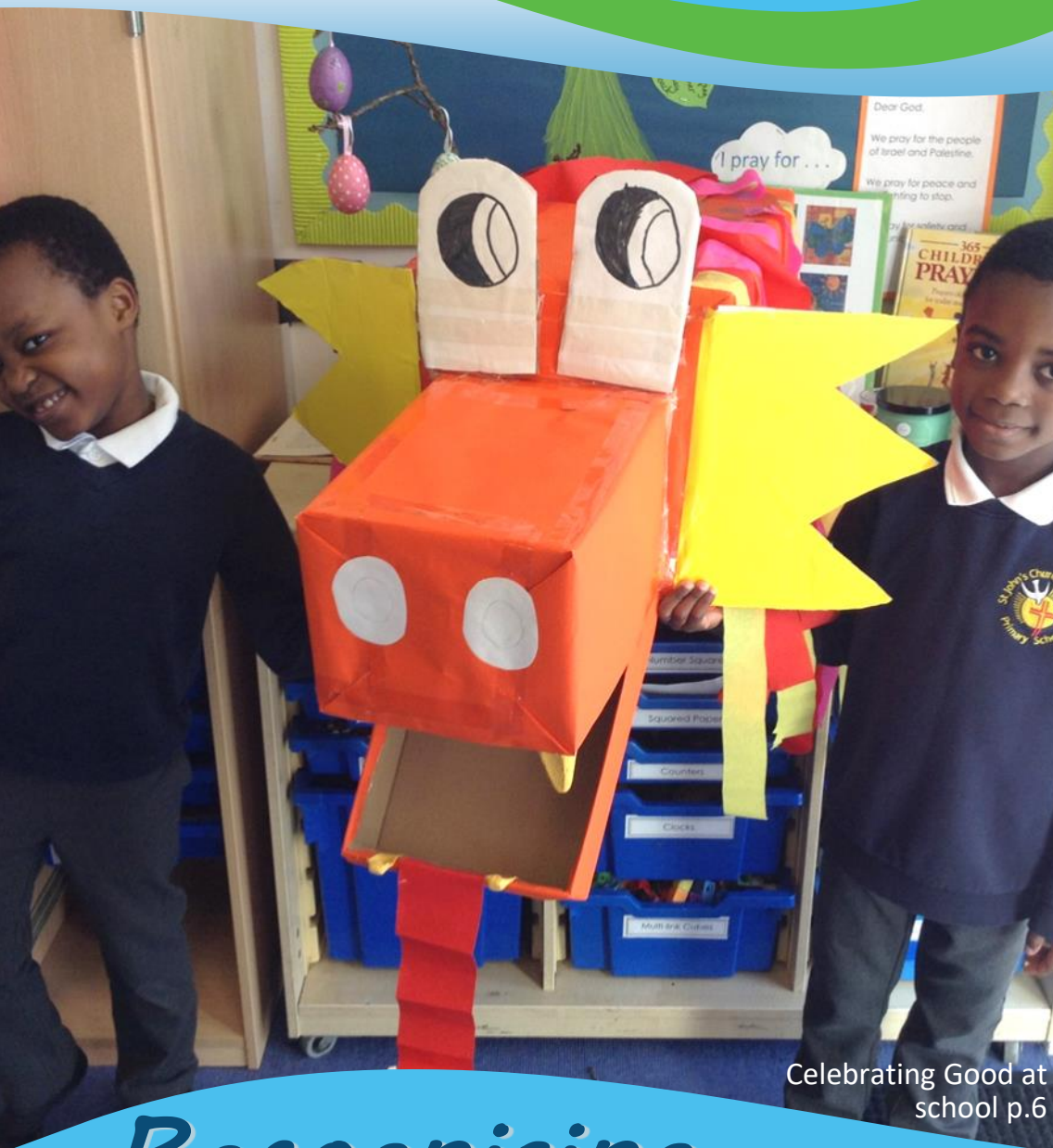


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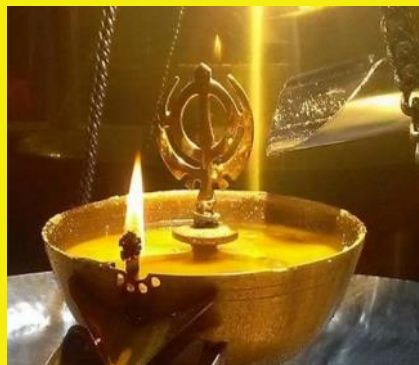
schools community faith



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Recognising Good

EASTER 2024

St John & St Stephen's Community Magazine
stjohnandststephen.org.uk



GOOD ... *how can we spot it?*

Welcome to NEWT 43

Recognising Goodness

As a twenty-first century modern democracy, we in the UK tend to measure success by achievement. So in schools there are targets, exams and qualifications. Later, success at work is achieved through competition – the best candidate gets the job. We look for efficiency, competency and impact.

It's much harder to measure personal qualities, like honesty, loyalty and goodness. But take the last one, goodness. We all probably know when we've come across goodness, but how does a human being develop 'goodness' and is it worth even trying these days?

