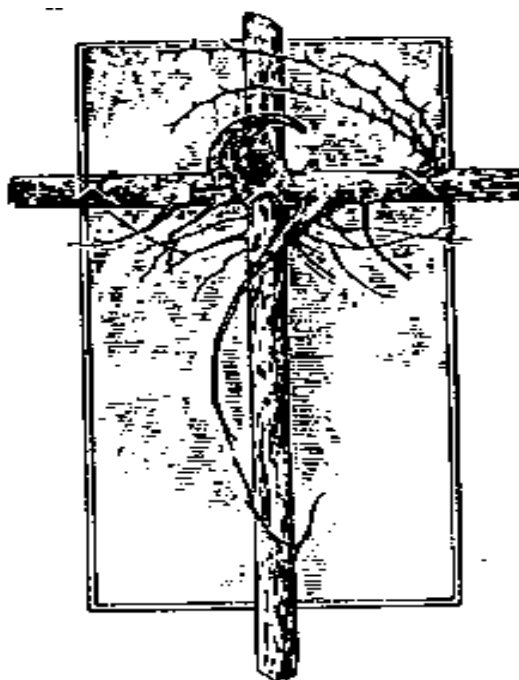


St Lawrence Church

Eastcote



**Report for the Annual Parochial Church
Meeting - 2020**

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AIMS AND PURPOSES

The parish's vision statement for 2020 is, "We see the Church of St. Lawrence at the Heart of the Parish of Eastcote: Open – Praying – Nurturing – Lively – Outreaching."

The Mission Action Plan agreed by the PCC for 2016-2020 lays out the parish's purposes as follows:

- **To worship God**
and enable all people to enter into that experience.
- **To show God's love in word and action.**
Living God's love in generous action and care.
Working for justice and peace and the integrity of creation.
- **To know God**
Growing as disciples of Christ, seeking to follow him more closely.
Enabling all people to discover God and follow Christ.
Prayer is at the heart of our life; God is our source for word and action.
- **To build and live in a loving community**
Provide fellowship and pastoral care, where all are welcome.
Living for the good of the whole community of Eastcote and the World.

Following the resignation of the parish's last incumbent, The Revd. Chris Rankine, from September 2019, the Bishop and Area Dean met with the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Consulting with them, the Bishop and Area Dean determined that the parish should enter a period of interim ministry.

The Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden, set out the purpose of the interim period with the following statement:

St. Lawrence will be in a period of transition over the coming months.

From today, 9th February 2020, John Seymour will be appointed as Interim Minister.

John will work with St. Lawrence through addressing the past, giving stability in the present and planning for the future. He will be assisted in this by Andrew Corsie's interim team, who work with the PCC and the wider church community doing interim work.

A document setting out the framework for Interim Ministry in the Willesden Area is also being made available to the PCC – and can be read by anyone in the congregation who is interested.

I hope you will welcome John as your priest here in Eastcote. His licence allows him to be here for a fair length of time – but I would anticipate that when you've had a chance as a parish to work through some of the issues and questions – and have put in place a Mission Action Plan that will lead to a good parish profile, then we can move to making a permanent appointment of a new vicar here.

REVIEW OF 2020

Having been licensed to St Lawrence as Interim Minister on 9th February 2020, it is my privilege to be writing this as my first 'annual review' in post. Whilst for many members of our congregation, there has effectively been 'no church', for many in the parish, work this year has been fast-paced and 2020 has seen significant change.

Looking at 2020 in broader context

2020 was an exceptional year in most senses. I was out for a run early this morning enjoying the chill air and blue skies before starting to write this report on 9th March 2021. For the first time in months, the roads were bumper to bumper with cars and there were generous numbers of secondary school students in clusters and mothers and fathers taking their children to primary school. With schools returning after pandemic lockdown only yesterday, this feels very much like new life and is very welcome.

Many would consider the last pandemic as being the 'flu pandemic of 1918-20. The corrugated iron parish mission church opened on 18th December 1920 – the centenary of which we remembered on its anniversary. It is worth taking a few moments to ponder how the phoenix of St Lawrence rose from the ashes of loss with 100 million having died globally in that pandemic and how we might look to new beginnings with the end of this pandemic.

The HIV AIDS pandemic started in 1981 when I was eight. The virus was making a real impact in the UK being presented as a 'gay plague' in the popular media as I reached my teens and puberty. Our partners in our link parish of Cristo Redentor will be conscious of HIV AIDS as a pandemic, with 8% of Mozambique's population living with HIV AIDS, accounting for around 45,000 adult deaths annually – the leading cause of death. As much as the crippling impact of a pandemic is new in terms of our collective memory, we are in relationship with those for whom pandemic deaths are a continuing reality, year after year. What we are used to – and our own circumstances in life – determine what we see and what seems important.

It might seem strange for me to raise the HIV AIDS pandemic as we think about 2020 as a year for St. Lawrence. My point is that things look different depending on the perspective they are viewed from. The pandemic has been a particular experience for those with families with young children to how it has been for people who are retired and live alone; it has been different again for those of us who have remained connected to others through our work routines but haven't had home-schooling to contend with. Some have felt more connected to church and have reported that there has been better communication; others have felt very disconnected, with our efforts to communicate not meeting their needs. Some have felt the loss of church family and wonder if they still have a place; others have had their experience of church family intensified, albeit remotely.

As we come out of lockdown and come together again as a community 'in real life', listening to each other's experience is going to be needful, as is listening without bringing too many assumptions. For some, church has 'disappeared' in 2020; for others, it has become new and lively in unexpected ways.

Interim process

The foregoing comments set the scene for the interim process at St Lawrence in two ways: the interim work has been continuing in the context of a global pandemic which brought an end to in-person worship from 17th March 2020. And it has brought to light some very different perspectives from within the congregation.

Reconstructing the feedback from the survey work started in the week beginning 23rd February; three broad groupings of response emerge, the first being the largest category:

- **Surprise:** at St Lawrence finding itself in an interim process with no idea as to why this might be needed. Personal experience for members of this group is of the parish being a friendly, welcoming place with a depth of Christian faith and spirituality and room for everyone.
- **Distress, (anger), and relief:** distress at changes that had taken place over recent years with a corresponding sense of loss in relation to those changes. Concerns included a change of worship style (introduction of a band, drums, more frequent use of incense; concern over loss of use of the high altar); openness to change from some in this group, but consternation over a lack of consultation, consistency / follow-through on ideas and ambitions and consent; relief at Chris Rankine's departure corresponding to a conviction that 'Chris was the problem'.
- **Disappointment, frustration, disenfranchisement:** communicating a sense that Chris was a breath of fresh air, that he engaged well with families and children, brought a sense of hope and possibility. A conviction that the changes that Chris had sought to bring about to modernise worship and make the church community more inclusive (including receptivity to families and children) had been frustrated by an 'the old school' resistant to change and determined to keep hold of the reins of power to further their interests. A belief that through a combination of having innovation thwarted and bullying directed against Chris and his family, he eventually had to leave. A conviction that some of those who had felt welcome in the parish had left following Chris' departure and a fear that the parish would not be a place in which these respondents could find a home or flourish.

Reviewing these responses, the PCC expressed shock, sadness and disappointment. "We have got lot of work to do," was a response from one of the Church Wardens.

