to share and hopefully give comfort to all who attended.

When it became obvious, we were going to be without heating there was some discussion and agreement to move our services to St Francis for the winter period, but after a period of reflection it was decided to remain in the Parish Hall, although the logistics causes extra preparation for the wardens, musicians and clergy it has been a smooth transition, when 9.15am traditional service comes around and all those who arrived early are sitting in the more comfortable black chairs and the rest in the plastic chairs. The number in attendance on average is around fifty communicants, sadly these figures are still below pre covid levels, whether this is a general trend in all churches I don't wish to speculate. Later after a coffee has been drunk a biscuit consumed it’s the turn for the 11.00am informal and contemporary service. The numbers on average are around 60 adults and anything between ten to twenty children. Evensong is steady at between ten and fifteen and the midweek Holy Communion has around seven communicants. There are as always various views on whether to keep the 11.00am service in the Hall or return to the main church after Easter, all I will say is you will know by the time you have read this what has been decided.

**MUSIC**

Whether its traditional choral music or contemporary Christian music as we have had for a number years, we are blessed to worship and enjoy either or both. We are blessed to have such a high standard of choral and contemporary music all under the guidance of Sam Shackleton. As Sam is a great fan of Si Fi, I just want to say MajQa, which is Klingon for well done. There is so much of Sam's work that goes under the radar, preparation, paper work and meetings it’s just the tip of the iceberg.

So, for Sam, the choir, the worship band and Alison our organist, I’m sure you will all want to say thanks and sing your praises even though it won't be up to your high standards.

**THANKYOU**

It is difficult to know where to start, isn't it, well no not at all really. We just have to start with Anika. To take on the task of four parish churches each with their own identity and challenges, an increase in meetings, funerals, baptisms, weddings and all the extra administration duties. A number of years ago there was a TV programme called challenge Anika, at times when the day has been full on, I'm sure Anika could have done with that helicopter Anika Rice flew around in. We are blessed to have and to know her, I also believe we should give thanks to Dan, Ezra and Toby for letting us take away Anika for many hours during the days and evenings these past months. We must also give our thanks to Paul Thurlow and all our other lay readers for taking and the preparing of the 11.00am service, that takes months of planning and preparation.

During weekdays the first point of contact for people is our volunteers in the office, it’s such an important part of St John's so thank you for your lovely smiling greetings that we receive. During this last year we not only had Stephen and Nigel leave us we also lost Judy Walker. Judy was only with us for two years and became such an important part of the church team and family, her smile and never ending optimistic and positive outlook overcame so many challenges that came her way. Judy gave us all a lovely smile and also lovely Bao buns, deliciously light and fluffy. I'm sure Judy is missing us but enjoying her grandparent duties.

So, after a steep learning curve I hope we have made Judy’s replacement Lin welcome. Being in a parish office can be challenging at times but Lin you do a wonderful job. You go above and beyond, especially handing out treats to certain dogs that visit the office. Opposite Lin we have Vanessa, again you go above and beyond what is expected of you. Every day is different, every day brings its own challenges and yet you always keep calm and composed. We are blessed to have you both with us, nothing is too much trouble for you, we do so much appreciate you both.

We also said goodbye to Steve Spiteri, unfortunately Steve felt he couldn't carry on with the caretaker’s role due to mobility issues, he was sad to leave us as we were sad, he left us. Steve still keeps in contact and hopes one day to return occasionally to help us. It was a few months before we welcomed Graham our new caretaker. Graham is doing a fine job and hopefully enjoying helping us out, we certainly enjoy him joining with us here.

From caretaker to the caretaker of our youth, so thankyou Pip it's wonderful to see you grow in faith and to share your faith with our future, and to all who help and assist the Childrens groups, Claire Lowe, Trevor Stubbs, Sarah Church, and the volunteers on a Sunday, bless you all.

Last year’s report if you remember I didn’t give thanks to all those hard-working volunteers on the Christmas tree festival committee, because we didn’t have one, it is so time consuming and I believe they start their organising meetings as early as the summer. The amount of money raised which was approx. £4k goes to much needed funds for the church so to the committee, the bakers, Bell ringers, singers, those selling cake, coffee and teas and the stewards, a massive well done and thanks, the Christmas tree festival is surely now well rooted in our church events calendar.

To those on the world-wide mission committee helping to re-establish our links in Zambia, I'm sure we can learn from each other and let's hope there will be many fruitful years ahead.

A church cannot run without a vast amount of people freely giving their time to make St John's what it is today and it soon became clear shortly after the interregnum began, and we had a first meeting with CPAS, who are a charity that are involved in advising and assisting the process to select a new incumbent, at that first meeting they advised that our parish website was out of date and needed updating, apparently this is quite a common occurrence. It is in this day and age the first place a prospective candidate will look, as the saying goes first impressions...so after some unforeseen delays the parish website has been updated and I would like to thank Heidi Scott for taking on this task. Heidi had no experience or training on how to build a website, it has been a steep learning curve hopefully whoever has applied has been encouraged to go through the website. We also need to thank Martin Burton and Sam Shackleton for supporting Heidi, especially during the day the website collapsed. So, to our welcomers, administrants, readers, our intercessions volunteers, those who help at the 1.00pm Baptisms, Marcia, Judy our pastoral organiser's, the pastoral visitors, Ali Cohen our new electoral role officer, Jane Stockall who is the stewardship committee chairman the vice chairman and also the committee a special thank you, that is what you call multi-tasking!

