

**Annual Meeting of Parishioners
and
Annual Parochial Church Meeting
Monday 29th April 2024, 7pm
at St John's Church, Rownhams**

ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS

1. Welcome and prayer

Revd Graeme Dixon welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a short Agape service. There were 41 people in church.

2. Election of Churchwardens

- John Sofrin was proposed by Nick Launders, seconded by Pat Wooten and his appointment was unanimously agreed.
- Sara Lynn Black was proposed by Glennis Gould, seconded by Sarah Beak and her appointment was unanimously agreed.

3. Close of meeting

The meeting was closed at 7.15pm.

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (APCM)

1. Apologies for absence

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| • Claire Thompson | • Caroline Lessiter | • Sue Launders |
| • Mike Bunce | • Val Seagar | • Pat Wills |
| • Isabel Murray | • Steve Beak | • Peter Skidmore |
| • Hugh Murray | • Sophie Ross | |
| • Angela Jones | • Rodney Stratton | |

2. Minutes of previous APCM held on 24th April 2023

2.1 Agree Minutes for accuracy

The Minutes of the previous APCM were proposed by Christine Owen, seconded by Nick Launders and unanimously agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from the Minutes – none.

3. Electoral Roll

Sue Muldowney read out the list of those who had died since the APCM in 2023 to the meeting. Please see report Appendix at the end of these Minutes.

4. Reports

Reports had been circulated prior to this meeting. Please see report Appendix at the end of these Minutes.

5. Vicar's report

Rev Graeme Dixon gave his report on the year 2023. Please see report Appendix at the end of these Minutes.

6. Questions on reports

6.1 Qu. Can the PCC Minutes be made public?

They will be published on the website, at the rear of church and in the magazine in future.

6.2 Qu. Should any changes be made to 6.30pm services that have low numbers?

These are clearly valued services as they are quieter and more peaceful. The PCC will discuss the timings, frequency and structure of the evening services, especially to accommodate NHS workers.

6.3 Qu. Why is an architect required to obtain permission to remove the pews?

The Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) requires this for most changes made to churches to ensure due process is followed.

7. Adoption of independent examiner

Elizabeth Arnold has agreed to be the independent examiner for the coming year. This was proposed by Randalle McKay, seconded by Denise Pennells and unanimously agreed.

8. Election of the PCC

11.1 Standing down:

- None

11.2 Ending their three-year term:

- Fiona Skidmore
- Angela Jones
- Christine Owen
- Jason Phelps
- Katrina Stout
- Avis Wood

11.3 Standing for election to PCC:

- Kevan Abernathy
- Sarah Beak
- Glennis Gould
- Angela Jones
- Randall Mckay
- Sue Muldowney
- Christine Owen
- John Pennells
- Sarah Phelps
- Fiona Skidmore
- Crawford White

Election of the above was proposed Lynette Allen and seconded by Gill McKay.

11.4 For information, those whose term will end at the APCM in 2025:

- Angela Wright

PCC members for 2024 are:

- Kevan Abernathy
- Sarah Beak
- Lynn Black
- Graeme Dixon
- Glennis Gould
- Simon Harris
- Angela Jones
- Clive Jones
- Randell McKay
- Sue Muldowney
- Sarah Phelps
- Christine Owen
- John Pennells
- Sarah Phelps
- Fiona Skidmore
- John Sofrin
- Crawford White
- Angela Wright

9. Any other business

- i. None

10. Closing prayer

Graeme closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting was closed at 8.10pm.

APCM REPORTS APPENDIX

Vicars Report

I would like to begin by saying thank you to everyone who has given so generously of their time, skill, and goodwill. Our parish is dynamic in its welcome and joyful in its sharing faith. The love of Christ is very much at the heart of our service in this community. A church with many willing and able hands, and with such a wide range of activities makes it difficult (and probably unwise) to attempt to thank individuals so please accept my sincere “umbrella-style” thank you.

Thank you to everyone for the vital role you play in the ongoing life and witness of our church. I am deeply grateful for everything that you give to this church. I feel privileged to be among you as your vicar.

That being said, a particular thanks to Randell and to those who have served on the PCC, to Jason and Katrina.

I would also like to thank Lynette for all the work she has done for us in cleaning and presenting our churches.

We need a churchwarden.....