Ideally, finding a way forward to take account of this response would have been a task undertaken with the congregation as a whole during the first year of interim ministry. The limitations of the lockdown necessitated that this work was continued with the lay leadership of the parish, namely the standing committee of the PCC. Some very productive work was done, starting to recognise the range of views and experience in the congregation and the difficulties in talking about the tensions, this being like 'walking on eggshells'. With engagement in this process, preoccupation with Chris Rankine – and consternation at being 'put into' an interim process as a punishment or rebuke - started to give way to a realisation that the issues identified represented different interests within the congregation and concerns that legitimate needs were not being met.

With the easing of lockdown in Spring 2021, plans are in place to engage the whole congregation in the six steps of the Interim process, as well as to share in the exercises which have provided for learning by the standing committee. The six steps are:

- Task 1 – Coming to terms with the past / history

- Task 2 – Present – Discovering a new identity – Know Thyself
- Task 3 – Leadership changes during an interregnum
- Task 4 – Systems – renewing relational linkages
- Task 5 – Unconscious Bias training
- Task 6 – Future – Commitment to new directions in ministry

The interim process will involve rebuilding bonds of community. Many who worship regularly in the parish speak of recognising others by sight but not knowing their names whilst describing the church as being friendly and welcoming. It is not unusual for members of a church community not to know each other well, but the picture emerging is of a community that has fragile connections between its members, which have been strained through members' sense of their interests competing with each other.

Reading through the history of the parish, the accumulated files notes and meeting minutes it is striking what comes across of the parish's character. A continuous theme is clergy seeking to bring worshippers together as one community; of an unstable relationship between fellowship and social time and worship. The PCC has embarked on a remarkable number of very ambitious building projects, with architectural plans drawn up under each of the incumbents from 1933 onwards but with little to show for the energy and commitment invested. This suggests some longstanding, systemic problem in the parish which relates to some element of the parish's history and which may be being played out in the present day.

For St Lawrence's to flourish, different members of the church community are going to need to be able to hear and listen to each other's stories, priorities, interests and needs and take account of the parish's history and present missional context. What will follow is a shared and agreed vision for St. Lawrence's mission – one in which all can grow in discipleship, in faith and service.

A community in pandemic – losses and gains

Being brought together

In order to meet immediate practical needs with the arrival of lockdown, I set up the 'In such a time as this' scheme, pairing those who were potentially isolated and needing support with shopping and other errands in the context of lockdown with a volunteer. The staple of the scheme was fortnightly contact by telephone and agreement about what practical tasks might be undertaken. The scheme was popular and – significantly, in the light of the initial survey within the interim process – brought older and younger members of the congregation into relationship, which was much valued on both sides. I'm proud of the generosity of members of St. Lawrence. It was heart-warming to hear of new relationships built, such that family affections were created.

Maintenance work and maintenance days have provided welcome fellowship but also a sense of purpose and achievement for quite a number in the parish. It has been good to see the church looking smart again. Bacon sandwiches have also been a welcome treat.

Worship

Worship for my first Holy Week and Easter at St. Lawrence was broadcast via iPhone from one of the vicarage bedrooms. Leading worship alone was certainly a new experience and quite surreal at times, but I felt the value of continuing to offer regular prayer with the stability this offered. One of my abiding memories is the sound of birdsong heard from the back garden ahead of each act of

worship.

The move to being online has opened new means of communication. The 'Lost Income' appeal was launched with a video; regular sermons were presented as online reflections with images. This continues to offer new ways be community together and to communicate, so that in the future, best use can be made of face-to-face time in church.

With the end of the first lockdown, worship moved back to church, being live-streamed from there. This has required changes to our AV set up. Whilst the difficulty of not being able to meet in person has continued to be costly, there have been benefits to live streaming, most notably: those joining the service are able to communicate with each other online during worship; it is now possible to attend weekly worship outside of set times, with the livestreams being available for replay on Facebook or through the parish website; those unable to be at home – for example those in hospital, or facing limitations through illness or limited mobility are able to join services.

Many in the congregation were courageous in embracing new forms of technology and new ways of participating. Some found other ways to continue their faith and their relationship with St. Lawrence with the changes faced. Some watched national Church of England services online, on the TV or on the radio; others were brought print outs of pastoral letters and of sermons to read.

When lockdown lifted over the summer, we were able to offer worship in church with a team of six stewards ensuring that COVID precautions were maintained. In this form, worship in person continued from 11th July through to December 27th with those attending coming from the full spectrum of our congregation. Sadly, it was not possible to maintain separate activities for tots, children and teens alongside offering Sunday worship for older members of the congregation.

It is of note that live streaming services led to considerable reach through the parish's public Facebook page. The Eucharist and Act of Remembrance on Remembrance Sunday had a reach of 4764 with 2900 views; Christmas Carols, 764 views; Christingle, 681 views; our Nativity play 251 views. The reach reflects circulation of promotions for the services by local community groups and promotional activity through the public and private Facebook pages.

Staff news

Revd Julia Bevis-Knowles

had been working as chaplain to Ealing Hospital and the Meadow House Hospice within the North West London University Healthcare NHS Trust from summer 2018. In 2019, Julia took on a full-time chaplain responsibility within the Trust.

With the advent of the COVID pandemic, NHS work took on a new character for all staff, including chaplains. Julia has been working on a shift pattern seven days a week during the heights of the pandemic lockdowns, which has necessarily restricted her ability to participate in parish activities. I know that the way Julia's work has limited her availability to preside at the Eucharist, be present in worship and to offer pastoral and spiritual support to members of the parish has been costly and painful for her. Julia has been much missed over this time and much prayed for.

I know that the experiences of a chaplain in the NHS over 2020 have been traumatic and draining in many ways.

Dan Bishop

left post at the end of August 2020 to start training full time for ordained ministry. The parish held an online send off for him with a financial token of appreciation and cards. Dan is humble and takes time to listen to those he spends time with and so was held in affection by the parish community. He is missed!

In the preceding months, Dan made some vital contributions in the parish. 2020 saw the 12 hours of worship initiative in March. Wednesday evening youth groups were given over to Zoom meetings in the Spring, dedicated to preparing candidates for confirmation. Dan's specific AV training was invaluable as livestreaming moved from the vicarage back to church.

Further, Dan leaves some important foundations for us to build on, having contributed his time and expertise to an initial upgrade of our AV infrastructure for livestreaming and having produced a significant report which is informing the parish's review of its work with children and young people.

Finally, Dan rather courageously took on the responsibility for being stewardship recorder following Maria Smith standing down from this role at the end of 2019. Given Dan's dyslexia and lack of affection for numbers, this may have gone beyond the call of duty (but not his contracted hours as lockdown ate into his engagement with our youth!)

Alan Wright

reached with great dignity the age of eighty in September 2020 and with this, suggested that he might step back from some of his responsibilities in the parish, having contributed significantly to lay leadership and wisdom through the years. Alan's responsibilities as vice chair of the PCC ceased in October 2020 following the APCM. Whilst Alan has continued to preach on an occasional basis, the lifting of lockdown in 2021 will allow him to find his own level as a 'retired' Reader.

Rosemary Ryder

stood down as a pastoral assistant from 10th January 2020, with a range of other immediate commitments making demands on her time and attention. Whilst a pastoral assistant, Rosemary was instrumental in setting up the lunch club, maintaining the film club with a change of personnel, and establishing the Crafties group. Rosemary also played an important role in 2020 – alongside Sadie, Alan, Elaine and Barbara – in maintaining the 'At such a time as this' scheme.