To the lay chairs, it’s such a difficult position when half the PCC/DCC members want to go home at 9.30pm while the other half want to carry on talking, I don't envy you, so grateful thanks for all your hard work and patience too.

I would also like to give thanks and recognition to Carl, who attends the 11.00am service. He has been so generous over these past years to St John's. For those not too familiar, Carl donates all the oranges for the Christingle services also the Mother's Day flowers. Carl you are very much appreciated.

This year there has been so many changes and upheaval, from Stephen's well-earned retirement to Nigel’s move to take up the reigns in the parish of Saltford. One thing that hasn't changed but will be soon, is the team of wardens. Sadly, Julian Anderson is stepping down this April but fortunately Julian will still be seen dressed immaculately as usual around St John's. So thankyou Julian for your time and immense knowledge of the church calendar year especially the placement of the correct liturgical colours in each church season. Julia and Lesley thankfully you’re both staying for another year. Your wisdom, experience and memory are invaluable, as are the many hours of service to St John's.

So, if you've got this far congratulations and thank you for sticking out this 2024 wardens report. This is the part where I'm thinking I hope I haven't left anyone out, so if I have, please accept my apologies, and hope you can forgive me.

Blessings.

Steve Scott - Churchwarden

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| **St JOHN’S DCC** |

The DCC represents you, the congregation, we met regularly throughout 2023 to discuss practical issues, to make decisions effecting the fabric, finances and mission of our church and to plan for the future.

At the meeting in June, time was set aside to remember our friend John McLennan who played an active role as a DCC member for many years.

In September the DCC raised a glass of Pimm’s in thanks to Stephen who retired as Team Rector.

The DCC were ably supported this year by various sub groups, the Building for the Future Task Group, the Church Heating Committee Group and the Finance Sub Group. We thank them for the information in their reports and presentations that have aided our discussions and decisions.

**Vision and Prayer meetings**

During the year we had two vision and Prayer meetings when the focus of the DCC turns away from business and finance towards a more prayerful and reflective look at other issues. The October meeting was focused on praying for different aspects of church life e.g., mission and children’s work. February’s meeting concentrated on prayers for the different residential and commercial areas of Keynsham.

**Building for the Future**

The sub-committee has worked very hard on our behalf this year. The DCC considered various options produced by the Church Architect for the re-ordering of the church. These were presented to the wider church for their feedback. The DCC approved the permission sought by the BTF group to undertake informal discussions with major church user groups regarding the proposals for the re-ordering. Approval was also given for a bank account to be opened for money raised to finance the project.

**Church Heating Committee**

DISASTER the church boiler was condemned this year resulting in a very cold church! Whilst the congregation retired to the parish hall for services the heating committee has spent many hours consulting with different heating engineers to determine the best form of heating (taking into account an aim for the church to be carbon neutral by 2030). We are very grateful to this committee for their informative reports and presentations and look forward to a toasty warm church.

**Development -** **Staff and Clergy**

Under this banner many topics were discussed, in particular life in the Parish following the departure of Nigel our Curate and Stephen our Team Rector. The DCC noted the progress of the PCC and the Parish Profile Team who have compiled a profile and job advert etc. supported by Claire Horton from the Diocese.

This year we noted the welcome appointment of Graham as Caretaker, but sadly no Children and Family Worker has been appointed.

**Services**

With the pattern of services decided in 2022 this year’s conversations have focused on feedback received from the congregation and representatives of different church groups.

Following the failure of the heating system the logistics of moving services into the hall for the winter months were discussed. Many thanks are due to the church wardens, clergy and lay people who have stepped in to organise and lead our services. Particular thanks to Lesley Organ who has worked so hard seeking out clergy to lead and preach, prepared rotas and revised service booklets to aid visiting clergy.

**Reports**

The reports submitted by a variety of church groups are much appreciated by the DCC. The news and information they give offers an important insight into the health and wellbeing of the St Johns family. As always, the faithful work of the Pastoral Team was recognized. *If anyone is interested in this form of outreach the team is in need of more volunteers.* Pip’s Youth reports detail the range of fun activities she and her volunteer team organise for the Youth as well as initiatives for teaching and growth.

It is also encouraging to learn of the growth and progression in the Junior choir groups from Sam. We are so lucky to have such a talented group of choristers (both adults and juniors) and worship band musicians to enhance our worship.