In the bible's account of creation, God 'saw that it was good'. Everything God made was good, and given as a gift for the good of mankind, even as mankind was tasked to care for it. Christians also believe that *all that is good* comes from God. That means wherever you see goodness in action, God is at the source.

Although we all recognise goodness, it's hard to develop! 'He's a good boy'; 'she's such a good girl' can be loaded statements that we normally dis-identify with as we get older and find our own path in life. When was the last time you witnessed something genuinely *good*, or someone who was obviously *good*? When the news is often depressing, it's all the more important to recognise goodness when we see it, and to celebrate it.

If you've come across the *You Tube* channel of American Rocky Kanaka, you'll know he spends a lot of time 'sitting with dogs'. It's a very simple act. He goes to dog shelters and befriends dogs who've been

maltreated or abandoned and who've stopped trusting humans. They are all desperately in need of someone to believe in them before they can recover from their maltreatment.

All he does is gently go and sit on the floor inside the dog's kennel, a few feet away. Most are sitting in the corner, tuned out or afraid. Their tails are down and the look in their eyes is heart-breaking. But the difference he makes just sitting there is huge. Eventually he draws them over with a little treat, and maybe a gentle pet. Eventually, the dogs start to come alive again and you can see their potential. Sooner or later, someone phones in with an offer of adoption.

It's nice to watch something online that is a very obvious example of simple goodness and how it can effect deep change. The goodness of his intention and his gentle perseverance seems to call out the potential good qualities of the dogs, despite their initial standoffishness or aggression.

I wonder where you have recognised goodness locally? Could you do something to encourage it, or to encourage the person or organisation embodying it?

Far from being something insignificant, true goodness has the power to bring about nothing less than transformation.

Claire



Copy date for NEWT's Summer edition will be 27th June 2024

Please send contributions to the Parish Office office@stjohnandstephen.org.uk

or directly to the editor at chris@meunier.org.uk

Recognising the GOOD in one another



A perspective from Sikhism

Recognising the “good” in others is a fundamental teaching in Sikhism. From a young age, we are taught to see the good in everyone, no matter one's class, colour, belief or background. We can only begin to see the divine light in all when we permit ourselves to see beyond people's appearances, behaviour, and social labels.

It is fair to say that nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes, no matter how big or small. Sometimes, our mistakes are so minor that we fail to even notice them, but in other situations, our wrongful mistakes can lead us into



serious trouble. So why judge someone for their mistakes when we too make them every day?

Even if someone has a thousand good qualities, as human beings, it's in our nature to always bring up someone's bad qualities or mistakes, no matter how hard that person tries to redeem themselves.

A famous Punjabi saying goes, “If you can't see good in all, then you can't see God at all”. So, recognising the goodness in others can lead to a profound sense of equality, compassion, and peacefulness towards all.

**“If you can't see good in all,
then you can't see God at all.”**

So, what are the benefits of seeing the good in others? Well, firstly it will help strengthen others in difficult situations. Everyone has unique traits and abilities that contribute to the world in meaningful ways. If we continue picking on others' faults, it will lead them to believe that they don't have a second chance which can lead to detrimental consequences. Therefore, it is vital to see the good in others despite their past.

Secondly, it will strengthen our relationships with others. When we focus on the positive qualities in others, we are more likely to be understanding of one's flaws which can help build more positive relationships with those around us. It will also allow those who committed the mistake to reflect on their actions and give them the chance to improve in the future.

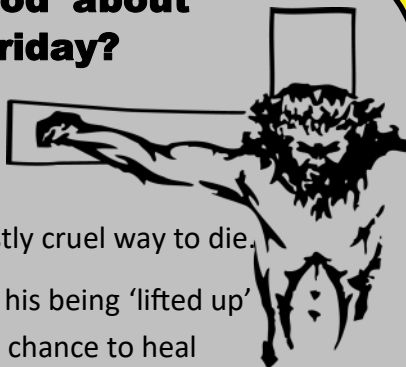
Lastly, it will help us to be much kinder and supportive towards others. We will become more compassionate and understanding if we look for the good in others, even if they make mistakes or act in a way we don't agree with.

Article written by Navjit Kaur Gill
(Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Reading)

**Wishing you all a Happy Easter and
a blissful festive period over the
next few weeks.**



What's 'Good' about Good Friday?



Crucifixion was a ghastly cruel way to die.

So, why did Jesus see his being 'lifted up'
in this way as his chance to heal
and transform our world?

Join us on Friday 29th March to hear and ponder:

Midday outdoors on the riverside by Huntley Wharf
with dramatic readings and songs, or afterwards
quietly in the Church building on Orts Road.

For details see the back cover page.

Feeling **GOOD**

at New Town Primary School

For Children's Mental Health Week 2024 we were celebrating all the things that make us feel good, strengthening relationships and focussing on enjoying each other's company without any academic expectations.

It is really important that we take days to stop and really appreciate one another, and our wider school family.