Christian initiation & funerals, electoral roll

Baptisms

Just two baptisms took place in 2020: those of Victor Thomas Watkins and of Micah Christian. Both were baptised in public worship which was livestreamed.

Admission to first Communion

Leading group sessions on first communion was a real delight for me. The following were admitted to first communion on 13 September 2020 by Bishop Pete Broadbent following preparation undertaken by Chris Rankine in 2019: Adam and Olivia Strinic and Rhys and Charlotte Jamieson. I prepared Ethan and Olivia Solomon, Annabel Yarde, Henry Anasonwu and Christopher Hobson for first communion. Whilst unfortunately Christopher was unable to attend the service on the day, Ethan, Olivia, Annabel and Henry were all able to be admitted on All Saints' Day, with an international audience joining by livestream!

Confirmation

Following confirmation classes on Zoom led by Dan Bishop and me, the following were confirmed by Bishop Pete Broadbent: Dan Betterton, Charlie Cadman, Lucy Cummins, Tom McCarthy, Adam Rayment and Isabelle Wong. Jack Edwards and Stephanie Claire Alvis were confirmed as adults.

Marriages

There were no marriages at St. Lawrence in 2020

Funerals

In the last year, I took the funerals of: John Sidney Coombes, Gavin Paul Allen, Pamela Elizabeth Gough, Harry Leach, William Earnest Priddle, David William Davies, John Henry Morris, Christopher Paul Taylor and Nadine Alison Herbert.

Deaths

I want to note here the deaths of members of our congregation or those on the electoral roll of the parish: Pam Gough, who was a much loved member of the congregation and particularly contributed to worship through singing in the choir and also Winifred Wilkins who sadly died early in 2020.

Leaving the electoral roll

Jean Taylor relocated to Scotland and the Solomon family to Buckinghamshire. Both are missed and fondly remembered.

Uniformed organisations

4th Eastcote Scouts

I hadn't anticipated that the uniformed organisations would have such a significant profile in my first year in post. In many ways, the 4th Eastcote Scouts have been at least as dominant a concern as any other part of parish life. This is a rare situation now in parish ministry as most Scout groups operate independently from parishes, finding – in other contexts - that the two parties' interests are not well-aligned.

Simon Hill started as Group Scout Leader for the 4th Eastcote Scouts. Before I arrived in post, Simon had approached me to ask if the PCC would grant the group a long lease in order to raise funds to build a new Scout hut. As I arrived in the parish, Simon and Malcolm presented me with a sponsorship agreement dating back to 1995. They asserted that this was a lease and required the PCC to provide accommodation for the Scouts – or a continuing lease. Checking back through the parish records, the legal relationship between the Scouts and the Parish has never been defined. It was apparent that this was leading to some practical difficulties, not least over deciding who was responsible for maintenance and accommodation costs for the Scouts' hut. The Scouts have never paid any rent for their property and have enjoyed significant subsidies for works done from the PCC.

Arriving in post, the Scout hut – which dates from 1947 – was in a dire state, with roof fabric that had broken open. Within the hut, there was evidence of water ingress and the sky was visible through holes in the roof felt. My immediate concern was whether or not the building was

structurally sound and – in view of the PCC's duty of care – whether the building was safe for use at all.

With the PCC needing to ensure the safety of the Scouts and their own liability, they were ready to support asking a surveyor to give an opinion. The frame of the building is made of concrete which is held in tension by steel rods. The concrete has started to break down, and with this, the steel exposed. When the steel rusts, it loses its tensile strength. The main structural risk to the building therefore comes from water getting into the frame, directly and by ingress with urgent repairs to the roof being required. These have now been completed, assuring a number of years' use from the building so that a definitive solution can be found for the Scouts' accommodation needs. The sponsorship agreement that Malcolm and Simon presented as a lease was in fact a commitment by the named incumbent of the parish to jointly provide accommodation for the Scouts, with the Scouts usually fundraising for this provision. The sponsorship document seems to be a personal commitment on the part of the incumbent, rather than on behalf of the PCC; the document states that review of the sponsorship agreement should take place every five years and with a change of leadership on either side.

Legal advice on the status of the 4th Eastcote Scouts as tenants is that the most that their occupancy of the hut since 1947 could be construed as is the equivalence of a license agreement. This is significant, as the creation of a lease gives tenants particular rights – in particular, to a continuing tenancy. The question here was what the parish's obligations are with respect to the Scouts and how these can best be met.

Drawing on the example of the 1st Northwood Scouts and knowing that funding had been made available to them from Hillingdon council, the 4th Eastcote Scouts presented plans to build a new wooden hut – providing like-for-like accommodation – adjacent to 17, The Chase. The rationale presented was that this would save the PCC having to invest time and energy in providing new premises by the Scouts doing this for themselves.

The PCC had reservations about the scheme, not least that the proposed new location for the hut would block access to the site at the rear of the vicarage for other potential uses. Plans for disposal of the existing hut – with its asbestos fabric – and making good were curiously absent from the Scouts' costings. The siting of the hut was also rather close to large trees adjacent to 17, The Chase, raising concerns that the trees would present a problem for both properties. Nevertheless, the PCC was ready to explore this option and agreed to start negotiations on a lease to allow the Scouts to proceed with the project.

Starting to enter into discussion with the Scouts on the practicalities of the project, it was apparent that the proposals presented worrying liabilities and risks for the PCC. Meeting 1930s building specifications, the foundations of the church building are shallow; the drains which run along its north side also date from the 1930s. The Scouts' proposal was to bring the materials required to build the hut as well as to transport the materials needed to provide foundations and to remove the earth from the site using access with transit vans around the North and West of the church building.

The demolition and removal of the existing hut as well as making good had not been factored into the costings. Provision of utilities and sewerage were proposed as piggy backing on the parish's supplies. What the Scouts were proposing was not impossible, but it would require much more thought and better planning. To help them, the PCC produced a position document setting out the parish's requirements for the Scouts to proceed with their proposal.

Having considered the parish's position statement, the Scouts concluded that the costs of providing a building that would not present prohibitive risk to the church building and damage to the site was beyond their means. The Scouts were not open to a proposed alternative location for a new hut. As the parish is committed to continue to support the Scouts and have them on site, the job of providing new accommodation now falls to the PCC and the parish.

Looking back to Chris Rankine's review of 2018, the building proposed there, as a wing on the North side of the church building, was costed at £2.5 million. In his comments in his review, Chris suggested that not only was this cost prohibitive, but that if the parish had this kind of money, it should be spent in other ways.

Following the developments above, at the close of 2020, the PCC is committed to provide a new building on site, which the Scouts will also be able to use for meetings. The PCC has not determined how it is going to raise the money to see through this undertaking; it has also not worked out how provision of this accommodation will fit with its broader mission. What the PCC does have in its gift is the large piece of land between the vicarage and The Chase; what is not clear at the time of writing is what value this might contribute.

In the meantime, I've been working with a structural surveyor, a valuation surveyor and a lawyer with expertise in Church of England and property law to draw up a lease for the Scouts to ensure that they have the assurance of somewhere to meet, to be clear about the two parties' rights and responsibilities with respect to the accommodation, and to provide the basis on which the PCC can work to provide a new building for its own use as well as for the Scouts. This significant investment puts both parties on a secure basis and allows us to plan for the next chapter of St Lawrence's relationship with the 4th Eastcote Scouts.