The last 12 months for our parish has been an exciting time of continued change, as well as new opportunities and renewed energy. Congregational strength is returning to pre-covid levels at St Johns and growing beyond at St Boniface.

Having said that very much on my heart is how we can reach out to the missing generations:

- Generation Z and up to thirties.
- Families.
- Baby Boomers 50 plus
- Those who used to come to church but no longer bother.

Nevertheless, it has been a year of greater stability than previous as we begin to emerge fully from the pandemic exile.

Mission and ministry continue to define us.

Worship and prayer continue to be at the heart of our Christian life. I am encouraged by the faithfulness and commitment of our gathered congregations. Our service structures are starting to bed down in a recognizable way. Offering opportunities to provide a welcome to those not familiar with church, whilst seeking to establishing those in the faith. It's a difficult mix and one we will continue to work at.

Morning prayer though small in number is one of the powerhouses of our ministry as we read the scriptures and pray together. A time of real fruit growth and strengthening of faith.

Our newly formed bereavement group 'Friday friends' gives the church an opportunity to come alongside those who are lost and grieving. It is becoming a powerful source of ministry as we wrestle with ways in which we can support those at such a vulnerable and challenging time.

Our new creche is now becoming established and whilst still evolving, plays an important role in our services, by offering hospitality to both newcomers and established families so that parents and carer's can still keep in touch with live worship in a present and physical way.

Prayer ministry – is taken up each time it is available. My hope is that we can add to the number those willing to participate in this important ministry.

We have Seven home groups and I would like to thank the leaders of each of these. We are looking at starting an eighth group, TBC.

Music - we have a rich vein of worship available in church, thanks to all those who serve in this essential ministry. Repositioning the drums in the balcony seems to have helped the sound dynamic. We are indeed blessed to have so many talented musicians serving in our parish.

Confirmation is something we need to think more about. Many of our children would like to receive communion and yet they have not been confirmed. Something about our tradition and culture needs to change here as confirmation is a central part of what it means to be Anglican.

Our social committee are doing wonderful work in overseeing the running of our social calendar. Thanks to all those who take part. Events of note would be the beetle drive, the barn dance, and the burns night. This year the social committee is putting on a murder mystery, a garden party at the vicarage and we hope a live band night in August on the Glebe, amongst other things.

It has been encouraging to witness the many ways in which we are engaging with our local community, and this grew significantly during the last year. I love seeing people within our community feel encouraged to explore their faith further. At the heart of this is Alpha, which is a challenging ministry and yet one which has a real impact on those who join it. Our Lego church is something we are still developing – its time its place and content. We have seen many new families experience Lego church. It has also been a place of real growth for church members as they have served by leading many of our Lego church services, thanks to Pete, Danny and Andy and particularly Ewan. Connect, which is a small group helps those who attend – we hope to add more to the group this year. Its inspiring to share with others as we seek to share the love of God with those who do not know him yet.

Our Net group for children, which last Friday at the start of this summer term welcomed 19 mainly non-churched children, is a real source of hope, growth and a joy to behold. Ewan has plan's to evolve NET in September as several of our young people transition into MORE together. We may also lower the entry age of NET to key stage 1 (that is 5 years and up). It's a source of lament that so few of our church children attend NET.

Parents and Tots has almost outgrown its second home – the community centre. We routinely welcome in excess of 25 plus carers and over 30 children. Each session includes, snack time, bible story and singing – with at least one Christian song in there.

Ewan, our YC&F worker is now very much at the heart of our church family. His work through NET and More groups, Mums and Carers, Alpha, Lego church, our schools work including Christian unions in both our schools and soon Mountbatten school, outreach events such as the children's parties, our light party and our Good Friday celebrations and leading on Sundays is making a real difference. It is a blessing to have Ewan with us.

During the year we have enjoyed many highlights. I love the run-up to Christmas with so many opportunities to host the community as well as schools and preschools groups for carol services. Our Christmas services in 2023 were well attended as was the light party and our Coronation event.

We had two very generous Gift days, which supported our outreach. A huge thanks for people's generosity. Of course, our finances continue to be a challenge especially as we have lost the income previously generated from St Johns church hall.

None of this would have been possible without the many hours volunteered. Without you all, there would be very little happening in our parish and things simply wouldn't be the same. We are indeed a very gifted parish – with gifts in all areas from music to administration, from flower arranging to litter picking, and preaching to praying.