To start the day, the staff were treated to a luxury hot chocolate station, an affirmational cream tea, and our wonderful Mrs Rex had crocheted every single staff member a beautiful button hug.

When the children arrived at school they had a whole day planned by the team to support relaxing the mind, talking to each other and learning about themselves and promoting high self-esteem. The theme for Children's Mental Health Week was 'My Voice Matters', so all our children were given a chance to speak about things that are important to them and display this through artwork.

Also they all learned about fairness through an Equity and Equality workshop and to understand that some people need things and sometimes we just want things. A little bit like 'Nanny McPhee', who says that when we want something and no longer need it then it is somebody else's turn.

The children had the opportunity to give each other a story massage during the day and they wrote their own massage stories to share with their families at home.

Many children commented on how happy they felt during the day and every single member of staff reflected on the success of the relationship building opportunities. *Feel Good Day 2024* at New Town was a success.



Energy suppliers

by Rosie Croft



BANKS

tips from Jo Laynesmith

Spotting a GOOD business

In a NEWT that is all about recognising 'Good', I want to tell you about Good Energy.

It's actually the name of the energy company that we use at home. But I want to think wider than that one company, to understand what makes an energy company 'good'.

Which of the following do you think of as *most* important in defining a 'good' company.

- ◆ Good profits so that the directors get a fat bonus and the shareholders get ample dividends
- ◆ Staff are treated well and are able to buy shares in the company
- ◆ The head office is super glitzy and is often mentioned in the Financial Times
- ◆ It gives a lot of money to charity
- ◆ It promotes ethical issues and has a scrutiny panel to keep it 'on the straight and narrow'
- ◆ It treats its customers well – and never keeps them waiting on a phone for longer than 5 minutes.
- ◆ It's the very cheapest available

I guess my own number one answer as to what makes an energy company 'good', is that it sells energy that will not contribute to climate change. I have read many estimates of how much fossil fuels contribute to climate change – and it's often quoted as being more than 75%.

If you believe, like I do, that it is climate change that is causing so many severe floods, droughts, forest fires, ferocious storms, sea level rise, all of which cause horrendous damage around the world, then we need to do everything we can to minimise climate change. We need to abandon fossil fuels (gas, oil and coal) as quickly as we can, and replace them with energy generated by renewable sources.

Have you thought about switching *your* energy supplier to one that generates and sells renewable energy? You might start your search using **Best green energy suppliers – should I switch? – MSE (moneysavingexpert.com)** .

How green is your money?



Some banks take your money and invest it in ethically 'good' companies who make their profits without harming our planet. Others don't care and invest willy-nilly allowing 'bad' companies to keep cutting down our rainforests, extracting and burning fossil fuels, and so accelerating climate disaster.

According to Mother Tree, £12,500 held in an account (the average UK household saving figure in 2022) with *Barclays*, *HSBC* or *First Direct* contributes more than 2.7 tonnes CO₂ per year which is more than flying from the UK to Rome and back 13 times. For ethical banks such as the *Co-op* or *Triodos* it's only about 0.4 tonnes.

Check out your own bank's rating and find greener ways to bank at:
[mymothertree.com/bank-league-table](https://www.mymothertree.com/bank-league-table)

Your Energy
& Banking choices
matter

Celebrating GOOD



at St John's CE School

Here at St John's, we are continually celebrating and recognising the achievements and success of those in our school community. We have recently celebrated a variety of wonderful events, from the incredible Chinese New Year Dragon Parade created and led by our Arts Council, to our spectacular Poetry Slam with the well-known poet James Carter!

Our Chinese New Year Dragon Parade was a truly memorable event where our Arts Council children from Years 1 to Year 6 worked together to create a vibrant and colourful dragon to parade throughout the school in celebration of the Chinese New Year.

St John's also celebrated a week filled with poetry composing and reciting in celebration of our first ever 'Poetry Slam!', with the support of award-winning poet James Carter! James spent the day with every class in school, inspiring them to create new and imaginative poetry in the most exciting ways!

Our children then showcased all of their poetic skill with our Poetry Slam performance to the school where children read out their newly composed and breath-taking poems. It was a wonderful experience and so valuable to recognise the poet that we all have inside us!





Inspired by our Poetry Slam, we celebrated World Book Day in style this year, recognising all of our favourite authors and stories from Nursery to Year 6. The children shared their love of reading throughout the day and teachers shared theirs too, sharing their favourite stories with the children. They made such a wonderful effort with the costumes this year and made it a wonderful celebration of all things reading!



We are also recognising our children's impressive scientific enquiry skills this term as we hold our annual Science Fair during Science Week. Children every year amaze us with their ability to create fascinating and intricate science projects to demonstrate a particular phenomenon, experiment or discovery. We look forward to seeing all of their captivating displays and announcing our winners this year!



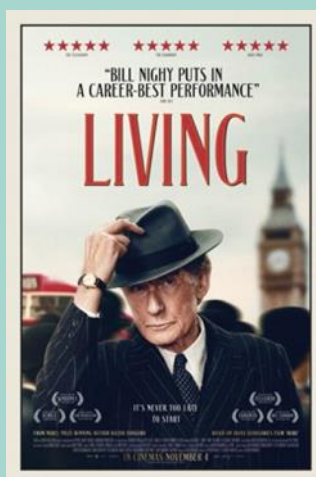
Lent FILM Series 2024

'Something to live for'

Once again in Lent we have been watching films together on four Thursday evenings in church and then meeting up to discuss our reactions to them.



Dir. by Tina Satter (2023): 12A
In the wake of the 2016 US Election result, the true story of Reality Winner (Sydney Sweeney), a young Air Force Officer, who found herself being visited by the FBI. Who will get the upper hand and will she crack?



Script by Kazuo Ishiguro (2022): 12
Bill Nighy stars in this beautifully cinematic portrayal of a dull bureaucrat forced to completely reassess his life and discover new meaning and beauty in it. (Includes fatal illness, alcohol abuse)



Dir. by Dionne Edwards (2022): 15
Travis (Natey Jones) is trying to find himself after serving Time. Candice (Alexandra Burke) has a once in a lifetime audition for the West End. But who will wear the sparkly new dress? (sexual content, challenging urban context)



Dir. by Hettie Macdonald, written by Rachel Joyce (2023): 12
Harold (Jim Broadbent) is an ordinary man who has passed through life, living on the side lines, until he goes to post a letter one day... and just keeps walking. (Includes addiction, suicide, domestic violence)

They are all currently available titles if you want to catch up on them, and do consider making a mental note to join us next Lent for a new film series ...

Steve W – Estate Cleaner at Huntley Wharf

One thing that has struck me as very kind and generous in the last few weeks is when I was approached, whilst cleaning one of the corridors, by a resident who wanted to share some chocolates with me, as a thank you for my work. This strikes me as most generous because the residents are making a special effort to offer me this gift, as well as coming to find me during their day to make sure I receive it.

A few residents have offered especially kind words too, recently, which is very motivating and makes me feel appreciated. One resident said 'Thank goodness we have you here' which made me feel my work had been recognised. A few small words can make the biggest difference!

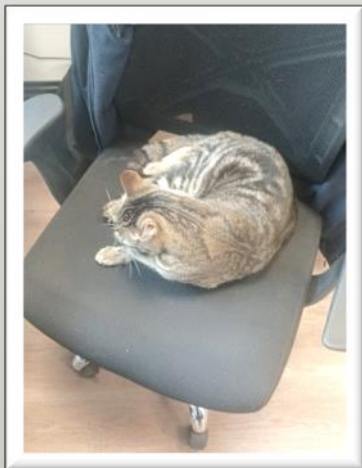
Zoe H – Concierge Team at Huntley Wharf

A couple of weeks ago, some residents handed in a cat that they had found crying outside of their lobby. After trying our best to locate the owner, the cat had been in the office all day and we were desperate to find it somewhere safe to stay.

A couple that lives next door to the Concierge Office offered to take the cat in until its owner turned up. The couple bought food and toys for the cat and paid for a vets visit to make sure the cat was healthy – they ended up paying for medication when an infection was found. They introduced it to their own pets and gave it its own place to sleep in their apartment!

Unfortunately, the cat's owner never reached out to us, so the lovely couple have given it a name and welcomed it into their home permanently, even working from home to check on him through the day.

Welcome Monty the Cat and thank you lovely residents!



Suzie – Team Member at Huntley Wharf

Last week, some residents moved in at Huntley Wharf, their first time in the UK. They had anticipated needing some help from the team as they had rather large deliveries that we needed to allow extra parking spaces for.

Along with their request they brought for the whole team some Chinese delicacies, including some snacks to keep in the office. This act of kindness struck me as they had already decided to do this before receiving the service, therefore anticipating this in advance, which is generally quite out of the ordinary.



Natalie R – Huntley Wharf community member

A little while ago, I had a particularly rough day and as a result I went to the *Lush* store in the Oracle Centre to get some pick-me-ups. The team member was so lovely and must have sensed that I was a bit down because they spent a bit of extra time giving me a little pamper and encouraging me to tell them what was going on.

8 When it came time to pay, they gave me a free item as an 'extra act of kindness' and it happened to end up being my favourite item of those I purchased!

spotting *Go*

From Huntley Wharf ... to Reading College

NEWT's correspondents have been spotting genuine GOODNESS



Where have you spotted genuine human GOODNESS either on screen or in print?

Sami: 'In *The Pursuit of Happiness*', an old film starring Will Smith as Chris Gardner, working to care for his son while living on the streets. He became the first person to master the Rubik's cube.'

/Continued →



Sami, Accessible Learning to Higher Education



Mohammed A – Maintenance Operative at Huntley Wharf

Recently, I spotted my colleague, who was walking down the road towards me, stopping to help an elderly woman and her daughter. They were trying to cross the road with her double buggy pram. They both seemed distraught and had already stepped off the

oodness

... to Newtown and Cemetery Junction,
n asking you to share examples of
you have recognised.



Alamin, IT & Computing L3



What's really GOOD about College?

Alamin: 'Opportunities to gain more knowledge, and to make new relations.'

Lema: 'Our GCSE Science teachers approach us with genuine concern, respect and interest in us.'

Mo: 'Giving everyone opportunities to do better in life.'

Farouk: 'Chance to meet new, good people.'

Bestfavour: 'Good to see more people from different countries.'

Sami: 'Academic opportunities coupled with friendships formed here.'

E-Sports students: 'Our teachers are good communicators - can make jokes and banter- and they seem to care. They are tolerant and respectful if someone doesn't understand.'

Alamin: 'Social media videos of helping the less-privileged.'

Mo: 'Videos showing the supreme leader of Iran personally visiting and supporting veterans and their families. It's his manner with them that shows it's from genuine concern for them.'

Bestfavour: 'A video on *Tik Tok* that showed a man making food for poor people and giving it out

Lema: 'The *Netflix* fiction series *The School of Good and Evil*.'

E-Sports students: 'In *The Hunger Games* series, when two enemies change because one is suffering. The other then becomes kind and helpful despite their differences.'

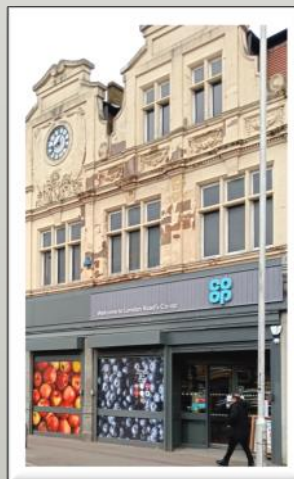
pavement and into the road . There was heavy traffic with no signs of the cars stopping decided to step up and help them out. He put his arm out indicating to the drivers to slow down and stop. The cars eventually stopped, and he stepped into the middle of the road as if a traffic policeman and allowed the ladies to cross the road safely with their children.

Zanab and Pascale are the school receptionists at **New Town Primary School**. They enjoy their jobs and find the school values very important.



'We see goodness in children, they're innocent and genuine and we love helping them and seeing them flourish'. They like to bring goodness and positivity through their work. They believe face to face communication with parents is important, seeing a face rather than a screen. They believe in treating people the same way they'd like to be treated. Zanab said that Muslims believe (as per Hadith) that smiling is an act of charity. By reading or coming across positive news or a quote on social media both Pascale & Zanab are inspired by genuine human goodness worldwide.

Newtown resident, Claudia Tavares Gee, said, 'It's in the people. I woke up one morning to find a dog in my back garden! I don't know how it got in as there is a fence and a wall. Anyway we have a residents Facebook so I put the dog's photo there and a very kind resident took the dog up and down the street to find the owner. She even took it to the vet to see if it had a chip. Eventually the owner was found and the lady then sent me a photo of the very happy owner hugging their dog.



Member of staff at Cemetery Junction Co-op, when asked 'Where do you see human goodness in your work?' answered, 'Simple - every Monday the same man comes in and buys food to put in our donation box for the foodbank. That's goodness.

Rev. Christine from St John's said, 'I think these two pictures I took on a local street in Newtown last week speak for themselves about individual people's care and good intentions'.





Know your Newts

meeting the people in our community

KATNISS (Siu Yuen)

Quite a few people have three parents these days. In China, it's an old tradition that a man can have more than one wife.

So you have three parents?

Yes. Life in any Chinese village was harsh and people had to work very hard to make a living. It was a time of wars and a very difficult economic situation. My parents lived in the same village in Guangzhou province. They got married and then my mom visited Hong Kong many times to explore the place and see if there would be any opportunity for a better life. Like many others, they then walked over the mountains to avoid border controls. (Other illegal immigrants swam across the sea.)

Later, they joined a government scheme, which supported them to start a café business in a newly built housing estate in South Hong Kong Island. They then discovered that my mom was infertile. Dad wanted to have children so they decided to look for another wife through a sort of dating agency. They found someone in Taiwan and went to meet her. All three decided to live together and make a new life in Hong Kong. They set up home and, over the years, five children were born, four girls and a boy. I'm the youngest. I call my dad's first wife, 'Big Mom' and my birth mother 'Mom'. My sisters are much older than me so it is like having five mums! One of my sisters still runs the 'Silver Café' that my parents founded.



from HK to Newtown

What was your early life like?

I was a lucky kid. I was sent to Christian schools: kindergarten, primary and secondary. I loved listening to Bible stories and singing hymns in music lessons. Every other Saturday, the whole primary school would go to a church service. I enjoy drawing and attended after-school classes to learn Chinese painting and oil painting. I would sketch in the margins of textbook pages, much to the annoyance of my parents and sisters!

I wanted to go to the U.K. to do my 'A' levels so I went to an Overseas Education Fair where we

"I wanted to go to the UK to do my A levels"

could talk to representatives from schools and agencies. In 2011 I came to CATS College in Canterbury in Kent. I studied Economics, Biology and Chemistry in my first year but only scored highly in Economics in the mocks so in the second year I studied Maths and Accounting alongside it. I achieved some good results so I then went to Durham to study for a B.A. in Economics.



Were you happy there?

As a youngster I was used to the great buzzing metropolis of Hong Kong - good food, late night shopping and *Disneyland*. London would have been similar but too full of distractions! I liked Canterbury, and Durham is quite small and surrounded by countryside. It's a beautiful city and I loved walking in the woods to relax. Outside of lectures, I spent a lot of time at church and in Bible study groups, one for church members and one for international students. Both study groups were very fruitful for me. Every Easter holiday the student church would go away for three days in the Lake District. It was lovely to be away from everything, studying and then going for long walks. I was thanking God for creating such a beautiful place. Strangely, I have moved around so much that I still haven't been baptised!

And after your graduation?

I returned to Hong Kong and got a job as a financial consultant at an insurance company. I met my husband, Timothy, in my second post. We were business analysts in the same team. His desk was to my left and behind me. We worked together for three years until our paths diverged. I went to reporting in another company while he has moved onto computer programming.

And then you got married?

We married in Hong Kong on 27 Sept 2022. It was simply signing papers at the registry office. Our intention was to save money for our common goal: moving to the UK. I wore a beige floral dress, and Tim wore a matching suit. We took lots of photos at a park nearby with our family and friends who came to witness our wedding. I tossed a flower bouquet, one of my friends got it and she is now engaged! After we have settled down, we will have a proper wedding ceremony in HK. I'm really glad that Tim has come into my life. We were best friends at work before we became a couple.

How did you come to join us at St John's?

My best friend Yuki, who I met at school in Canterbury, lives only a five-minute walk away from the church. She



studied at Reading University and has been living in Reading for ten years. On a walk to her house, I saw the church sign in the bushes and decided to come.

My first service was on Easter Sunday last year. Liz Bailey came and spoke to me and Don & Bridget signed me up on the church's Welcoming Course for recently arrived people from Hong Kong. The people are really nice and welcoming at St John's.

Do you have any time for hobbies and interests?

What are your favourite things?

We spend most of our time together or individually, watching movies, listening to music and gaming. Since

coming to the UK, our new interest is to discover new recipes and good local food.

We have been playing badminton at Woodley Leisure Centre, a place recommended by Chris & Carol Meunier. I used to enjoy swimming but it's too cold in the UK!

In Hong Kong, our companies used to organise 'corporate



activities' like dessert making, yoga or crafting classes so we could socialise with colleagues after work. I still like to do crafting. I can buy the materials and tutorials online. I recently made a Christmas Tree in a jar with Yuki.

My favourite food is chicken wings, and I love watching animation films from the Ghibli studio of Japanese Director, Hayao Miyazaki.

Thank you, Katniss, for telling us about yourself and how you're building your new life in the UK.



UK Election

helping you to decide



Conservative party

Candidate to be selected shortly



Climate Change is a vital issue for us all. Reading Conservatives take it very seriously and are fully committed to reaching Net Zero by 2050.

How we counter the impact of Climate Change is important in this year's general election, but the over-arching issue must be the cost of living crisis. Addressing the financial squeeze every household is facing must be the priority. This directly affects the resources we have as a nation to reach our Net Zero targets.

We Conservatives are for a pragmatic approach to achieving our climate commitments which does not place an unaffordable burden on those currently struggling. For example, the majority of drivers cannot afford to buy a new electric car. In Reading, unless you have a driveway, you cannot easily charge an electric vehicle if you have one.

This is why the Government has eased the planned phase-out of buying petrol and diesel cars – in line with countries across Europe – extending the deadline from 2030 to 2035.

At the same time, the Conservative Government has invested over £26 million in improving Reading Buses, established *Active Travel England* to promote walking and cycling – and made the body a statutory consultee on all new housing developments.

Other parties promise the earth in addressing Climate Change. In Reading, Conservatives are committed to delivering realistic, affordable solutions which get us to Net Zero.

Written by Stephen Goss,

Deputy Chairman - Political Reading Central Conservative Association

NEWT asked each candidate for the new Reading Central constituency,

“How important an issue for you at this coming general election is Climate Change, and how much will it shape your other policies?”

Read their responses below:

Labour party

Matt Rodda



It is vital that we tackle the climate emergency and I have been pleased to work with church members and other local campaigners on this incredibly important issue.

Labour will put the climate at the heart of the agenda. Our ambitious climate and energy agenda and investment plans will be funded by a proper windfall tax on oil and gas giants, alongside borrowing to invest within fiscal rules, and will include:

- investment in good jobs in gigafactories, clean steel plants, renewable-ready ports, green hydrogen and energy storage, through a £7.3 billion national wealth fund that will unlock tens of billions of private sector investment.
- a warm homes plan to upgrade Britain's homes and cut energy bills, investing a further £6.6 billion to double the money already committed by the Government.
- establishing Great British Energy, a publicly-owned energy company to invest in clean homegrown power, with capital of £8.3 billion, including £3.3 billion for a local power plan to invest in clean energy for local communities and enough funding to accelerate nuclear projects and make the UK a world leader in floating offshore wind.

I believe this is the right plan for our economy and our environment, which will deliver on clean power by 2030, take hundreds of pounds off energy bills, create half a million good jobs, make Britain energy independent, and deliver climate leadership.

Climate GOOD

waiting to be done

Right: Members of St John & St Stephen's church took part in a prayer vigil during Lent, praying outside Parliament at Westminster.

What exactly is the Good that needs to be done to save our planet for future generations, and who will do it best? ...



Green Party

David McElroy



As the Green Party candidate for Reading Central I will speak honestly and passionately about the issues that are important to me. As an eco-socialist, I believe that environmental destruction and climate change are closely linked to poverty, war and soaring inequality.

The way the country is run - to make the rich richer - is fundamentally incompatible with fulfilling the needs of people. Or the needs of the fragile blue planet given to us that we depend upon for our health and happiness.

Voters can expect me to support causes that improve their quality of life whether it is improving the air, paying teachers and doctors or denouncing terror and genocide in all forms.

So how does climate change shape my other policies? I believe these are intrinsically linked through social justice. The benefits of carbon emissions are private while the costs are borne by everyone. They are disproportionately felt by those most vulnerable who suffer worse hazards and reduced services. This needs to change.

People are already suffering from the financial incompetence of successive Labour and Conservative governments and climate change will only make this worse.

The solution to these problems cannot be more of the same. I urge the people of Reading to reflect on what matters to them and who has brought us here and become inspired to vote Green.

Liberal Democrats

Henry Wright



As a NEWT reader myself, I'm excited to be asked this important question. Tackling the climate emergency (we have moved beyond just "change"!) is a high priority for the Liberal Democrats and me at the upcoming local and general elections.

With the government's own Climate Change Committee warning the "current strategy will not deliver net zero", I want us to hit net zero in Reading by 2030. To do this, I've put the climate crisis at the heart of the policies I back in Reading and for the whole UK.

We must act nationally – I will fight for:

- Investing so that 80% of the UK's electricity is generated from renewables by 2030
- Providing free retrofits for low-income homes (and tax incentives for others) to help end fuel poverty and reduce emissions
- Planting at least 60 million trees a year, and restoring woodland habitats and chalk streams

There's a role to play locally too – and I support Reading Lib Dem plans to:

- Introduce a low emissions zone in the town centre to reduce emissions and the poor air quality choking our children
- Develop a better network of cycling routes, in conjunction with local schools such as New Town Primary School and St. John's CE School

Get in touch to ask questions or help my campaign (we have small tasks of 30 mins!) by email at

henry.wright@readinglibdems.org.uk

A Short Lunchtime Concert by
Chorate Chamber Choir



Courage and Conviction

Music includes...
Three Songs of
Courage by Dyson,
Creeds by Byrd
& Palestrina
and more...

Directed by
Jamie Hudson
Accompanist
Stephen Dilley

Sat 20th April at 12:30pm
St John and St Stephen's Church
Orts Road, Reading RG1 3JN

Free admission - retiring collection in aid of CIRDIC
(helping the homeless and vulnerable in Reading)
duration approx 45 mins, refreshments afterwards
More info: chorate.org.uk and cirdic.org.uk Donations →



Bix Walk the Country

Saturday 18th May 2024

Walk 5 or 10 miles in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside and raise
money to transform lives with Christian Aid.



Start between
9.30am and 1pm
from Bix Village Hall,
Rectory Lane Bix RG9
6DH between Henley
and Nettlebed. -

Get sponsored
for walking for
Christian Aid or
make a donation
on the day.

For more information:

contact Rosemary on rosemaryacraft@gmail.com or 01189 260672



Christian Aid is a key member of ACT Alliance. Eng and Wales charity no. 1105851 Scot charity no. SC039150 Company no. 5171525. The Christian Aid name and logo are trademarks of Christian Aid. © Christian Aid 11/05/2024 - 21/05/17



Easter Holiday Fun at The MERL

The Museum of English Rural
Life, Redlands Road, Reading,
RG1 5EX

Tuesday 2nd to Sunday 14th April. Admission Free.



Enjoy trails and activities in the galleries and garden

Have a go at a themed trail in the MERL's garden (free)

Discover the Spring Family Activity Packs

Have a go at a variety of gallery and garden trails including our
woodland brass rubbing trail

Have fun on the fabulous wooden play-on tractor and wagon

Bring a picnic or enjoy an Easter treat in the cafe

Please note The MERL is closed
from Thursday 28th to Monday 1st April

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READING WATER FEST 2024

**Sat 8 June
from 11am**

Water Fest is Reading's
way of celebrating and
showing off the Kennet
Canal in all its glory.

Enjoy the gorgeous and historic spots on its towpath - complete
with a programme full of fun, music, dance and activities!

Visitors can take in the sights and sounds as they wander
through Chestnut Walk, Forbury Gardens, and the Abbey Ruins.

En route you'll see some beautifully painted boats and meet
some of the friendly boaters keen to chat to you about life on
board.



East Reading Festival 2024

12-6pm SUNDAY 23rd JUNE 2024

Palmer Park, East Reading

If you would like to get involved, please
visit Facebook.com/EastReadingFestival
for more info

Voter ID alert:

Both for the Council elections on 2nd May, and for the Parliamentary election expected in the Autumn this year, you will need to show valid photo ID.

Driving licence, passport, disabled blue badge and some other photo ID card or travel passes can be used.

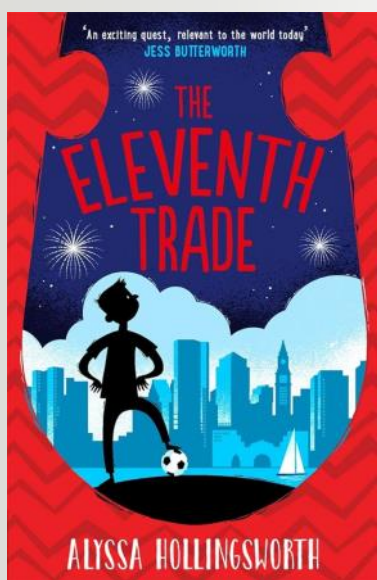
Otherwise, you can apply for a free identity card from the Council - either go online at **reading.gov.uk** and search for 'voting', or just phone 0118 937

3717 and ask for an application form. Alternatively you can register for a postal vote. **Don't lose your vote!**



GOOD reads

3 book reviews from Stephen Dilley



For adults:

Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan

One of my all-time favourite novels, this very short book might only take an hour or so to read but will stay with you for a very long time. Set in the run-up to Christmas 1985 in a small Irish town, the novel introduces us to Bill Furlong, coal merchant who does his best to be a good man while running his business and looking after his wife and daughters. However, when he is confronted with real evil, in the form of Magdalene Laundries where unmarried mothers were confined, he faces the most important moral dilemma of his life. This is a deeply moving story about what it means to be a good person in a world which can seem cruel and corrupt.

For older children (aged 9+):

The Eleventh Trade by Alyssa Hollingsworth

Sami and his grandfather have come to the US as refugees from Afghanistan. His grandfather is a world-famous musician, but when his *rebab* is stolen, Sami is determined to take whatever steps he can to restore his grandfather's livelihood and his last connection with home. He embarks on a series of 'trades' to get the *rebab* back and finds himself surprised by the kindness of friends and strangers along the way. This is a deeply hopeful and inspiring read which adults will also love.

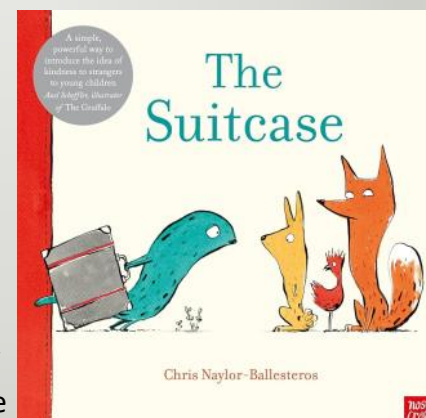


For younger children (aged 5+):

The Suitcase by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros

This is a poignant but uplifting picture book about a strange-looking creature who arrives carrying a big suitcase. The other creatures in this story are initially suspicious but eventually become more kind and welcoming.

The Suitcase is a beautiful way to teach young children about the importance of empathy.





Good Friday noon: the riverside at Huntley Wharf

HOLY WEEK

- Sun 24th March** **PALM SUNDAY** - *greeting Jesus the long-awaited King*
 10:30 am Holy Communion with palm crosses
 St John & St Stephen's church
- Thurs 28th March** **MAUNDY THURSDAY**
 - *remembering Jesus' last supper with his friends*
 7:30 pm Holy Communion St John & St Stephen's church
- Fri 29th March** **GOOD FRIDAY**
 - *the day that Jesus was killed by hanging on a cross*
 11:30 am Meet outside St John & St Stephen's church and walk together with the cross to the riverside
 12 noon Act of Witness with dramatic readings and songs outdoors by the riverside at Huntley Wharf
 Afterwards, hot-cross buns, then from 1 pm opportunity for quiet reflection back in the church
- Sun 31st March** **EASTER DAY** - *resurrection!*
 10:30 am Holy Communion St John & St Stephen's church with activities for children

**Celebrating
Easter
in Newtown**



Church Contacts



Vicar
Rev Claire Alcock



Sunday worship 10:30 am
 - everyone welcome



Parish Centre
Administrator
Jo Laynesmith



Churchwardens
Ian Maynard & Sue Bruce



Assoc. Priest
Christine Bainbridge

please phone the Parish Office 0118 926 3633
 or email: office@stjohnandststephen.org.uk

School Contacts



Head Teacher
Polly Cornish



Deputy
Head Teacher
Kate Hawkins



Assistant
Head Teacher
Hollie Appleton

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 email: admin@newtown.reading.sch.uk



Head Teacher
Martina Parsons



Deputy
Head
Cameron Purvis

St John's CE School 0118 937 5540
 email: admin@stjohns.reading.sch.uk