I've had the pleasure of leading some online Zoom sessions with the various Scout groups, including a tour around the church building, a Remembrance service and a Christingle service.

6th Eastcote Brownies

3rd Eastcote Guides

1st Eastcote Rainbows

I was glad to meet with Deena, Clare, Maria and Jolene soon after starting in post in order to plan for Mothering Sunday as a parade Sunday. Sadly, our plans for a service with full involvement from all the uniformed organisations were brought to nought with the arrival of our first lockdown. It was frustrating to have our plans scuppered but set a good precedent for working together in the future.

The green storage container nearest to the St Lawrence Centre drew my attention. The lock on this was stuck with no-one having gained access to it for 10 years. Opening the container, the Guides have identified some valuable camping material which they will retain in the container. In 2020, the container is also going to be re-roofed and repainted. Thanks are due to Terry Wigington for opening the container through subtle skill when the combined brute force of our strongest premises team members were not equal to the task.

Rev'd. Dr. John Seymour

CHURCHWARDENS' GENERAL COMMENTS

2020 has been a very eventful year!

It started with Sadie having to source priests to lead our services each week before we were notified that Rev'd Dr John Seymour had agreed to be our interim priest. We were delighted to welcome him to St. Lawrence at his licensing by Bishop Pete on 9th February. Fr John had already covered several services for us but now, after moving into the vicarage and beginning to find his way round the local area, he could begin working with us through the interim process until a new vicar could be appointed. Little did he know what was to come!

After only a few weeks, the church doors were closed when the country went into lockdown. Fr John began to live stream our Sunday service weekly - initially from the vicarage using an improvised altar and mobile phone. Sadie and I were both shielding with our husbands which made it difficult for us to carry out our responsibilities. Rev'd Julia's role as a hospital chaplain increased so much that she was now needed there every day.

Prior to lockdown we were able to hold our Supper Quiz and Line Dancing fundraiser and all other regular social events and hall bookings until late March when all church meetings started being held on Zoom.

When full lockdown was relaxed, we were able to be back in church, with social distancing, mask wearing and much reduced numbers. We had to book in online for a place and a rota of stewards were recruited for various tasks. Services were then live streamed from church. Dan Bishop set the equipment up for this and dealt with various sound issues until he and Anna left the Parish and moved near Cambridge at the end of August so that he could commence his ministry training. As there was nobody else available, I took on the AV desk role on a temporary basis, with much guidance from Fr John as I had no experience at all of what was required whilst Sadie oversaw the stewards and any other issues in church.

At the start of the first lockdown, 'A time like this' was set up by Rosemary Ryder and Fr John with volunteers who kept in contact with people and doing any shopping needed for those who were unable to go out. This has continued to this day and is very much appreciated.

We began making enquiries regarding having a defibrillator installed on church premises for use by the church and the wider community and made a successful application for a Ward Grant from our local councillors. This will be installed on the outside of the hall building near the table store and training will be arranged once the London Ambulance Service is available.

There has been much coming and going this year with various church roles. Rosemary Ryder resigned from her role as Pastoral Assistant because of family commitments, Maria Smith as Stewardship Recorder, Terry Smith as Treasurer, Katy Hinson as Safeguarding Officer and Dan Bishop as Youth Worker. We thank them for all the good work they have done and hope to continue to see them when we are able to do so. Phil Howe has agreed to take on the Stewardship Recorder role and Chris Edwards the Safeguarding Officer role. Sadie took on the role of Treasurer until a new one could be appointed. Lindsay Liggett and family and Jean Taylor have moved away from the area. Sadly, David Horchover, who had a long association with Scouts before moving to Ickenham and 'Tag' Taggart, known latterly for his roles with St Lawrence Players, Pam Gough and Winnie Wilkins all died during the year.

Sadie and I are very grateful for all the help given to us during this very challenging year including those who have willingly offered to help with stewarding and other tasks when asked, often at short notice. It is much appreciated by us. Thanks also to all the various teams of people who have worked 'behind the scenes' to prepare the church and take part in services. Our thanks also go to Duncan, Ian and Heather, the choir and musicians for the music they provide in our services. Jenny, our administrator does a sterling job in the office liaising with contractors and hall bookers as well as coping with all the questions and jobs that we put her way. Thank you everybody and we hope that 2021 will be better for us and that we can gradually get back to some normality.

Elaine Wigington and Sadie Wright

FABRIC REPORT

This report on fabric, goods and ornaments of the church under "Section 5 of the care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction 1997" covers the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020.

CHURCH BUILDING –

- Tile, drainpipe and gutter repairs
- 2 small broken windows repaired
- Organ services
- Racking unit purchased for Porch for Food Bank donations
- Additional items of AV equipment purchased to enable live streaming of services
- New key safe purchased

CHURCH GROUNDS –

- New external lighting installed for car park and pathway at rear of church
- Maintenance team keep grass cut and grounds tidy
- Tree in Church carpark reshaped.

ST LAWRENCE CENTRE –

- Office redecorated and layout rearranged
- New key safe purchased

CHURCH HALL –

- Damaged roof tiles replaced and minor gutter repairs
- Lobbies and stairs decorated
- New side hall door fitted
- Replacement oven purchased and installed
- Replacement hinges fitted to main door
- Small key safe repositioned from back to side door and an additional one fitted.

FARTHING'S CLOSE –

- Completely redecorated internally
- New washing machine purchased
- Blind fitted to conservatory

OTHER –

- Boilers and water heaters serviced
- Fire inspection carried out and extinguishers serviced
- PAT electrical testing carried out.
- Inventory carried out.
- Trees removal in grounds near Scouts Hut.
- Scout Hut electrical works signed off October 2020 - we paid towards these electrical works.

Thank you to Gerry Edwards for leading the Premises team and to everyone who has helped to maintain the church and its buildings, in particular, Scott Boobier for organising and leading a regular maintenance team to look after the gardens and grounds, and Mike Williamson for taking on responsibility for keeping the Remembrance Garden tidy. Thank you also to Jenny A'Court our administrator for all her work with sourcing and liaising with contractors for the many different works required, often at very short notice.

Elaine Wigington – for and on behalf of Churchwardens

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The year started in January 2020 with deficit balance of £1,736 and has ended with a deficit balance of £39,726. Terry Smith was Treasurer until he resigned on 30 September and our thanks go to him for the work he did over three years. As nobody had come forward to replace him, the lot fell to a churchwarden and Sadie Wright was asked to take on the role. The remainder of the Finance Committee stayed in place with Jo Wong stepping back but continuing to give advice and help when needed, for which we were grateful. Christina Barham has joined the team (Alan Wright, Malcolm Bentote Sharon Fletcher and Arthur Plummer) to oversee the accounts and to do bank reconciliations etc. and Phil Howe has taken over as Stewardship Recorder from September. I am most grateful to all the Finance Committee for their commitment and assistance as well as to Jenny A'Court and Janet Williamson for their sterling work in the office. The PCC took the decision that the annual accounts should be prepared, as well as examined, by external accountants.