Thanks must also go to the payback team who make such a difference to our churchyards.

Spiritual growth is in part about each of us hearing and responding to Gods call on our lives. It's about being closer and closer to the heart of God. None of us are Christ, but all of us are called to become uniquely Christ-like. Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more truly the people we are called to be. One test of this is what we are willing to give and do for God and for others – not just the people we get on with or those who are 'like us' but responding to those we meet even if we find them hard work and we don't particularly get on, even then we are called to love each other. Just as Jesus did on the cross. Growing together in faith in our churches is a great privilege as we share each others journeys and encourage one another.

Discipleship remains a priority in our churches. God's call upon each of our lives individually is not the same as God's call upon every else's life. For example, just because some people feel called to pray in public, it doesn't follow that everyone must pray in public. The love that God has for you is as unique as you are. My hope is that I may be to help you understand what God's special call for you is, to pray for you and to pray together that God through the Holy Spirit will go before us and reveal himself to us as individuals and as a church in acts of service as our faith is strengthened.

I remain committed to an ongoing programme of visiting members of our church family, as I see that as an important aspect of the priest's pastoral role. That said, realistically, as the requests/expectations upon my time continue to grow, the demands on my time are outstripping the time I actually have available.

With the welcome of the new residential care home at Broadleaf park I would like us to develop our pastoral team to those who can administer the sacraments and visit people who are unable to attend church services, and so this means home communion and pastoral visits can take place more frequently. We hope to explore how we can facilitate the new care home including our taking services on a regular basis.

We have a good website and a wonderful parish administrator who facilitates a range of outgoing communications across the members of our church. The weekly newsletter is important and a useful way of keeping in touch. Our parish magazine, which is a great resource for many has an impact on the sharing of news and thinking and progress across the parish, I am aware we could use this better to communicate all that is happening.

We do contribute to the village news, a great resource as it is posted to every household in the parish, as such it's an underused resource. Publicity is also mainly via our website, Facebook and Whats app pages, as well as posters/flyers displayed in and around church. I would be grateful if more of our members could pro-actively share the news on our Facebook page as Facebook does seem to reach a lot of people who might not choose to engage with us by any other medium.

I have asked Ewan working with Abbie to oversee our publicity of events by producing a social media strategy.

In the background to all of this has been Re-ordering of our churches.

At St Johns we have at last submitted our faculty application to replace our pews with chairs, having consulted our architect Fiona.

We have also responded to additional questions posed by the DAC and are hoping that once the public have a chance to respond we will be able to move forward with this first phase of re-ordering.

Phase 2 will involve lowering the pew platform and phase three will include a new kitchen and cupboard space.

The hope is that sometime this year we will be able to use St Johns church in a much more flexible way.

At St Boniface we are still waiting to hear from Fiona about our kitchen re-ordering. There is also decorating to be considered.

Vision

For some time we have been preaching about the kingdom of God and at the heart of the kingdom is love. Jesus was clear about love. In John 15.12 he commands us to 'love one another as I have loved you.'

At Leo church when I asked a family why they were attending, the response was to be part of the community and your church should be at the centre of this community.

They were right.

I would like to look forward and begin to think how we can cast a vision for St Johns church when greater flexibility is gifted to us.

Our vision statement might be something like. 'Loving God, loving one another and loving our community.'

With values of love, encouragement and giving for instance.

In essence that captures parts of our current vision statement perhaps in a more succinct way.

Having a vision day that looks at how we might put our churches at the heart of our communities will happen in 2024, where the whole church will be invited.

Priorities for 24/25:

- Re-ordering of both churches
- Vision day
- Understanding how our churches can become the centre of our communities.
- Reaching Gen Z, families, boomers and our new housing estates.

Churchward's report, St John's Church January 2023 to March 2024

Overview

Although the financial year for Twinpires is January to December, for convenience this report extends to the present. Also, in order not to duplicate items presented by others I will concentrate on matters of fabric – i.e. buildings and contents. Having said that, I am pleased to say that the regular Sunday congregations have returned to near pre-Covid numbers, together with about 45 views of each on-line service. It is not certain how many people the latter represents.

We have continued to grow our outreach to the local area with activities the Church of England might describe as “fresh expressions” of church, meeting the needs of the community – for example Lego Church, the Carers and Tots sessions and the Friday Friends group.

