



**ST JOHN'S
CHURCH**
HOVE

At the Heart of Hove

Action Plan 2021-24

Introduction

This plan sets out the aims of St Johns over the next three years: 2021-24. It puts into words what the people at St Johns believe are our priorities for our part in Hove, to support and nurture our community at the heart of Hove.

It comes as we start to review and rebuild what we do and how, following the impact of a global pandemic, reflecting and channelling all that has taught us about our relationships with ourselves, with our close companions and neighbours and in terms of our responsibilities to wider society.

Using those three lenses, it is organised into three parts: Looking Forward; Looking Out and Looking In. And it is a dynamic, inclusive document, designed to invite you to join our team here and be a part of all we bring to Hove and all that you can bring to broaden our community.

A Foreword from our Vicar

*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. **Romans 12: 9-11***

Our Diocesan of Chichester asks us to reflect on the ‘four names’ of the Church, based on the Creed: **One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic**, and ask us to see this as the ‘**four mores**’.

What does that mean in a concrete way for a parish like ours?

Unity is vitally important – amongst ourselves (relationships), our procedures (good administration of property etc.) and with the local community. Christ said, that by our unity everyone will know that we are his disciples. **That is already a massive strength of this community!** But, rooted in the Eucharist and Common Prayer, how can we build that even more effectively among ourselves and into the wider community?

Holy: by our life of worship and prayer through which the Holy Spirit transforms, us we open ourselves as a community to the service of others – whether believers or not. **We are a strong praying community already!** But how can we foster a creative and imaginative Christian lifestyle – holiness, a living relationship with God – in a way that is attractive to others around us?

Catholic: the word ‘catholic’ means, ‘inclusive and embracing’ – open to all truth, all goodness, because all truth and goodness is a trace of God in the world. **The parish is everyone who lives within our boundaries.** How can we become more open, more inclusive, more welcoming to everyone around us?

Apostolic: an apostle is sent. As vicar, I have been sent here by the Spirit and so have all of us to share the Good news of the Gospel. That’s not shouting in the streets or handing out leaflets but what a hymn says: ‘They’ll know we are Christians by our love!’

Let us set out - together with Christ - trusting that God is with us on this journey

Looking Forwards – *More Open, More Holy*

We believe that St Johns is and will continue to be a key part of the community in Hove. To do that, it needs to continue to grow, to maintain and build on the many services needed in our community here; to work with the wider Deanery and Diocese to support our wider community there; and through that to deliver the love of God in practice.

- 1) We will develop and deliver activities that are most needed locally, through understanding our community and how it is changing (Strategic Development Funding support)
- 2) We will find new ways to reach out to our local community by linking effectively with other agencies who provide help and support locally
- 3) We will explore and target what the Diocese and wider Church can offer to help us deliver this plan, and what we can bring to them to support its wider work effectively. (Living Faith courses etc, Synods)
- 4) We will make our church more visible and attractive, building on our strong and established reputation for welcoming all, and celebrating our diversity at the centre of Hove
- 5) We will explore and develop existing and new technologies to extend our outreach, and to broaden the way we deliver our faith and service (Strategic Development Funding support)
- 6) We will look to utilising local press and media opportunities to draw attention to community issues, events and opportunities and to reach a wider audience in the community
- 7) We will celebrate our community and share our joy in worshipping together through variety in events built around and by our congregation and neighbours
- 8) We will find ways to build our income in order to sustain and develop our services to the parish and the Diocese

Looking Out – *More Open, More Apostolic*

To bring the best to Hove and to our Church, we need to work in unity and harmony with the many other groups committed to delivering to the local community. In a densely populated, small area, with a largely working age population many in individual households, our energy needs to focus on reaching out in a variety of ways and with other partners to meet those needs.

- 1) We will build and strengthen our relationship with the Cornerstone Community Centre, playing an active role in its management and continuing to subsidise its premises to provide a range of community activities and needs.
- 2) We will build and strengthen our relationship with the Hop50+, to provide for the older, less able and often isolated population, continuing to subsidise its premises for those purposes
- 3) We will work with other providers in Brighton and Hove to deliver help for the homeless community
- 4) We will include the Befrienders service regularly in our prayers and at an annual service, encouraging greater contribution to the isolated in our community throughout the parish

- 5) We will continue to work and share our worship with the YMCA, developing new ways to support them in the work they do with disadvantaged younger people
- 6) We will look to increase our charitable giving, particularly to local issues, in a variety of ways

Looking In – *More Catholic*

To support all of the work we want to do in the community and for the Church, we need to prioritise our own community at St Johns too. As well as continuing to share the love and joy of our faith through continuous strengthening of our forms of worship and prayer, we need to keep at the heart of that the call to service, so that we can truly deliver that Love to the wider community.

- 1) We will develop our confidence in prayer, encouraging deeper faith and commitment to the church through for example Study Groups and Development Events
- 2) We will review and refresh our form of worship, building and strengthening our core of a 'middle-way' style and variety of worship which appeals to a diverse audience
- 3) We will build our pastoral care, extending our welcome and fellowship into the homes of those unable to join us in the church, encouraging members of our community to regularly contact, visit and, where requested, arrange home communion
- 4) We will promote opportunities to help individuals to develop their own faith and forms of worship, and to take part in a variety of opportunities to support the work the Church delivers to its own and the wider community
- 5) We will develop new ways to help members to understand our finances and to explore new ways to encourage and broaden giving to the church and charitable organisations
- 6) We will use the lessons of the pandemic to continue to deliver to our community in diverse and safe ways and to consider their wider needs for support both in the building and beyond.