By March, the church was closed because of the pandemic with services being streamed; as a result, our finances began to change drastically with a large drop in collections and room letting fees. Once the impact of the pandemic was felt, an appeal was made to the congregation inviting them to contribute and around £8,000 was raised in April, which increased to £14,044 in total over the next few months. Terry Smith suggested the PCC should reduce Common Fund giving to the Diocese and this was then reduced by 25% from £7,100 to £5,325 per month for the remainder of the year. In the autumn, we were getting concerned about going into the red on our current account and took £50,000 from our deposit account to tide us over. This is from money in reserve for any planned major building works such as new heating and lighting.

Very few services were held live in church with congregations from March onwards and therefore very was received through plate collections. Those in the Stewardship scheme who paid by standing order continued with their payments with a few others sending in cheques to cover usual cash payments – for these we are most grateful. Again, many thanks to those who are in the Stewardship Scheme (127 in total); their giving went a long way towards keeping us afloat and I would ask that those who are not in the scheme consider joining. Payments may be made weekly, monthly, quarterly, or even annually, depending on how you organise your finances, either through the bank by standing order, which is preferable, or by numbered envelopes in the collection plate. Please speak to Sadie Wright or Phil Howe if you would like

further information about the scheme. Also, if you are a taxpayer, you can 'Gift Aid' your contribution and the church can reclaim tax at the rate of 25%.

Although the church was mainly closed throughout the year a lot of maintenance work was carried out, both planned and emergency. The cost of all this was approximately £15,219 and included larger jobs such as new lighting in the car park (£4,268), a new side door to the hall and repairing broken light fittings in church. Some cost was also incurred on work to trees.

Just a few figures for comparison:

	2019	2020
Overall income	£ 194,835	£ 131,424
Overall expenditure	£ 196,571	£ 171,150
Plate collections	£ 6, 448	£ 1,510
Covid-19 Appeal	-	£ 14,044
General maintenance	£ 14,915	£ 15,219
Room lettings	£ 59,221	£ 18,818
Closing position	(£ 1,736)	(£39,726)

The church is currently in a very difficult position – yes, thank goodness, we do have reserves but whilst we eat into them, we reduce the amount available for major work on the church. I thank everyone for their generosity, but I would also ask you to think seriously and prayerfully about joining the Stewardship Scheme and Gift Aid.

Sadie Wright

HEALTH AND SAFETY

No specific health and safety concerns were raised in 2020. The PCC discussed and agreed a new health and safety policy for the parish.

HILLINGDON DEANERY SYNOD

In 2020, only one face to face meeting of the Deanery Synod could be held, in February, before the arrival of the pandemic. The focus of the evening was prayer; various forms of prayer were discussed and 'prayer stations' were set up around the church for members to visit and explore. It made for an interesting and different evening.

Because of lockdown no meeting was held over the summer but in November the Synod AGM was held via Zoom to elect officers *etc.* At the St Lawrence APCM in October 2020 none of the four Deanery Synod representatives stood for re-election and Sadie Wright also retired from the post of Lay Chair, which she had held for about 15 years. Two new representatives were elected leaving two vacancies to be filled.

Sadie Wright

PCC AND COMMITTEES

The PCC was able to meet face to face twice, in January and March, before the first lockdown. In June, PCC business resumed remotely via Zoom with further, remote meetings of the full PCC taking place in September and November. The Standing Committee was convened on 4 occasions during 2020 to discuss urgent business relating to the impact of lockdown on church finances and to begin to think about the way forward for the interim ministry process. Several matters requiring urgent decisions were agreed via correspondence in line with changes to the Church Representation rules for conducting PCC business during the pandemic.

Given the wide range of PCC responsibilities, it has set up several committees to handle specific aspects of parish life. Each is responsible to the PCC which receives regular reports on their activities and decisions. The following committees met in 2020: Finance, Premises, Fellowship, Outreach and Communications. The Safeguarding and Health and Safety Committees did not meet but key policy documents for both areas were discussed and agreed by PCC. More information on the committees' work can be found in **Annex A**.

The following served on the PCC in 2020.

Parish Priest Rev'd Dr John Seymour (appointed 9.2.2020)

Assistant Priest Rev'd Julia Bevis-Knowles

Reader (LLM) Alan Wright

Churchwardens: Elaine Wigington
Mrs Sadie Wright

Members: Christina Barham (appointed 18.10.2020)
Dorothy Bentote
Malcolm Bentote (resigned 18.10.2020)
Claire Bishop (resigned 18.10.2020)
Scott Boobier (appointed 18.10.2020)
Elizabeth Clubb
Gerry Edwards (resigned 18.10.20, co-opted 1.11.20)
Darren Fletcher (appointed 18.10.20)
Robert Hinson
Judith Howe (appointed 18.10.20)
Mark Kimsey (resigned 18.10.20)
Gwenllian Leach
John Maxwell (resigned 1.8.20)
Christine Piper (resigned 18.10.20)
Didier Rouillon (appointed 1.11.20)
Julie Siddle (appointed 18.10.20)
Terence Smith (resigned 30.9.20)
Mr Mike Williamson

SAFEGUARDING

No safeguarding issues relating to the parish were raised during 2020. The PCC conducted a Parish Safeguarding Self-Audit and agreed the PCC Safeguarding Statement in June, as required by the Diocese of London.

Reports on the activities of church groups and groups affiliated to the church can be found respectively at **Annex B** and **Annex C**

CORE PCC COMMITTEES

FINANCE

The Treasurer's financial review is included in the main report at page 13.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The committee was not formally convened in 2020; relevant business was referred to the full PCC.

PREMISES

The Premises Committee is responsible to the PCC for the day-to-day maintenance of the buildings, the church and surrounding grounds including the car park, St Lawrence Centre, the hall and the shipping containers and for referring significant issues to the Churchwardens. Works in conjunction with the maintenance team and the Parish Administrator.

Over the last year the Premises Committee has considered several issues affecting the church and its associated buildings:

- It has continued to ensure that the Church and all other buildings comply with all statutory health and safety requirements and to maintain a detailed and up-to-date schedule of all statutory testing, which is available to view in the Parish Office.
- It has conducted regular checks of the condition of all buildings on the site and set out all identified defects in a managed Action Plan.
- As agreed by the PCC and following a tender process, it has appointed a contractor to replace the external lighting around the church and car park. All the work was completed by the end of May.
- As confirmed by the annual statutory inspections undertaken in 2020, the church's electrical and heating systems are at the end of their life need replacing as a matter of some urgency. The PCC agreed that investigations into replacements should commence.
- It has agreed a Planned Maintenance Programme to ensure that the church buildings and grounds are kept in good condition. The first monthly maintenance working party came together in December.

Since the first lockdown in March the committee has met on a regular basis through Zoom meetings which have proven to be very successful and have allowed all members to continue to take part.

Gerry Edwards

SAFEGUARDING

There has been a lot of work happening this year driven by Fr John following his appointment as our Interim Priest. We initially met in person and then continued with regular online Zoom meetings. Work on producing job descriptions for several of the volunteer roles, together with the relevant policy, procedures and protocols relating to them, was commenced.

All members of the team were encouraged to undertake the Basic Awareness safeguarding training, which is available online from the Diocese. Records of training completed by them together with those of other church members, should all be sent to Elaine Wigington, who is keeping a central record. This will also identify when refresher training is due.