A welcome innovation has been the formation of a sub-committee to organise social events such as the Beetle Drive, Burn's Night and Twinpires' Talent Show. These have been well received and our thanks go to the team for their efforts.

General maintenance

Many routine items of maintenance and servicing have continued, according to the schedule:

- Checking and replenishment of first-aid boxes (church and hall)
- PAT-testing of portable electrical appliances (church and hall)
- Servicing of fire-extinguishers (church and hall)
- Servicing of gas boilers (church and hall)
- Biennial professional examination of the lightning conductor (church)
- Clearing of roof valleys and gutters (church hall)
- 5-yearly professional examination of the fixed electrical wiring (church)

Minor repairs, such as light-bulb replacement and repair of locks, have been undertaken as required. More significant events are listed below.

Specific Maintenance

St John's Church Building

- To my great frustration, the repair of the guttering and re-positioning of roof-slates that have slipped is a job from 2021 that is still outstanding. Budget estimates put the likely cost in the order of £12,000, though the VAT element can be reclaimed. We are grateful for offers of grants from the National Churches Trust (£3020) and The Hampshire and Islands Historic Churches Trust (£1000). We have permission from the Diocese to proceed, however, owing to the prolonged rainy weather and because our key contact at the roofing company had to have more than a month off work, progress has been slow. We need the roof to be fixed this year!
- Compounding our roofing problems, just before Christmas some lead flashing was stolen from the roof above the vestry. In the process a few slates were dislodged and two large coping stones knocked off the parapet of the boiler house. An insurance claim is in progress and it is intended that this work will be carried-out at the same time as that on the main roof.
- Progress continues to be made on replacing the current pews with chairs. As has been described, both in services and in Twinpires News, this will make it possible to use the church building in more flexible ways. The formal application for permission (a 'faculty petition') has been submitted to the Diocese and their initial response has just been received. It requests a bit more information which Graeme and I will

supply.

- The routine professional examination of the electrical wiring in the church revealed several areas which did not meet current standards. Most of this has been rectified, with a few more minor items to be completed next month.
- The IT team undertook various adjustments to reduce the incidence of the problems we have experienced with the sound-system, however a new installation would be a preferable long-term solution.
- Two LED spotlights have been installed to illuminate the dais, replacing lamps that no longer worked.

St John's Churchyard

- Following last year's professional survey, necessary tree-surgery was carried out on some trees which were severely diseased or already dead.
- The Payback team attend two or three times a month to maintain the churchyard. We endeavour to keep the delicate balance between its requirements as a graveyard, as a habitat for wildlife and as a community open space.
- Moss was removed from the roof of the lych gate – thanks go to Blue Shield Cleaning who carried out the work *pro bono*.
- Loose stone blocks were replaced in the pillars at the end of the lych gate path, with some additional repointing.

St John's Church Hall

- The Payback Team redecorated the main room of the hall, using materials supplied free of charge by the Community Repaint scheme and B&Q. However there has long been evidence of penetration of damp into the wall at the SW corner; similarly, a new damp patch has recently appeared high up on a wall towards the rear of the building.
- Loose bricks were replaced around the parapet of the area of flat roof. This was followed-up by resealing the roof-parapet junction and filling a hole which was found between the tiles of the roof. It is hoped that these measures will solve the problem of damp in the walls.
- The large floodlight on the rear wall ceased to function and was replaced with an LED floodlight, together with a timer-switch to prevent it being left on accidentally.

Work planned for 2024

- Repair of guttering, slipped slates and lead flashing on the roof of the church. As rainwater sometimes drips through into the nave this needs to be achieved before getting new chairs.
- To complete the project of replacing pews with chairs, then to move-on to the next stages of levelling the floor and improving the refreshment area.
- To continue to investigate and plan for more eco-friendly heating arrangements for the buildings – in particular for the church itself.
- Work will continue on items listed in the Quinquennial report as resources allow.

Terrier (inventory)

During 2023 nothing was added or removed from the inventory of St John's.

Thanks

A huge thank you to the multitude of volunteers who help to run our services, provide administrative support and maintain the buildings and churchyard. Many of them work behind the scenes, but without them things would fall apart - in some cases literally! Thanks too to Graeme, