

St John's Notting Hill

Community Audit

May 2021

Overview

St John's Notting Hill was built in 1845 on the top of Notting Hill. It was designed to be the architectural and spiritual heart of the community and has remained so since then. The 21st century saw new energy in the role of the parish church in serving the community, particularly through the restoration of its historic organ, the renewal of its musical life and outreach and through an ever-increasing use by the community since the new community rooms were created. The church is open 7 days a week and is currently planning its post COVID life with energy and resilience, particularly in its focus on children's work and expanding the use of the community rooms by an even wider cross section of society. Current plans in RESURGAM will enhance the facilities and ambience of the church in its outreach to the community, offering first class facilities.

There are several worshipping communities within the Church including St John's Notting Hill, the Filipino Chaplaincy, the Farsi community and the Cantonese worshipping group. The congregations are attracted from throughout London. Regular worshippers do not necessarily live the parish boundaries.

The parish straddles two wards within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea - Norland and Pembridge wards, each of which have two local ward councillors with whom we have close links and who we have consulted in the preparation of this audit.

Stage One - audit of the local congregations

Our audit of the local congregations consisted of a questionnaire conducted over three weeks. In the questionnaire we asked the following three questions, the results of which are summarised below:

What is the most exciting thing which has happened in this church in the last 5 years?

- development of the music during the services - stunning - enhanced by the renovated organ
- the intercultural nature of our congregation
- instigation of the community café
- art exhibitions within the Sacred Space Gallery
- development of the grounds involving the Persian community
- community activities taking place in the church
- courage to stay open during the pandemic
- helping shine a light on Christian persecution
- growing congregation is much appreciated
- daily opening of the church
- development of the Filipino community - comments included: the Filipino congregation wishes to extend our gratitude to St John's parish for the support received for the Filipino priest assigned to the chaplaincy program and his family
- development of the west end of the church and the undercroft allowing community groups appropriate space.

Looking ahead, what would you most like to happen here at St John's in the next 5 years?

- Many responses emphasised the need for work with children/youth, especially offering support the most vulnerable, including after school activities, e.g. reading assistance for young children, with the possibility of getting a youth worker. Junior church should be further developed, a youth choir instigated and include outreach to local schools.
- Offering further assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and persecuted people
- a need to reach out to the elderly and those without access to internet connections
- a need to reduce our carbon footprint by more innovative heating and lighting techniques
- other environmentally focussed activities, e.g. sustainable living, and continued exploration of the painted ceiling
- continuing ministry to the Filipino community through social media platforms to reach isolated members of the congregation and those who are not able to join the Holy Eucharist in person, due to geographical distance or work schedules
- focus more on children's work as the third generation Filipino children are growing in the community (safeguarding, language and bible teaching)
- find new ways to support Filipino overseas workers or diaspora in their journey here in United Kingdom

- English courses for Farsi speakers
- Sport & music
- Simultaneous translation for Persian speakers
- Recreational trips

What changes in the community will bring new opportunities for ministry and how will our building need to change?

- there is a need for beautiful surroundings and music to attract a more varied group of people and to uplift their spirituality develop redecoration and wooden ceiling
- and so there is a need to improve acoustics of the church and, for future concerts, the lighting and sound systems which will help to attract a more varied group of people
- there is a need to encourage the congregation and community to get further involved and to build the future congregation by encouraging younger people (under 30s)
- perhaps to have services outside if weather permits
- increase income for the Parish
- use of rooms for the children's work program, bible studies and counselling for members affected by covid virus or loneliness brought by the distance of the families.
- focus on online coverage of the Filipino mass through online platforms like, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.
- use of rooms for community activities, especially for refugees and asylum seekers
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Stage Two - Wider Community Audit

As a result of phase one of the restoration project we have developed the Undercroft and created flexible meeting spaces in west end of the church. This has enabled us to welcome more community organisations which currently include:

Children's groups using the Space, the Church or the Undercroft:

- Chelsea Young Writers
- Blue Shift Coding
- Acorn Nursery
- Teddy's Playhouse
- Bach to Baby
- Kensington Ballet
- Funky Moves dance group
- Elma Music
- Homework Group
- Individual children's parties
- Cooking class

Community Groups:

- National Childbirth Trust
- Anglican and Eastern Churches Association
- Ladbroke Square Garden Committee
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Filipino Language Classes
- English classes for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Japanese Ikebana classes
- Joy Mandarin Academy
- Probation Service
- Progressing Prisoners Maintaining Innocence
- Regular concerts
- Art exhibitions
- Organ recitals
- Silent films
- Friends of Kensington Day Centre
- Political Hustings
- Polling Station
- Zumba Class

Christian Worship:

- Filipino Chaplaincy
- Persian Chaplaincy
- Cantonese worship group

- Ukrainian Baptist bible study

The Resurgam stage of the restoration of St. John's church will help to create a more flexible and welcoming space which will enable us to develop our relationship with a wider range of community organisations.

Stage 3 - Liaison with the local representatives

For this stage of the audit we have

- Consulted with local Ward councillors
- Referred to the RBK&C Pembridge and Norland Ward Profiles
- Assessed the local community organisations with whom we can continue to build meaningful relationships

The parish sits within the most densely populated borough in London and population reflects the broad ethnic groups of RBK&C. In the 2011 census 55% of the residents identify as Christian which was a decrease of 8.2% from the 2001 census. The parish has high levels of economically active residents.

The following is a more detailed list of local community facilities and organisations

Schooling: Acorn based at St. John's for pre school children

Activities for 13 - 19 year olds: Pupil Referral Unit in St. Anne's Road
Rugby Portobello
Kensington Temple

After School Provision: Rugby Portobello
Harrow Cub
Clement James Centre

Police Presence: Police Station in Ladbroke Road - now a
Community Police Unit

BME Support None

Resident Involvement: Kensington Society
Ladbroke Association
Clarendon Cross Residents Association
Norland Neighbourhood Plan
Lansdowne RA - Garden Committee
Elgin Crescent RA - Garden Committee
Camden Hill Towers Resident Association
Ladbroke Association - Sophia Lambert best contact
Pembridge Society
Ladbroke Square Gardens Amenity Society

Debt Advice: Relevant CAB is based in Chelsea

Employment Advice Services: None

Green Space: Squares (Private)
Avondale Park

	Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool/Gym Ladbroke Square Gardens
Recycling Provision:	Royal Crescent Henry Dickens Estate Avondale Park
Sports Fitness Classes/ Leisure Facilities:	Henry Dickens RA Hall Avondale Park - tennis, football, martial arts Private Gym - Lancaster Road
Community Hall:	St. John's Undercroft Ukraine Centre Italian School
Training Courses:	Clement James Centre
ESOL:	Westway
Elderly Support:	Shepherd Trust Octavia Hill Abbey Homes (Penzance Place) Chartwell House (private) Library - Not in the parish
GPS	Portland Road Avondale Park Road St. Charles Hospital
Health Professionals	Pharmacy - Holland Park Avenue Chiropractor - ? Clarendon House
Mental Health Provision	St Charles Hospital
Disabled/Learning/ Eating Provision:	Council responsible - Westway Trust

Conclusion

By conducting this audit we have had the opportunity to review our presence within the local and wider community which is reflected in the Parish's Mission Action Plan. It has helped us to appreciate the positive impact our presence in the area. It has also helped us to identify some development areas, for example, youth, elderly, music, lighting and the need for us to improve our communication with the local community and neighbours