A Parish Safeguarding Self Audit and PCC Safeguarding Statement, as required by the Diocese, was completed in June and an action plan produced setting out the areas that needed action along with target dates for completion. Some of this work has been completed and other work is ongoing.

There have been several team changes during the year. Katy Hinson resigned from her role as Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO), Claire Bishop as Children's Champion and Dan Bishop as Youth Worker. We were pleased to welcome Christine Edwards as our new PSO. She is very experienced in safeguarding and at present has been working on role descriptions for various roles in church. Liz Chandler and Janina Zachopoulos-Butler both agreed to take on the roles of Evidence Checkers. However, we are still in need of a Lead Recruiter so that we can start to process the many required DBS checks.

Further support is needed and if anybody, ideally with some knowledge of safeguarding processes or a willingness to learn, feels able to consider this could they please contact either Christine, Fr John or myself.

All work is carried out in accordance with guidelines set out in the Diocesan Handbook for Safeguarding Officers and there is comprehensive information available on the Diocesan website.

Elaine Wigington

OTHER PCC COMMITTEES

COMMUNICATIONS

The new Communications Committee consists of John Bingham, Jo Bursford, John Chrczconowicz, Judith Howe, Gwenllian Williams and Sadie Wright. At the first meeting in December, the committee discussed their first ideas on how to improve the effectiveness of communications within the parish and wider community. It was agreed that effective communication should be Simple, Immediate, Positive and Personal and that those qualities should inform our discussions and decisions as we move forward. The group agreed that its key objective was to develop and implement a communications strategy/action plan by December 2021. As part of that work, the committee would need to define who the church wanted to communicate with and agree an approach that met the needs of a diverse audience. A survey of churchgoers would be conducted as a first step, providing data and opinions on which to build the new strategy.

Judith Howe

FELLOWSHIP

We started the year with a very good Supper Quiz, led this time by Robert and Katy Hinson. Although only 54 people attended, we raised £283 for church funds. Our thanks to them for such a good variety of questions.

In February, a popular 'bacon roll Sunday' was held before the beginning of Lent. Then, in early March a Line Dancing fundraising evening was held, led by Stephanie Lindley who is one of our hall hirers. She did not charge us for this and sold many tickets to her class members who, together with a few from St Lawrence, enjoyed a successful evening, which raised £729 towards the hall decorating costs. Pizza and hot dogs were served and proved very popular.

The arrival of the pandemic meant that other events planned for 2020 could not take place but the committee hopes to be able to hold further events in the not-too-distant future. As always, if anybody has suggestions for events and activities or would like to join the team, please contact Elaine Wigington.

OUTREACH

The Outreach Committee met face to face in January and continued to explore potential areas for outreach activity in line with its terms of reference. The first lockdown meant that no further progress was made until after the October APCM.

Following the appointment of Darren Fletcher as Chair, the committee met again in December with a focus on charitable giving and on how best to engage with the local community to ensure that our outreach activity responds to local need. It was agreed that the committee's first major task for 2021 should be to conduct a community audit based on 3 key principles – meeting local community needs, avoiding duplicating services and providing evidence to potential funders.

Other areas discussed included our involvement with the Hillingdon Food Bank, promotion of Fairtrade; and boosting our support for charities.

Looking ahead, the committee is conscious of the very significant impact of the pandemic on people's lives. This is something that will be take account of and reflect on as we start to plan and develop new outreach activity in the light of our community audit.

Darren Fletcher

YOUTH, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Until the 2020 APCM, the Youth, Children and Families committee had been dormant, missing a chair. Its one PCC member, Claire Bishop, stood down from the PCC in October 2020.

With Dan Bishop having left post as youth worker to train for ordained ministry in August 2020, the most immediate tasks facing the committee were to explore how to replace Dan's ministry. The PCC directed that a review of Children and Youth ministry more broadly should be undertaken.

The committee's first meeting considered the report which Dan had written as a review of his post, alongside exploring the history of youth and children's ministry at St Lawrence. As seen and articulated by one participant: 'the tensions apparent in the parish between those leading children and youth activities and 'those responsible for running the church [who] were not happy to embrace youth and children's work.'

The committee formulated actions to take place following the meeting (immediately in 2021) with a view to making an appointment for the start of Autumn 2021:

- Generate questions for a focus group on children and youth ministry
- Arrange to meet with focus group
- Develop a congregational questionnaire.

It is of note that youth and children's Sunday groups have been suspended during lockdown. Online meetings with youth continued during Dan's time in post in 2020. Children's activities were available on the parish website for part of lockdown and seasonal children's activities also took place online throughout 2020.

John Seymour

ANNEX B - CHURCH GROUPS

ALTAR SERVERS

Our worship at the 8am and 10am eucharists continued to benefit from the ministry of servers, including a number of young people in junior roles, chalice assistants and intercessors, until the church was closed in the middle of March. When the church reopened intercessions from September to December were led by lay people at the 10am services. Thanks go to all who have contributed; we hope that they will be keen to resume their respective roles when the church reopens.

Ian Woodhouse

CHOIR AND BAND

It was a year largely where the joy of sung music at services has been restricted to a small choir or band of just 3 or 4 members during the summer and autumn easing of lockdowns, and we have not enjoyed a full choir since March 2020. However, we keep in touch via WhatsApp and emails, and there is huge enthusiasm to get back to live performance when allowed.

Organ playing has been covered by Heather Chamberlain, Ian Woodhouse and Duncan Sykes throughout all but the very first lockdown period. One can feel very exposed without a choir to cover up those original musical deviations!

During 2020 we lost Pam Gough and remember her with much love for many years of involvement and support for the choir.

Duncan Sykes

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EASTCOTE (CTE)

The following activities have taken place during the pandemic. CTE chair, Jane Inglese, emailed a meditation for Wednesday evenings enabling the Lent Group to continue throughout the year. The usual street bucket collections for Christian Aid could not take place but a donation of £50 was made by cheque via St Lawrence. An Extraordinary AGM was held through Zoom 23rd June. A video by Medaille Trust charity (combating modern day slavery) was put on the web site. For Remembrance Day, Graeme Gibaut delivered a wreath informally and CTE donated a further £30 to the Royal British Legion. On 14th December a virtual carol Service was broadcast live on Zoom and could be viewed on the CTE website until Christmas.

FLOWER GUILD

The flower guild has, like everyone, had a very different time in 2020 but we are continuing to provide beautiful flower arrangements every week even though we are down to just one display for under the altar and, at the moment, a much smaller team of people. We are looking forward to a return to normal and

being able to decorate the Church as it should be decorated. Hopefully by Christmas we will be able to hold our very popular wreath-making workshop again!

Jane Williams

MARTHA SCHEME

This scheme continues to be serving the congregation but during the past year, bearing in mind the restrictions of the pandemic, it has been unable to offer the same help as previously.

At present the pairing scheme '*at such a time as this*', set up at the beginning of the pandemic to offer help and support, has kept contacts alive with help given eg phone chats, shopping, forwarding notices and Fr John's 'Reflections' to those with no ready access to computers. As with all other aspects of our church life, the Martha Scheme too is in the process of ensuring it meets safeguarding requirements and will be adapted to function again as life returns to normal.

