



*Patronal
Festival
inside*

st JOHN[†]s

Living God's Love

Parish Magazine

SUMMER 2025

*What's going on in
St John's and Southdown*

high summer
the gatekeeper and the admiral
come to call

Haiku by Susan Lee Kerr. First published in Presence Issue 80, November 2024. Haiku in English are based on a Japanese form of poetry, briefly conveying a moment of awareness of nature or human life.

Thoughtful, quietly spiritual, this page in the magazine is intended as a space for reflection. St John's Church and its Remembrance Garden is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm for anyone who wants a quiet place for personal reflection.

st JOHN'S

Living God's Love

SUMMER 2025

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Vicar's Welcome

Welcome to the Summer Edition of St John's Parish Magazine. Do have a look inside for details of our 11.00am Patronal Festival on 22nd June (with annual Parish BBQ in the Vicarage Garden), details of all our Junior and Mini Church dates, the Grove School Summer Festival, as well as lots more. We are also trialling a children's activity page, so do let us know if you (or your children) like it. We are really fortunate that we can deliver all this to your door for free, but did you wonder how that is possible, and how a church is funded? Our PCC Treasurer explains on page 17. Enjoy reading, and if there is anything local you think we should include for our next edition, do let us know.



With blessings,

*Revd Tim Vickers
Vicar of St John's Harpenden*

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Summer of music at St John's

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Meet Revd Philip Green

Guest preacher at St John's Patronal Festival

Philip enjoys leading worship in a range of different contexts and churches, from BCP Holy Communion and Evensong to Messy Church. He also works full time at Aldenham School, Elstree, where he teaches a range of subjects including US Politics and serves as Assistant Chaplain. He is SSM Officer for the Archdeaconry of St Albans – SSM stands for self-supporting ordained ministers, licensed clergy who offer their ministry on an unpaid basis, an important contribution to parish ministry.



Revd Philip Green

Patronal Festival

St John the Baptist, Harpenden

Sunday 22nd June 2025

11.00am

Patronal Eucharist
(with incense)

With special guest preacher

Revd Philip Green

Junior and Mini Church in the vicarage garden
(or in the hall if weather demands)

Followed by 'pay what you think it's worth' BBQ in the vicarage garden.



An Artistic Contemplative Event was a first for St John's, providing a reflective experience in Holy Week. Atmosphere, music, guided prompts and materials (and coffee) supported creative response at visitors' own pace. With thanks to Debbie Knight, Anne Hignell, Susan Kerr and Revd Ritah.

'Interesting, peaceful, absorbing.'

'I feel the church belongs to me!'

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AMAZING!

Pick up your pencil and find your way to St John's.
On 22nd June there's a BBQ! See page 9 for more about the Patronal Festival.



Oops! Bloopers

These sentences actually appeared in other people's church bulletins or were announced at church services.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals. 🙌

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and the deterioration of some older ones. 😊

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00pm - prayer and medication to follow. 🤪

Thanks to Lauryn Awbrey for supplying.

Lifestyle Change

Free course

The world we live in makes health challenges almost inevitable. Ultra-processed foods, chronic stress, and a lack of time all stack the odds against us. These aren't personal failures — they're the reality of modern life. This 12-week course is free, given to help empower those living with chronic, preventable, lifestyle-related conditions like obesity, overweight, prediabetes, or type 2 diabetes to reclaim their birthright of good health and vitality.

stJOHN'S **FREE** Lifestyle Change
Church Harpenden Course for Health Transformation



Obesity, Overweight, Type 2 Diabetes,
Prediabetes Sustainable Remission

Lead by qualified health coach Eranda Wickramasinghe, this is a lifestyle education and group support programme, not a medical or clinical service. It is a mindset and habit change course that isn't about dieting but about understanding and reshaping the habits that drive long-term change. Quick, easy, and simple solutions unfortunately don't work long-term. Real, lasting change takes time, effort, and persistence. It's not always easy, but it is possible, and this course guides and supports your steady, deliberate steps toward lifestyle change.