**Finance**

Anne Hewett continued in the important (and time consuming) role of Church Treasurer. Many thanks to Anne for her easy-to-read reports and for keeping the Congregation well informed about finances and stewardship. Once again finances kept the DCC on the edge of their seats but once again we have been blessed by some generous legacies and one-off gifts. The DCC agreed to reconvene the Finance Sub Committee to help take some of the pressure from Anne. We also noted the benefits of the Parish Giving Scheme which will also help to simplify and reduce the burden of paper work for the Treasurer.

**Fundraising**

A fund-raising ideas group has been formed to plan a calendar of events to raise general funds and to investigate better ways to promote the Parish Hall and its facilities for hire. The group includes Office manager Lin and Facilities manager Vanessa. *Note: as always Volunteers are needed to help stage the events.*

**Miscellaneous** – subjects noted, discussed or agreed included

* Plans for his Majesty the Kings Coronation weekend
* Upgrade of the lighting to the clock face
* The installation of a new alarm system
* The installation of a new lighting system in the Church
* The Winter Festival and Christmas Tree Festival

There were many more topics of conversation, too many to list but if anyone would like to read the minutes of any of the meetings, please do let me know.

The members of the DCC do not always agree on everything but at the heart of our discussion is a love for our church and a willingness to promote the mission of St Johns.

If anyone is interested in joining the DCC there are places available please register your interest with Anika Gardiner or Deborah Hall

Finally, I would like to thank Tim Edwards for his role as Lay Chairperson and secondly Anika who amongst many other tasks has also acted as Chair following Stephen’s departure.

Deborah Hall - DCC Secretary

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| **THE FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH** |

**Events**

Our only event in the period of this Report was due to be a Candlemas Service at the end of January 2024, but with the Church heating out of action the decision was taken to postpone this event until 2025.

Whilst the actual organisation of “The Friends” successful Abseil Event of 2022 has now been passed to another Committee and is to be repeated in April 2024, our experienced Members will still be actively engaged with assistance on the day.

**Income**

A significant proportion of our income comes from legacies, and we are grateful for a bequest of £1000.00 from the Estate of Eleanor Spill.

**Donations to St. John's**

During the year, “The Friends” made just one donation to St. John's, and that was £1000.00 towards new illumination of the Clock on the front of the Tower. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the installation of modern l.e.d. Spotlights.

Due to the significant age of the 18th Century St. John's Clock, there is a continual need for repairs to the ancient parts that enable it to be accurate. “The Friends” are acutely aware of the high-profile part that it plays within the life of our Church, the heritage of our town, and beyond. It is in need of some extensive and costly repair, way beyond the means of St. John's financial support, so with this in mind one of our Members, in conjunction with the Diocese, has volunteered to research local and national sources of funding and lead a small consultative discussion team to take this forward.

**Merchandise**

Our Guidebooks, Notelets, History Books and Poem Books continue to be available from the Parish Office.

**FOSJ Website**

The subscription to the Provider of the above will not be renewed, and information will now be available on the new Parish website location.

**Membership of “The Friends”**

Membership of “The Friends” costs just £20.00 a year, or £30.00 a year for two people sharing the same address. An application form is available from the Secretary of “The Friends” Tel 0117-986-4683. We also welcome one-off donations and bequests.

John Lye - Secretary/Treasurer

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| **PASTORAL COMMITTEE** |

During this year the Pastoral Team have continued its mission to love and care for all members of St. John’s Church and beyond in the community.

Our lunches during the year were well attended including many people who do not come to St. John’s but who regularly attend to share in fellowship with us.

Our Lent afternoon tea was much appreciated and our Carols and Mince pies in early December went off well despite everyone having to think very hard to remember the words of the carols, because we had forgotten to bring across the Carol Books from the church!

There was no Holiday at Home this year as sadly with most of us in our late 70’s and 80’s it had just become too much for us to put on this event over three days. However, as a special treat we held a cream tea and cakes for our elderly which was enjoyed by all.

We continue to administer Home Communion to a few people which is such a privilege and always a joy to catch up with folks. We hospital and home visit the sick and try to remember people’s Special birthdays by sending cards.

Much pastoral care goes on behind the scenes throughout our church through home groups and between friends just looking out for one another.

The pastoral team has tried to help Anika during this last year in whatever way we could as she has had to take up the reins of all the Parish since September.

We would very much like to welcome new members on to the Pastoral Team - so if you feel this calling, please do get in touch with either Marcia or myself.

As always please do continue to hold Pastoral care in your prayers as we try to follow our Lord’s command to ‘love one another’.

Judy Presland

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| **PASTORAL VISITING SCHEME** |

Firstly, I would like to say a big “Thank you” to all who continue to give their time to the many people needing our support.

2023 was a difficult year as for several reasons the number of pastoral visitors reduced in number. Sadly, I have yet to find other willing volunteers to replace them. The role is certainly not onerous but does bring a lot of joy to those visited. If you feel you could offer to visit someone occasionally, please do let me know so we can ensure those needing a visit do not feel forgotten.

Marcia Cohen

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| **ST JOHN’S MOTHERS UNION** |

Mothers’ Union is part of a worldwide organisation with 4 million members in 84 countries which aims to promote the well-being of families and is especially concerned with issues which affect women and children. MU changes lives around the world through prayer, practical support and campaigning.

St John’s MU meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 2.00pm. The meetings begin with prayers, followed by a speaker or other activity and end with tea and chat. Nonmembers are always welcome.

We enjoyed a variety of speakers in 202 including Tree planting in Lord’s Wood, University Chaplaincy, Children’s Hospice South West, Flower arranging with Ruth Hutchings, and How to recognise and deal with scams.

Rev Stephen McCaw led our AGM and Communion service for the last time and Rachel Hall led us in a meditation for Lent. We enjoyed a lunch out in August and bring and share afternoon tea in December.

We have ongoing collections for Literacy and Development in South Sudan and other MU projects at home and abroad. Members give shopping vouchers for residents of the Bath Women’s Refuges. Money earned by Maggie Hill’s cooking sessions with the council youth club were donated to “Away from it all” holidays.

Hazel Fey continues to knit teddies for all children baptised at St John’s and we send baptism anniversary and wedding cards. The branch provide lunch for couples attending marriage preparation day.

Members serve refreshments for St. John’s Toddler group on Wednesday mornings.

During each year we have special prayer events including an ongoing “Wave of prayer” around the world, a day for “Gender-based Violence”, and Cathedral prayers in Wells. Members helped steward a “Souls of our shoes” exhibition, highlighting domestic abuse.

We have been pleased to welcome some new members this year and visitors are always welcome.

Tina Stubbs – Branch Leader

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| **YOUTH MINISTRY** |

First off, I’d like to thank God for this parish and the people in it. It’s a privilege to be your youth worker. It has its ups and downs, but it is always a blessing to be in this role. Our team of volunteers are amazing and we couldn’t have this ministry without them. The young people are fantastic and a joy to be with. They make everything so worthwhile. We all care for God and each other so it makes it a great environment to be and work in.

**Sunday mornings**

* We are more supported in our morning sessions by amazing volunteers and they are a true blessing to this ministry. But if you have a calling to help YP on a Sunday morning, send me an email
* Since last April we have explored and learnt a lot together in Way Makers. It might have been themes or a series we choose ourselves or linking in with the theme in church in hope conversations and growing faith continues at home.
* We filmed a short Christmas/epiphany drama and got to show this to parents after youth club one night. We’d love to share it in church one day but for now, we had great fun and laughter creating it (and some biscuits may have been harmed in the making of this video!)
* Muddy church - We love running Way Makers alongside but love joining in at the end, especially round the fire, eating a yummy treat. Big thanks to Anne and the children's ministry team for letting us join in.
* Our young people have also started taking roles in the church, such as hospitality, welcoming and operating the service slides or the sound desk. A few have also started to regularly join in with the Band. It’s wonderful to see and I’m so proud of them. It really shows how awesome and talented they are to the wider church family and (hopefully) encourages discipleship into later life.
* We have a good number in our youth ministry with morning Way Makers sessions having around 5-9 attend each time.

**Sunday Evenings**

* Well supported by wonderful volunteers, who are a great blessing to this ministry. We always have fun together and all contribute to make everything work.
* We try to have something different for them to do every session, with Christian values weaved through everything we do.
* We’ve joined in the bible series theme, used bible chat mats, videos, prayer and more.
* For activities we have group games, outdoor games, making pancakes, craft, the PlayStation, board game nights and games in church.
* We have a good number in our youth ministry and our youth group sessions having about 8-14 attending each time.
* As our group grows, we also have grown a group for those in 15-18yrs (or school yrs. 10+).
* Following on from our youth group, the new YA home group meets from 7:30pm and is more discussion based and grown up for our older young people ready for the next thing.
* We started with the bible course but when the bible series started, the older ones have been using the 6 beat spoken work book and videos as the bases for our discussion.
* We have also enjoyed discussing mental health, our faith, using the Examen and enjoying hot chocolate and biscuits.
* Going forward we love to explore the topics that matter to the young people and really dive deep into our faith.
* It’s a lovely small group of 3-6 young people

**Other work and activities**

* So excited to say that confirmation is on the horizon!! We have a few yes’ and maybes and it’s been a long time coming. Praise God! But we have to join a group in the deanery, Bath Abbey or Wells Cathedral. I just found out From Tony Cook in the diocese Go Team that both the Cathedral (Saturday March 30 at 8.00pm) and the Bath Abbey (Saturday March 30 at 6.30pm) are holding confirmation services. The next Diocesan wide Confirmation service is on Saturday 23rd November at Wells Cathedral at 2pm. Next thing is to speak with the young people and their families and see which they might like to go for but November seems the most likely candidate as the others are too soon and in Easter holidays. Confirmation prep sessions have been in the making already so hopefully will be ready to go whenever we need it.

**Summer camp**

* We will be going back to camp this Summer! Satellites Camp 2024 - 2nd - 6/7th August. Young people can save the date or book now! At the time of writing, 5 of our young people have signed up already! Whole camp and Day tickets are available. And we have some free tickets for new comers!! Isn't that fantastic! Invitations are open to those from other churches in CTKS who don’t have youth groups to go with. For those who don’t know, Satellites is a summer event for young people, brought to you by the team at Youthscape. It’s a five-day gathering, designed to inspire teenagers to live with God at the centre of their lives for the other 360 days of the year.
* Last summer, going to Satellites was a great experience. The young people loved it, camping together was great. The worship was fantastic, the main meeting talks and entertainment were so good and there were plenty of things to do. Sport, art, board games, seminars/workshops but also quieter things in the chapel, so things for all types of personalities. The facilities are pretty good and taken care of. There are maybe a few minor kinks to iron out, it was only the second year of it running, but booking is easy and a fantastic time was had by all. They provide very well for youth leaders and volunteers as well. We also all felt safe there, safeguarding is handled well and, for example, the young people can go to a talk while we youth leaders stay back and prep dinner. But most importantly, the young people really enjoyed every minute and want to go again. I'm sure it's done great things for their faith journey too. It really makes all the late nights and early mornings totally worth it. This year we have (at the time of writing) about 5 YP signed up! We can’t wait to go again!

**CTKS youth events**

* Gathering together to attend, The mix, in Bristol and Movement worship nights in Bath and in our own parish at St John’s (returning on the 24th March 24), Trips to laser fusions (laser tag) in Bristol.
* God has also been working in the hearts of others from our own and different churches in our community and part funded by CTKS, the first football event, called Kick Academy started on the 9th March and will happen every 2nd Saturday of the month. God bless this ministry!
* CTKS and Wellsway continue to support local schools through the chaplaincy ministry, bibles and ‘It’s your move’ books.

**Community connections**

* Continue being a trustee for One Community Trust, networking with other youth agencies (like youth connect south west and project 28 briefly) and occasionally supporting the free community lunch.
* Working or volunteering with Junior choir to make good connections with the kids who someday might be potential youth group members. Combining my experience in children and youth ministry and love of music and singing (modern or choral) to contribute to this valuable ministry
* Networking with Abi Gray, town council youth worker. We have a great pastoral working relationship and have been able to host the youth group in O.C.T for BBQs and in the hall for music gigs. Abi is a fantastic youth worker and brings so much to our community.
* Nova festival: We got to join in last year's Nova festival (a youth arts festival run during Keynsham music festival). Sam and I did a singing workshop and Trevor, and Anna did a creative writing and illustration workshop. Both went pretty well and we got invited back this year. Other commitments means we look forward to being involved in different ways again this year and look forward to attending with the young group on Sunday evening.
* Using my role as Trust Chaplain in ministering to young people in the local community and supporting community pop up choirs at Wellsway that will be performing in March at St John’s.

**Prayer points for the future** 🙏

* That our youth keeps knowing, growing and living with Jesus now and every day.
* Bless those who work and volunteer in all children and youth ministry
* Prayers for those on the journey to baptism and/or confirmation and those who journey with them.
* For inspiration and peace in creating fun and fulfilling sessions in our youth ministry
* For a youth ministry reunion in September with young people past and present.
* For those looking to join the youth group next September
* For support and growth in the ministry and pastoral support of those 18-25yrs
* Prayers for the parish team and our wider church family as it goes through so many changes
* Prayers that God sends the right person for a new team rector.
* Prayers that youth group never runs out of biscuits 😜🍪

Pip Lovell – Keynsham Parish Youth Worker

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| **CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES** |

St John’s Church provides a range of children’s activities. This report covers activities in the 11am Sunday services, 10.30am Sunday combined services and Sunday evenings. Junior Choir and Minims are singing groups for children and these are covered in more detail in the Music report. In addition, some services are All Age services, which include “something for everyone” – these services do not include separate activities for children. The Children and Families Worker post is currently vacant and in the interim Claire Lowe is responsible for the coordination of children’s activities at St John’s Church. A dedicated team of volunteers enables the provision of weekly children’s activities.

**April - September 2023**

* Two Sunday morning groups held during 11am services – Explorers (age 4-11) and Little Explorers (under-4s)
* Children’s activities provided during most 10.30am services – these often-included children from Minims or Junior Choir
* Muddy Church held in April and June (4th Sunday - during 11am service)
* Sporty Sunday held in May (4th Sunday - during 11am service)
* Fortnightly Sunday evening group for children age 7-11 (Impact) continued to be successful
* Three children “graduated” to Waymakers in July – gifts and cards given
* Summer party held in July – attended by over 20 children – beach themed with ice creams for everyone afterwards
* Summer Services were all 10.30am combined All Age services
* One candidate interviewed in August for the Children and Families Worker post (full time joint post with the Keynsham Methodist Church) but they were unfortunately not suitable

**September 2023 - March 2024**

* Additional Sunday morning group started
* Three Sunday morning groups held during 11am services – Adventurers (Y3-Y6), Explorers (Yr-Y2) and Little Explorers (under-4s)
* Children’s activities provided during most 10.30am services – these often included visiting children and/or children from Minims or Junior Choir (especially for services such as Christmas Tree Festival, Mothering Sunday and Easter Sunday)
* Themes/topics for children’s groups on Sunday mornings have been the same as those being covered in the sermon/talk – to enable opportunity for further discussion within families at home
* Muddy Church held in September, October, November, January and February (4th Sunday - during 11am service)
* Children made decorations for large tree in entrance porch for Christmas Tree Festival
* Christmas Party held in December – attended by over 20 children
* Children made Easter Garden during Easter Sunday service
* Children are encouraged to take part in services when possible

**Numbers**

* Numbers of children are fairly steady – but we have gained a couple of new families on Sunday mornings and a few new children have started attending Impact, replacing those who transitioned to Waymakers/Youth Group in September
* Typically 15-20 children on Sunday mornings in Explore, 8-12 children on Sunday evenings at Impact, and 8-12 at Muddy Church
* There are several children who attend “regularly”, but not every week

**The future**

* More helpers/leaders are needed to sustain three groups on a Sunday morning
* It is hoped that there will be more opportunities in the future for children to help with service planning and be more involved with service leadership
* Some children’s activities will be provided during 10.30am Summer Services this year
* More helpers/leaders needed if a Summer Holiday Bible Club is to be provided in the future

Claire Lowe

Co-Ordinator of Children’s Activities – St John’s Church

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| **ST JOHN’S BABIES & TODDLERS GROUP** |

We have had another lovely year at toddlers doing lots of crafts and playing with our friends. Numbers continue to fluctuate although we have a core group of childminders who come most weeks and are very helpful with setting up and clearing away. However, the group is an important resource for the local community.

Mothers' union have continued to do the refreshments each week, which is very helpful and works well. Financially the group is self-sufficient and basically pays for itself in terms of day to day running costs.

Carla Doucette will be leaving us in July which leaves me to run things single handed, which I will endeavor to continue. My husband is very unwell so that may be an issue later on, but I will keep the office informed.

Emma Sparrow

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| **WHO LET THE DAD’S OUT?** |

Who Let the Dads Out is a national movement that resources churches to reach out to dads, father figures and their children. Who Let the Dads Out is overseen by Care for the Family and there are now over 250 such groups around the country. It is founded on the principle of wanting to demonstrate God’s love to communities.

St John’s has been running a WLTDO group every third Saturday morning of the month since 2012. In 2018 St Francis began to host every first Saturday morning. Together they create a space for dads, granddads, father figures and their children to have fun together. The team of dedicated helpers provides bacon rolls, tea and coffee for the men and plenty of toys, craft activities, a story and toast and jam for the children.

Both events are proving popular. The average attendance at St John's is between 15 - 25 dads and 20 - 30 children. St Francis averages 10-15 dads and their children. It continues to provide a fantastic opportunity to deepen relationships with a group who do not attend church and a space for men at a similar stage of life to talk and get to know one another. We have a growing list of about 60 Dads who we communicate with on a regular basis.

Plans for 2024-25 include continuing to run social events for families as well as just dads, and inviting families who we have got to know to church events such as muddy-play church, Kick Academy and special Sunday services.

Robin Kelly – Who Let the Dad’s Out?

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| **ST JOHN’S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL** |

St John’s Church of England Primary School is located in the heart of Keynsham, within walking distance of St John’s Church. Mrs Julia Bamfield took up the post of Headteacher in September 2023. The school has a very strong Christian ethos and achieved outstanding status in its last SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) in July 2018. The school is part of the Futura Learning Partnership and the shared Futura Values of Respect, Collaboration, Aspiration and Opportunity are known to and lived out by the whole school community. Our theologically underpinned Christian vision provides the foundation for all aspects of school life:

* At St John’s we inspire our whole school to love learning and work together so everyone can reach their full potential.
* Through shared Christian values we recognise the skills and talents of all, nurture creativity and contribute to our community.
* With engaging lessons, exciting opportunities and challenging experiences we deepen knowledge and understanding, have fun and succeed.

The school maintains excellent links with the church as follows:

* The whole school meets together for Collective Worship every Wednesday morning, led by a member St John’s Church
* Each class has at least two Spiritual Leaders (there are four in Y6), who plan and lead Collective Worship weekly and also carry out other tasks related to spirituality within the school
* There is a Futura Church School Ethos Group which includes all six church schools within the Futura Learning Partnership and is attended by the Headteacher and a Foundation Governor
* The Headteacher and Chair of Governors attend Diocesan briefing events three times per year
* Specific events:
* St John’s Patronal Festival (June, at school) – a short service led by the clergy, games, fish and chips, outdoor service with parents and an early finish for children
* Year 6 Leavers’ Service (July, at school) - Year 6 children presented with a Good News Bible provided by St John’s Church and school
* Start of Year service (September, at St John’s Church) - Year 3 children presented with a Children’s Bible provided by Churches Together
* Harvest Service (October, at St John’s Church)
* Carol Concert (December, at St John’s Church)
* Christingle Service (December, at St John’s Church)
* Easter Service (March, at St John’s Church)

The Local Governance Committee (LGC) of St John’s School includes three Foundation Governors roles – these are currently filled by Claire Lowe and Paul Trueman, with one role being vacant. St John’s School joined the Futura Learning Partnership in September 2015 (then called the Wellsway Multi Academy Trust). Futura is a secular Trust, but the Diocese, LGC and Trustees ensured that the Christian ethos of St John’s School was protected from the outset (by changes made to the Articles of Association and by Diocese approved Trustees who serve on the Trust Board). More recently, the Futura Church School Ethos Group was established in October 2023 and includes representatives from the Diocese, the Trust Board and the Executive Leadership Team as well as Headteachers and Foundation Governors from each of the six Futura church schools.

Pupils at St John’s School are encouraged to act in a Christian way at all times and to support and care for one another pastorally.

Claire Lowe - Chair of Governors, St John’s School

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| **TWO RIVERS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL** |

Two Rivers Church of England Primary School is located in the new development of Hygge Park on the outskirts of Keynsham, close to Saltford. The school opened in September 2020 in a temporary building on the Chandag School estate and moved into its new, state of the art building in the autumn of 2022. Mr. Matt Filer took up the post of Headteacher in May 2023, following on from Mrs Claire Graham and Mrs Wendy Carver. The school is growing from Reception up and has capacity for 420 children. At present there are just over 100 children on role in Years Reception, One, Two and Three. The school has made a strong start academically and achieved outstanding status in June 2023. Two Rivers is part of the Futura Learning Partnership.

As a Church school, when the Academy Governance Committee (AGC) was established, Two Rivers had three Foundation Governors – Richard Triggs (St Dunstan’s), Claire Formby (St John’s) and Kevin Durrant (Keynsham Baptist Church Minister). Kevin worked closely with Wendy Carver and staff to develop the Christian ethos & values of the new school including the logo showing two rivers meeting and trees growing. Jeremiah 17:7-8 was the inspiration. Sadly, Kevin had to resign last year so the school now has a vacancy for a Foundation Governor. The school values are kindness, respect and courage with the addition of the Futura value of aspiration.

The children know the school values and are encouraged to behave in a caring and Christian way towards one another.

The school is developing its links with the church as follow:

* *Collective Worship* – Claire Formby organises Tuesday “Clergy” Collective Worship. A small team from St John’s plus Kevin Durrant and Preb Jan Knott lead this on Tuesday afternoons
* *Zambian link* – the children have been preparing to welcome teachers Susan and Febby from Chipata South for a week after Easter. Rachel Shaw and Claire Formby have liaised with the school to promote and support this.
* *Termly visits to St John’s Church* – Matt Filer is keen for all the children to go to St John’s at least once every long term despite the distance. An Easter Service led by Anika was well attended by parents
* *Support with resources* – members of the St John’s congregation have made a wooden cross and an embroidered alter cloth for the school and the wardens found some unused older church candles for them also

Claire Formby

Foundation Governor, Two Rivers Church of England School

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| **ST JOHN’S MUSIC AND WORSHIP TEAM** |

It’s been a busy and exciting year at St. John’s. The winter without heating in the church has been challenging for musical worship, and I would like to thank all the volunteers who have helped manage the logistics of setting up the hall each week.

As well as challenges, the lack of heating also gave us opportunities. The smaller space of the hall has fostered a feeling of community and participation. Being closer together has made the choir and band feel less separated from the congregation, and helped to make sung worship something that we are all doing together. This has felt particularly strong in the sung liturgy at the 9:15 service. Now that we are back in the main church building, I pray that we can maintain this sense of togetherness.

**Worship Band**

Our worship band continue to lead inspiring sung worship at the 11am and 10:30 services. We have a pool of talented and dedicated musicians, and are delighted to have welcomed two new adults and three young musicians into the band this year. We’re always on the lookout for more musicians to help us lead sung worship. Any guitarists out there would be especially welcomed! Do get in touch if you think you might be called to this ministry.

We’re also looking for people to help as audio technicians, setting up the equipment and mixing for services. Last year we ran two introductory training sessions – one for the youth group and one for adult volunteers. We’ll be looking to run more sessions this year, so no experience is necessary to volunteer!

**Choir**

The choir have once again had a busy year. As well as singing for 9:15 communion services, the choir have sung monthly evensong services. The broken heating gave us the opportunity to take evensong on tour over the winter. Thank you to St. Francis’, St. Margaret’s and Keynsham Baptist Church for kindly hosting our evensong services over the last three months. As always, Advent and Christmas were a highlight of the year, with the choir singing for three carol services, the Winter Festival, Christmas Tree Festival and Midnight Mass.

Numbers in the choir have dropped slightly this year, so we’re always recruiting for all voice parts! Not all members of the choir sing every Sunday – we welcome singers who would like to sing at festival services or monthly evensong but aren’t able to commit to sing every Sunday morning.

**Choristers and Minims**

This year we’ve seen an increase in the number of children in our Friday singing groups. We currently have 7 children regularly coming to Minims (year 1 & 2) and 12 children regularly coming to the junior choir (years 3-6). A large part of this growth is thanks to existing choristers and minims inviting their friends! The choristers regularly join the adult choir to sing at the 9:15 and 10:30 services, and a small number also sing at evensong. The Minims have also sung at several Sunday services this year, as well as at the Winter Festival.

Huge thanks to Karen, Rachel, Pip and especially Frances for all their time and hard work supervising and teaching the junior choir.

**Organ maintenance**

The lack of heating over the winter has had an impact on the condition of the organ. There is a concerning build-up of mould in the organ chamber. A thorough cleaning of the instrument was already long overdue, but the mould makes this even more important. It may also be necessary to install some equipment to manage the humidity.

The condition of the organ’s action[[1]](#footnote-1) is also deteriorating. In the last few months several motors have burst and been repaired or replaced. Further work on the motors of the great division is needed.

We are currently waiting for a report and estimate from Nicholson Organs for work that needs to be done.

**Looking ahead**

I have two priorities for musical worship in the coming year:

1. **Continue to foster sung worship as something we all do together**  
   This has been a real positive experience in our time worshipping in the hall.  
   For 9:15 services congregational participation in the liturgy is very important, so I aim for the music to enable this.  
   For 11am services, I pray for the band to continue feeling a connection with the congregation and reduce the sense of separation that can arise in the main church building. I also hope to continue to engage children and young people in our sung worship.  
   For 10:30 services, I hope for the worship band and choir to work closely together and pray that we are able to minister in a way that provides something for everyone to be able to worship.
2. **Sustain and grow the involvement of children and young people in leading sung worship**I want to continue to nurture the development of our young musicians in the band and choir.  
   Several of our choristers will be starting secondary school in September. Some already show great leadership in helping and teaching the younger choristers. This year I would like to provide more singing opportunities for them as senior choristers but also to flourish as leaders in the junior choir.

I look forward to the exciting year ahead!

Sam Shackleton, Music Director

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| **BELLRINGERS** |

**Sunday and practice night ringing**

The bells have sounded on almost every Sunday for the main morning services. Most weeks six bells are rung, occasionally five or eight, and on rare occasions when too few ringers are available the Ellacombe chime has been used, usually by George Colbourne. We have practiced on virtually every available Thursday evening, with attendance at practice varying from about 6 to 13, and averaging nearly 9. We now have 15 paid- up members, who are also members of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Association.

**Teaching and recruitment**

Nicola, who started learning in 2022, is making good progress and is now a much-valued member of the band. Sadly, her daughter Eve has not continued, but in spring 2023 Paula Joined our ranks and has also made good progress, now ringing regularly on Sundays. More recently Ella has joined us and is already ringing a bell with minimal help. We continue to try to improve our striking, and raising and lowering the bells, and we are making a little progress with plain hunt and plain bob.

**Special ringing**

The main national event of the year was the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla on 6 May. On the morning of the coronation 12 ringers rang rounds and call changes, including ‘Kings’ and ‘Queens’. Then on Monday 8 May we rang a Quarter Peal of Plain Bob Triples, with the help of three ringers from Bath. In September, following the farewell service for Reverend Stephen McCaw, we rang a quarter peal of Plain Bob Doubles on the front 6 with an all-local band. We fulfilled our obligations for wedding ringing. We also rang for the Keynsham Winter Festival in November, and afterwards rang some carols on the handbells in the church.

**Outreach**

In early 2023 Nicola set up a Facebook page for the bellringers which helps us to keep in touch with the community. She also set up a WhatsApp group in order to keep members of the band in easy touch with each other. We have welcomed several visiting ringers to our practices over the year, two of whom have become regulars. In February we welcomed the ringers from Bath Abbey on their way home from a tour of some towers in Bristol.

In December we entered a decorated tree in the Christmas Tree Festival. In January we opened the tower to visitors during a church fund-raising event and about 24 people enjoyed visiting the ringing room and the views from the top of the tower.

**Maintenance**

No maintenance work has taken place on the bells this year. George has made a device to keep the ropes aired during the cold and damp winter months.

Unfortunately, the 1729 clock continues to give problems and steps are being taken to try to resolve the issues.

**Social**

In January most of the band with spouses and partners enjoyed their annual meal at Haywards Restaurant.

In March we enjoyed a mini outing to ring the bells at Queen Charlton and at Stanton Drew, followed by a social hour in the Druids Arms.

Edric Broom - Tower Captain

1. The mechanisms to open and close the valves that let air into the pipes [↑](#footnote-ref-1)