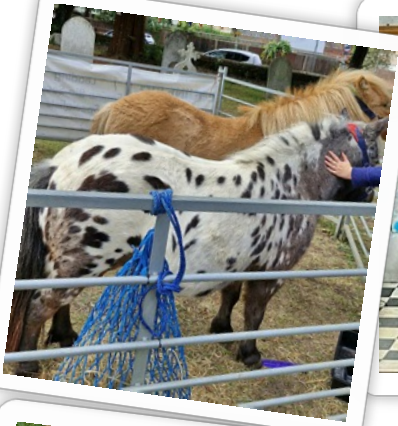


A DAY FOR ALL 2025 - THE WONDERS OF CREATION



Despite the forecast, the morning of Saturday 27 September dawned bright and dry. We were blessed with sunshine and a blue sky for most of the day. Lots of people of all ages, with families or on their own, came along to enjoy themselves. The wonderful sound of the church bells of St Mary's launched the day and – for the second time – the opportunity was given for people to see how the bells are rung.

Some families, especially those with young children, headed straight for the animals! The return of Kingswood Shetland & Friends - the two Shetland ponies and their small friends, guinea pigs, rabbits, a tortoise and a bearded dragon – proved extremely popular. The charity uses animal therapy to help many young people facing challenges in life. You can find more at <https://tracksthroughpastures.org/>. The team who came said "It was lovely to be back at St Mary's. Our ponies and small animals enjoyed the attention and received lots of brushing and cuddles, but the star of the show was Bruce, our lovely giant tortoise. He much enjoyed stretching his legs around the grounds, had lots of people asking questions, and the children loved him. Such a lovely occasion for the community to gather and enjoy animals and their therapeutic effect."

The illustrated talk by the Surrey Wildlife Trust provided much food for thought as to how we need to better care for creation. As always, the performances by the young musicians and the Divas Choir, the Children's Craft Activities, the SWOP shop, the Prayer Corner, the Mouse Trail and the Prayer Trail were much enjoyed. Those serving (free) refreshments during the day and the bread and soup lunch were kept very busy! The Photo Competition provided interest throughout the day (the winning entries can be viewed on the next page). There was a record number of photo entries and voting slips.

Lots of positive feedback was received. One regular, said "A Day for All is exactly as it says, it is a day for everyone to come together for a relaxing and informal day in the beautiful setting of St Mary's church. The animals in the churchyard were a real

draw for children. People visited our beautiful bell tower, entered the photography competition, enjoyed limitless tea and cakes, milled around the church and relaxed to listen to a talk on wildlife. This was all followed by a fish and chip supper, a perfect end to a very enjoyable day."

A church member, who spent most of the day polishing the church silver, wrote "From my vantage point in the sanctuary, the church looked busy the whole afternoon. As in previous years, I found it encouraging to see many new and unfamiliar faces. There also seemed to be good number of families with young children visiting us. It was interesting to see how parents would stop and point things out to their children. It was noticeable that when going round the church, both parents and children clearly felt they were in a 'special place'. Especially when they ventured past the screen to look at the organ and then moved forward towards the sanctuary. The display of all our gold and silverware seemed impressive to everyone and often prompted questions.

What I always find rewarding is the look of wonder on peoples' faces, especially the children's, as they move around the building, and the reverence and respect they show.

There was a warm and friendly atmosphere but also of fun and enjoyment. This was particularly evident in the Parish Room where refreshments were served. For me the great thing about 'A Day for All' is that it opens the doors of our church to the people of Ewell and the local community of our Borough. It makes our church accessible and through that, more approachable."

A member of the planning team emailed "It was a brilliant day and very successful. Everyone seemed to have a great time. We have lots of things to repeat/amend/increase next year."

Many thanks to the planning team, to the many volunteers who made the day possible and to everyone who came along – you all made it such a great day!

Sue Ayling

A DAY FOR ALL 2025

PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

16 and above: Winner - David Dance



Under 16: Winner - Ellis Watt-Smith



16 and above: Second - John Atherton



Under 16: Second - Abigail Larkin



16 and above: Third - Godfrey Morrell