- 12 sessions, one hour each, one session per week (with some breaks).
- A mix of in-person (at St John's Church conference room) and Zoom-based sessions.
- Sessions will typically run 8–9 pm on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

This free course is forming now. To specify your preferred start date, and for further details contact:

parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk or email eranda.p.w@gmail.com.



DID YOU KNOW?



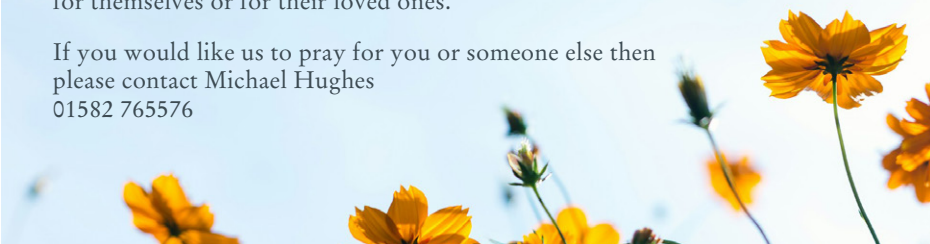
Drama in stitches

There's drama in the kneelers of St John's. Each of the seven needlepoint designs is about the life of St John the Baptist: 22nd June this year is the festival of our patron saint. He was a powerful, persuasive preacher, even drawing Jesus to the river Jordan. Later, John preached against King Herod's actions, which led to imprisonment in a castle, the chains in this design. And then to execution, the sword. On a column in St John's north aisle you'll find the whole story of the Sword and Chains symbol. Then you can go search for the kneelers that represent the castle. There are 208 kneelers to search among! All stitched by parishioners of St John's.

Need a prayer?

St Luke's Cell Prayer Group are always happy to pray for you (confidentially if needed). The group is named after the disciple and physician Luke, who is the patron saint of doctors. A request can be as simple as a name, if preferred. We don't need to know details in order to pray. Members pray individually and also meet monthly to pray for anyone in the parish who asks for prayers for themselves or for their loved ones.

If you would like us to pray for you or someone else then please contact Michael Hughes
01582 765576



The last hedgehog?

St John's Eco Church group is trying to increase the biodiversity of our grounds.

What is biodiversity? Biodiversity — short for biological diversity — is the variety of all living things and their interactions. Biodiversity is not a new idea. Plant and animal species become extinct, and new species evolve all the time. However, humans are having a huge effect on the rate of extinction, from polar bears to turtledoves. The main causes of extinction are damage and loss of habitat (forests, grasslands, lakes and rivers), exploitation (hunting and fishing) and climate change.



The good news is that conservation efforts do work. Conservation action in recent decades — setting up nature reserves, restoring habitats, cleaning up pollution — means the extinction rate of birds, mammals and amphibians would have been at least 20% greater. However, conservation isn't enough on its own. We need to transform the way we all work with nature — in agriculture and fisheries, caring for public spaces, disposing of rubbish, building new homes and roads, how we invest our money, in fact in all aspects of our lives.

You can make a difference at home. Here are some things we are trying out in the grounds of St John's:

- Garden organically, use peat-free compost
- Create a pond — even a small wet area helps
- Leave wild areas, e.g. log piles and long grass
- Allow plants to set seed for birds
- Help children enjoy being outdoors in the natural world
- Buy ethically — look for recycled paper and sustainably produced/recycled wood products; use less plastic and household chemicals; eat less meat and dairy
- Support conservation charities
- Write to your MP about your concerns for the Natural World

If you are interested in helping our efforts at St John's, do join our Eco Church group. With thanks to Green Christian greenchristian.org.uk

Margaret Charlston, St John's Eco Church group.

Mothers' Union

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families
Diocese of St. Albans

**‘Loving God, we thank you for your love
so freely given to us all.’**

Those words from the Mothers' Union prayer are on my lips as I walk on Harpenden Common in the sunshine enjoying the beautiful trees in full leaf and the abundance of summer flowers bringing colour and fragrance to the cottage gardens. There is so much to be thankful for:

- The dedication of Mothers' Union members who worked so hard one Saturday morning to make 150 posies for the Mothering Sunday service which delighted the children.
- The generosity of members who filled a large box with donated toiletries for the Azalea Project in Luton which works to end sex trafficking in the city.
- The gathering with other branches in April at All Saints Church in Hertford for prayer and intense discussion about the future organisation of MU in the diocese. Things will change.

Coming soon:

June 5th A visit to Tring Garden Centre, with afternoon tea.

July 3rd Mary Hoare will teach us how to improve flower arranging skills.

August 7th Summer Garden Party

September 4th Mary McKeand, Diocesan Archivist, guest speaker.

We welcome visitors to our meetings in the church Committee room at 2.30 pm on the first Thursday of the month.

Carol Cooke, Branch Leader. Contact parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk



Mothers' Union helps Mothering Sunday happen.

St John's Parish Magazine Genesis 50 years of delivery and still going

As a pair, Beth and Arnold Allen are among 13 coordinators of St John's parish magazine deliveries each quarter. Along with 65 other people they enable this magazine to get to your doorstep. The Allens can claim to be among those who have helped with distribution the longest, along with friend Margaret Goodfellow. Beth remembers Revd Gordon Martin, vicar when they joined the church in 1972, who wanted a magazine to go to every house in the parish. He said this was important, as you never know when someone might need it, whatever their faith or none. The same principle applies to this very day.



Production was very different back then. Beth recalls the typed sheets were delivered to their house. She and Margaret and their husbands spent the whole evening putting pages in the right order, folding and stapling. It took time but the chance to chat was a huge amount of fun. Beth pushed magazines around in her first daughter's pram – Elspeth was born in March 1974. Beth continues her involvement, over 50 years later. 'It encourages you to get out in your local area and is a way to do your bit for the church,' she says.

We have records of a Harpenden Parish Magazine going back to 1932, before St John's gained its own vicar in 1937. The newsletters during WWII, when Revd Clare was vicar, record historic moments in the parish, including the outbreak of war and VE Day – 80 years ago this summer.

Once there was a charge of 3 pence per issue. Today, we print almost 4,000 magazines each quarter and distribute them to every home and some businesses in the parish free of charge. It is thanks to people like Beth and Arnold that news from St John's and the local community reaches the residents of Southdown four times a year.

We say thank you to everyone involved in the magazine past and present, including Jill Slinn and Judi Williamson who retired recently after many years. And thanks especially to our Editor Susan Kerr who turns 80 this summer. Happy Birthday.

- Sarah McKie, St John's Parish Magazine Distribution Manager



Giving

Did you know that St John's is completely self-financing? We receive no external funding and rely mainly on the generosity of our congregation - over 60% of our income comes from individuals who give to the church on a regular basis through our Pledged Giving scheme. We also receive lettings income as well as one off donations and fundraising income, but like any other organisation we are faced with increasing day to day running costs (utility bills, staff costs etc). In 2024 our general fund expenditure exceeded our income.

St John's is at the very heart of the Southdown community. If you would like to support us with a one-off donation or perhaps would like to give more regularly, details can be found via the QR codes here or contact treasurer@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Alison Bygrave
Treasurer, St John's Harpenden

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The Vicar Scam



There's a scam going round targeting parishioners by mirroring the email addresses of vicars. In one case the scammer got £200 worth of Amazon vouchers, saying they were buying a gift for their team, but didn't want the team to know. The kind parishioner shared the email and others joined in the giving. No one checked because of the 'secret gift' aspect.

Be warned! No one in St John's Ministry Team would ever ask for money in this way. Mirroring is when it seems the email is from one person, but it's not. A way to check is to click on the sender address, and if a second address shows, it's a scam. Double check by clicking on message properties to see the sender source. Overall, if you are ever asked for money or personal details by any respected sender or institution (bank, police, even family member or old friend) be suspicious. Do not reply, do not click links, and do not send money. Check with the purported sender by some other independent route.

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CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

11th – 17th May 2025

It's not too late!



Each year, the international development and relief charity, Christian Aid, holds a number of special fundraising events for one week in May. St John's has a long tradition of carrying out a house-to-house collection in the parish. By the time you read this, the red envelope will probably already have popped through your letter box. This year, Christian Aid Week is raising money for tools and training, so that farmers can support their communities to escape hunger and fight the effects of the climate crisis.

- £6 could buy a pruning saw that means a farmer can tend to their fruit trees.
- £30 could help fund the training session that teaches someone how to make valuable organic fertiliser.
- £100 could fund the metal roofing sheets that shield a market stall holder and their produce from the sun and rain.

Christian Aid Week may already be over, but it's not too late to donate. If you still have your envelope, you can drop it off at the Harpenden Trust Centre. Or donate online: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

This Christian Aid Week we're also calling on the UK Government to make polluters pay for the climate crisis and to introduce new debt justice laws that could pull millions of people out of poverty. You can sign the petition here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week/campaign>

Thank you for your support.

*Margaret Charlston,
St John's Christian Aid Week co-ordinator*

7 days
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we can
beat
extreme
poverty.**

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11-17 May 2025

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Liz Neville, Rest in peace

Liz Neville, my Nanna, was a force to be reckoned with, small but mighty. Not loud, but mighty in everything that she did and how she lived, she was a demonstration of how everyone else should be. Sometimes she was stubbornly telling you that yes you *did* want another slice of cake, often she was determinedly helping others in any way possible when it might mean baking at two in the morning or driving four hours to look after her grandchildren. She even continued to work and call clients when bed-bound and on constant oxygen.



*Elizabeth Mary Neville,
March 21st 1947 –
February 9th 2025*

Liz Neville made her mark all over the world, from Malaysia to Malta. She grew up on a farm in Knowle, where her passion for riding originated. A jockey in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore later in life, she proudly called herself a horse rider as well as a farmer's daughter. In 2003, Nanna moved to East Common. Often joined by at least one grandchild, Liz began attending St John's where she was part of the Eco Church group, the sidesperson rota and the coffee and teas team, always baking something for events. Her smiling face during the preparation for our 2023 Clothes Swap helped to keep us all positive when sorting through cat hair-covered clothes and dealing with damaged railings.

Liz Neville leaves a legacy of three children and seven grandchildren. Her memory lives on through her selfless acts of kindness, her amazingly contagious smile and her effervescent spirit.

- Ella Connolly

Foodbank Ping

Convenient! The church porch of St John's is open every day where you can drop off packaged food items for the St Albans & District Foodbank. Local need continues: the foodbank provides about a thousand three-day emergency food parcels every month. What foods are needed right now? It's a logistics challenge: nobody needs a glut of baked beans or instant coffee! You can check on the foodbank website or now there's an even easier way – download the BankTheFood app to your phone. It sends a helpful ping when you are at your local supermarket, giving your local foodbank's current needs. It also helps the foodbank by registering the donation and saying where it has been dropped off if you buy it from a supermarket with the St Albans & District Foodbank drop off point.

bankthefood.org
stalbandsdistrict.foodbank.org.uk





Open Day

Saturday 1st March 10am to 12pm

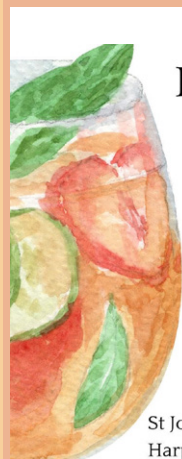


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Little Acorns

Little Acorns is a friendly toddler group for babies, pre-school children and their carers.



Little Acorns

We meet in St. John's Hall on Tuesdays, 10.00 – 11.30am. This is a friendly group where parents and carers have a chance to have a coffee, homemade cake and chat. All are welcome. The children enjoy a healthy snack, activities, a story and singing.

Summer term 3rd June – 15th July

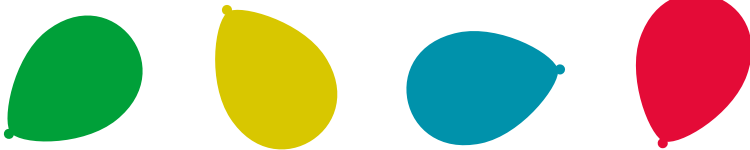
New term starts 9th September

Have a lovely summer!

No booking necessary. A voluntary donation is all that is asked.

For more information, please contact parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Telephone 01582 712776



Toddler Service

You and your toddler are invited to St John's inclusive, relaxed toddler service Thursdays at 10.15 in term time. We start in church with a beverage and cake, then tell a Bible story with an interactive craft. You don't need to be baptised or a member of St John's to come. It's a welcoming space, do join us! To find out more, why not email the Vicar at vicar@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Term dates, Thursdays, 10.15am:

Current term 5th June – 24th July



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Curate's Corner

A Reflection on My First Year as an Ordained Priest at St John's Church, Harpenden

It is hard to believe that a whole year has passed since I was ordained priest and celebrated the Eucharist for the first time at St John's. That moment, standing at the altar, surrounded by familiar faces and the presence of God will always stay with me.

This past year has been full of God's grace, learning, and growth. I have experienced the deep privilege of presiding at Holy Communion, preaching God's Word, and walking alongside people through the joys and sorrows of life. Whether in baptisms, weddings, funerals, or quiet conversations over a cup of tea, I have encountered God in so many unexpected and beautiful ways.

I have also realised how much priesthood is not a solitary calling. I am incredibly grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from the Ministry Team, members of the congregation here at St John's and those I have met in the shops and street. Your prayers, patience, and partnership in the Gospel have shaped me more than you may realise. Ministry here is a shared journey, and I am grateful to be walking it with you.

There have, of course, been moments of tiredness and doubt, times when I have felt unsure or overwhelmed, but even in those moments, I have been reminded that God does not call us to be perfect, just to be faithful and God's faithfulness never fails.

As I look ahead to the next chapter of ministry, I do so with gratitude and hope. Thank you for welcoming me, for trusting me, and for growing with me. Please continue to pray for me, as I will for you, as we seek to follow Christ and serve him together.

With every blessing,

Rev'd Ritab Namakula
Curate of St John's Harpenden





St John's Junior and Mini Church

St John's expanded provision for children is tailored around school term dates. Junior and Mini Church meet at 9.25am in the church hall and rejoin their families half-way through the service so we share in Communion together.

Junior Church - For primary school ages, reception and up. Children learn about God in a fun and inclusive way, exploring arts and crafts and playing games for greater understanding.

Mini Church - For preschool children under 5 years old with their adult. A chance to explore, play and hear the story that Junior Church is learning.

All Age Eucharist - At 9.30am we are all in church together, in a Communion service with the sermon and hymns geared for younger members.

Dates for Summer 2025

25th May No Junior Church (Bank Holiday weekend)

1st June All Age Eucharist - Giving!

8th June Junior and Mini Church - Pentecost

15th June Junior and Mini Church - Trinity

22nd June 11.00am Junior and Mini Church - John the Baptist

29th June Junior and Mini Church - Learning about the early church, St Peter and St Paul

6th July All Age Eucharist

13th July Junior and Mini Church - The Good Samaritan

20th July Junior and Mini Church - Mary and Martha

There is generally no special children's provision on Sundays either side of half-term and Sundays in school holidays (except for special reasons like Palm Sunday and Easter).

For more information contact

parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Telephone 01582 712776

Local Treasures: Brickmaster David Sampson

Do you know your Luton Greys from your Tudors or your London Yellow Stock? We're talking bricks here and bricklayer David Sampson is a fount of knowledge, mindful that Luton Grey bricks feature throughout older Harpenden. David has a long family background in Harpenden. He was a pupil at Grove School, and back in the day his grandparents owned a wet fish shop on Church Green. David's early work was in landscape gardening. He changed paths and went to St Albans College for a City & Guilds qualification in brickwork.

Brickmaking and laying have existed for some six thousand years with many variations and much expertise required. David is especially aware of the challenge involved in Britain's 1970s change from imperial measurement (inches and feet) to metric (mm and cm). It still has huge impact today, and he advises becoming brick-wise regarding repairs, restorations or extensions to buildings. Older bricks are larger than modern bricks, making an unattractive big mortar joint where the new bricks don't match. What to do? Seek a knowledgeable practitioner who plans with brick differences in mind, and knows where to source reclaimed Luton Greys, hybrid modern imperials or any other brick you need to match.

Here's another tip from David. If you are building a garden wall, don't skimp on cost. Bricks are graded by how frost-resistant they are. Fully exposed to the elements, your wall will get wet, freeze and the bricks expand. When the weather warms, they shrink, crack and weaken. Use low grade bricks, and in a short time the face of the wall falls away. Choose the higher priced but frost-resistant bricks and you won't 'lose face'.



Luton Grey brickwork on East Common.

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Parish registers

Baptisms

Welcome to the family of God

1st February 2025

Harvey Joseph Pitman

23rd February 2025

William Ivan Nunes Conroy

Confirmations

Confirming promises made at baptism

16th March 2025

Luella Buckley at St George's School

Funerals in Church

May they rest in peace

13th January 2025

William Robert Shankland

16th January 2025

Betty Holdaway

12th February 2025

Stephen Rex Laney

26th February 2025

Liz Neville

4th March 2025

Neil Elliot

12th March 2025

Susan Holt

19th March 2025

David Ankerson



Christening at St John's

Are you interested in having
your child christened?

If you live in Southdown you can have
your child christened at St John's (even
if you're not a regular church goer)

If you'd like to have a chat about what's
involved please email
parish.office@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk



Regular Services at St John's

Sundays

- 8.00am Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel
9.30am Parish Eucharist (*also live streamed*) followed by coffee in the hall.
All Age Eucharist, *normally 1st and last Sundays of the month*
5.00pm Evening service, *see website for details*

Wednesdays

- 10.30am Holy Eucharist is celebrated in the Lady Chapel

Monday - Friday inclusive

- 9.30am Morning prayer is said

Church is open every day from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Service times may change so please check the calendar on our website or sign up there to our weekly or monthly newsletter www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Watch our Parish Eucharist and other special services on our YouTube channel - search for "St John's Church, Harpenden" or visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/StJohnsChurchHarpenden>

The Parish Office is open Monday – Thursday 10.00am - 2.00pm



PARISH OFFICE

For enquiries, including marriages, baptisms, funerals and hall bookings, please contact the parish office.

OPEN

MONDAY - THURSDAY

10.00am - 2.00pm

Amanda Knights

Telephone: 01582 712776
parish.office@
stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

If you are in need of help or know anyone in need of support, please contact support@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Parish Directory

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Anne Edwards

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WARDENS

Position vacant

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Matt Harrison

music@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

TREASURER

Alison Bygrave

treasurer@stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Our magazine is published four times a year and is delivered free to all homes and businesses in the parish.

We are very grateful to those who write contributions and the many volunteers who distribute and deliver the magazines, come rain or shine, to everyone in the parish.

We welcome advertisements and are delighted to be able to provide full colour.

St John's PCC takes no responsibility for statements made in advertisements or other content in this magazine nor linked websites, nor for any matter arising therefrom.

To protect privacy, personal email addresses do not appear in the web edition, unless requested.

*Patronal
Festival
inside*



What's going on in St John's and Southdown

www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

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Parish Office 01582 712776



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