OLDER PERSON'S MINISTRY

Book Club

Like so many clubs, the Book Club has been affected by the Covid restrictions, and we were able to meet only once, thanks to Janet Williamson, as we sat out in her delightful garden. As usual, we enjoyed our discussion, listening to all opinions. We were very appreciative of our excellent refreshments. If the Government's 'Roadmap' out of the pandemic stays on course, we hope to be able to meet again in 2021 when all restrictions will hopefully be lifted.

Elizabeth Clubb

Tuesday Lunch Club

We managed to hold two lunches before everything stopped with the arrival of Covid.

These social gatherings are popular and attended by approximately 30 people (plus a team of helpers) who enjoy a choice of hot meal and dessert. There is always a table quiz to encourage conversation and a raffle with many small prizes. In January we arranged for a musical entertainment from Southbourne WI Songsters to follow the meal, which was enjoyed by all.

These bi-monthly gatherings have been missed and it is hoped that they can recommence in 2021. We would love to have more help and if anybody is able to join this team, please contact me to discuss what help you can give.

Elaine Wigington

Crafties

Sadly, Crafties also had to cease meeting in March. These weekly get togethers are very sociable and are missed but several ladies continued charitable knitting whilst in 'lockdown' at home. They look forward to getting together again next year.

PARISH LINKS SCHEME

No decisions have been made about our parish links scheme. There were 18 coordinators working in pairs covering 9 areas in the parish and one group for those people living outside the parish. Some members of

groups do keep in touch as friends but no groups meet socially. There are still some new members of the congregation who have not been attached to a group.

Barbara Plummer (Lay Pastoral Assistant)

ANNEX C - AFFILIATED GROUPS

Film Club

In normal times the St. Lawrence Film Club meets on six Tuesday afternoons a year in the Church Hall to watch a film followed by an opportunity to talk about it and catch up with other members over some light refreshments. As we all know 2020 was not a normal year, but we did have one meeting on 11th February when we watched the film *Stan & Ollie*.

This was an affectionate portrait of Laurel and Hardy in the 1950's when, in the twilight of their careers they toured British Variety theatres, and after an unpromising start, their friendship and performances shine through making their audience's laugh and winning their affection.

We hope that we will be able to have further meetings in the not-too-distant future. With the current restrictions July would seem to be the earliest month that the club could start up again, but this would also depend on there being enough help available to look after our guests. We would be very grateful for more volunteers for and to assist with serving the refreshments and clearing up afterwards. If you can offer this help, please contact Sylvia Hooper (020 8866 4496).

Sylvia & Alan Hooper

ST LAWRENCE PLAYERS

2020 started with little anticipation of what lay ahead; in the beginning of February, we performed what turned out to be our only production of the year, Alan Bennett's version of *Wind in The Willows*. The cast (of many!) included young people from the parish and was also the first outing for some new members; in particular we welcomed Dan Bishop, Luke Pedley and Matthew Moulder to our group in the roles of three of the main four characters. It was a fun and colourful production, and it is a sadness that circumstances prevented further productions.

The onset of the first lockdown meant that we have not met in person since the middle of March, but we have been holding twice-weekly Zoom meetings throughout the year, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We decided early on that these would continue, and by keeping them (largely) to a standard 40 minutes, we have managed to keep them fresh and often lively. It has proved a conduit for many members to keep in touch, support each other, and have a lot of fun. Main activities comprise play readings, quizzes, online games (Countdown and Scategories have proved most successful), poetry evenings, and just the occasional night of reminiscences. Notably, we held two evenings remembering our friends Estelle Dunham and "Tag" Taggart, both longstanding members and, more importantly, friends, whom we lost during the course of the year.

We continued to support the church as we were able as well as our two chosen charities for 2020 – Orchyd, which provides residential holidays locally for children with disabilities, and CVSS (Colne Valley Special Sailors). Whilst much of our fundraising would normally take place during productions, this year many members chose to divert their subscriptions and we were able to donate £400 to each of those charities. We will continue to support the same charities in 2021.

Many other traditions, such as our summer visit to the Chichester Festival Theatre, our annual dinner, and support of church events at the May and Christmas Fairs, will return and hopefully soon. In the meantime, membership of St Lawrence Players remains something that can be for everyone; performance, backstage work and technical involvement are all components, but friendship and a strong sense of community within both the church and the local community remain the cornerstones of our group, and especially so in these challenging times.

ST LAWRENCE SOCIAL CLUB

Due to the arrival of the Covid virus, only two meetings were held in 2020 – in January we had a speaker on the GCHQ and in February a speaker on Wainwright in The Lake District.

However, the future of the club was already in some doubt with most of the committee due to retire at the March AGM. Unless we could get members to consider joining the committee, the club would have to close. Despite exhaustive canvassing, nobody came forward to join the two members of the current committee who were prepared to stay on. The committee held an online meeting and drafted a letter to all members explaining the situation and giving various options. The outcome was that unfortunately the club would have to close.

A multiple-choice letter was issued to all members asking for their preferences for what should happen to the funds left in the bank. Based on the feedback, it was agreed that 50% of the funds would go to St Lawrence Church, and the remainder divided equally between three chosen charities – Michael Sobell House, MacMillan Cancer Support and The British Heart Foundation.

Thus, the venture that started in 1989 as part of Father David Hayes 'Forward Together' project sadly ended in September 2020. It will be missed by many but maybe a Social Club in a different format will be formed in the future.

Terry Wigington, Chairman

Uniformed Organisations

6th Eastcote Brownies

The Brownies and The Owls started 2020 excited by what the year was going to bring, as we were now fully engaged with our new guiding programme, for all the girls in the girl guiding movement. The programme is divided into 6 themes and has several challenges within each theme. So we started with "Know Myself." The Brownies were creative making and drawing their own coat of arms to link together their dreams, family, favourite activities, to place and fly on their own flag. They completed challenges about all different emotions and completed games to fit in with the challenges such as "brownie buddy" "Mime Time" and "Brownie Pocket Challenge." The girls also learnt about how to travel on public transport safely, which later helped the brownies, as we were invited to go and visit the Mayor of Hillingdon in February, where we travelled by train. The Brownies had a wonderful time and got to sit in the council chambers and ask questions to learn all about the history of Hillingdon, the Mayor and his role. During February we also celebrated "Thinking Day" a special day in our guiding calendar. The brownies completed the challenges of "Lend a Hand" "Guiding in a Bubble", by blowing bubbles through a straw using washing up liquid and water, they had to form a bubble within a bubble several times and learning all about Lord and Lady Baden Powell. We also attended Church Parade in February for "Candlemas" .

In March we enrolled our new brownies and then like everyone else, we were placed into Lockdown and were unable to continue with our face-to-face meetings. As leaders we had to now adapt to "Zoom" meetings and put a programme together, so as we could still take the brownies through their journey and still meet them to see them each week. The brownies started to work on their "Stay at Home Challenge" where they completed crafts such as making their trefoil badges out of items they found at home, creating

a piece of window art such as a Rainbow, creating the word “Eastcote” from letters and items that they would see on their daily walk. They made a Den or Tent to sleep in overnight and wrote a new campfire song to sing to everyone. They also wrote to all keyworkers to thank them for keeping us safe. They also designed a badge for our district competition, which will be created for all the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to wear. We played different games such as Brownie Bingo, Scavenger Hunts, Knife Fork and Spoon, Pass the Pen, Runner Bean, Acting Games, Detective Games and many other fun ones, which we adapted for our online meetings.

In June the Brownies completed their Collectors Badge and completed a “Show and Tell” night, where they told everyone about their chosen collection. We also had a craft night where the brownies created homemade cards and made Salt Dough, in which they placed their own handprint, painted it, carved their name under the handprint and gave it to their dad for Father’s Day, along with the homemade card. We ended the Summer Term by going to a virtual festival and a virtual campfire, although we were still unable to meet, it was just so nice to see everyone on screen taking part in all the activities on the day and singing campfire songs from their own homemade dens and tents. Over the summer holidays the Brownies were completing their “Grown your own” interest badge, where they successfully looked after and grew their own vegetables, flowers and designed their own dream garden.

In September we continued with our meetings on Zoom, due to the high levels of the virus and the availability of leaders. The Owls planned another fun term with the help of the Brownies and we decided to work towards the “Be Well” theme. Many challenges were completed, which included exercise, healthy eating and drinking plenty of water. The brownies worked towards their “Pudsey Bear” challenge badge, where they had to complete a different exercise every day for a week, the length of the activity was equal to their age in minutes. They completed a run, hula hooping, juggling, yoga, skipping, walking, catching and kicking a ball. In November we made poppy remembrance wreaths to hang on front doors and foam poppies to wear or hang on school bags. On Remembrance Sunday we attend our District virtual Remembrance Event, with all the other members of our guiding family.

In December the Brownies finished and gained their Be Well Theme award and we ended the term with Christmas crafts. The Brownies made Christmas Crackers, sequin Christmas characters to hang on their trees, Reindeer bags, Santa Countdown advent clocks and Chocolate Christmas puddings made from chocolate tea cakes.

This year has been a challenge for everyone, the brownies have enjoyed the activities on zoom as have the leaders. We are grateful that the wonders of technology have allowed us to still meet with the brownies, but we cannot wait to get back to face to face unit meetings and back to all the activities we have missed doing like our day trips, camps, church parades and district outings. Let’s hope that 2021 will bring that wish for everyone, as we have many things planned for the forthcoming terms and all the brownies at 6th Eastcote.

Jackie Smith

3RD Eastcote Guides

The year started off well with lots of plans for the year ahead, including a weekend camp at Girlguiding’s Willow Tree Centre, Harefield and Girlguiding weekend festival in Hampshire. The Guides selected the badges to focus on for the coming term and produced posters on ‘What it means to be part of Girlguiding’ Our next topic was researching the impact of plastic and microplastics pollution on the environment and they took part in the Girlguiding Plastic Pledge to reduce their use of single use plastics to earn their badge.

We had enjoyable evenings making pancakes for Shrove Tuesday and had our first of two evenings dedicated to making Mother's Day crafts, then everything changed!

Lockdown stopped us in our tracks, and there was a sharp learning curve to get our sessions online. We started in earnest after the Easter holidays and continued our programme virtually. We enjoyed a virtual weekend camp in April where the girls either camped in the garden or made a den indoors and prepared either a campfire evening meal or breakfast.

We set the girls regular challenges they learnt the alphabet using British Sign Language, made origami items, baked cakes and cookies and we shared their photos via WhatsApp. The girls made their own bingo cards and we played bingo online, they also enjoyed taking part in some done fun quizzes and scavenger hunts. We made a lovely video where the girls made a red heart and sent video clips of 'passing it on' representing sharing love and being kind, this was put to music and shared via WhatsApp. National Girlguiding hosted events during the year to which the girls were invited such as 'Adventures at Home' and our District arranged 'Share the light' a virtual camp with lots of singing in June and a remembrance service in November.

We had cookery evenings making pasta dough, cupcakes, as well as Bollywood and Cha Cha dancing, escape room adventure, as well as concentrating on our Innovate Skills Badge learning new skills and techniques. We managed to get two live outdoor sessions in the Church grounds before Christmas; an outdoor cookout (chocolate bananas and s'mores) and adventures after dark with torches and sparklers. We have welcomed new Guides to our unit throughout the year and have been really pleased with the behaviour, resilience and engagement the girls have demonstrated this year and look forward to being able to resume our face-to-face meetings when restrictions allow.

Deena, Clare, Chetna and Maria

4TH Eastcote (St. Lawrence) Scout Group

4th Eastcote Scout Group is one of the largest in the Ruislip, Eastcote & Northwood district with two Beaver sections (aged 6-8), two Cub sections (8-10) and one Scout section (10-14) meeting each evening of the night during the week at the Scout hut. We are open to both boys and girls wishing to get outdoors, learn new skills and experience lots of adventures!

The impact of covid has dramatically transformed how we delivered scouting to young people in the community. After pausing in-person sessions in mid-March, we were able to get all sections up and running weekly zoom sessions from around May. From September to December, following relaxing of covid guidelines, we were able to run smaller group sized sessions in person and take the opportunity to support our young members, plus give out hundreds of badges they had earned during lockdown! Despite the challenges of zoom sessions and thanks to the hard work and dedication of our leaders, we were able to run several fantastic online events:

- Beaver space themed virtual sleepover
- Cub Glastonbury virtual camp
- Scout Clay modelling evening
- Explored the history of 4th Eastcote Scout Group led by two of our members from the 1940s

We were only able to run one camp, our traditional 'Chilly Goat Camp' in January 2020 which was attended by myself plus four brave scouts! We took part in lots of scouting activities such as climbing, potholing and

crate stacking. The weather was average for January with frost overnight, so hot chocolate and English breakfast was most appreciated by all scouts! Looking to 2021, we have pre-booked a few sites and once restrictions ease, we hope to continue our regular camps!

While 2020 has been challenging, it has also presented a good opportunity for the group and our volunteers to work together to improve the scout grounds and scout hut. We have cleared back the brambles and removed unwanted clutter to open up the site. In the scout hut, with the support of the PCC, we have replaced the electrics inside and outside to improve brightness of the lighting and use more environmentally efficient lights. We have also carried out a full repaint inside and outside and repaired walls. We are also very much grateful for projects led by the PCC to improve safety and security with new lighting in the car park and along the path to the scout hut and for the volunteers who have helped cut back foliage around the site. Looking to 2021, we look forward to continuing to work jointly with PCC to improve facilities and look at options to replace the scout hut, which will shortly be reaching its 75th birthday!

We are hoping to return to running in person-sessions soon and begin to recover from last year. We have unfortunately seen a 20% reduction in our youth membership to 82 active young people aged 6-14 (as of January 2021), with the biggest challenge to recruit new Beavers to the group. If you know any families with children aged 6-8 who are keen to enjoy scouting activities, please drop us an e-mail at gsl4theastcotescouts@gmail.com. We have spaces for boys and girls in both our Beaver sections who meet on Monday and Wednesday between 6-7pm.

On the leadership front, we continue to look for volunteers to join and support our Scout section aged 10-14 which meet on Friday. It is a great chance to get outdoors, teach new skills and make a difference for young people in the community. Any new volunteers would be supported by an experienced team, with training and uniform all paid for. If you are interested in taking on any sort of role within our group please drop me an e-mail at gsl4theastcotescouts@gmail.com

I would like to thank all those who have helped the Scout Group over the last year; especially our team of 24 volunteer Leaders and the Executive Committee. To stay up to date with all we do or to find out more about helping the Scout Group join our Facebook page at facebook.com/4thEastcotescouts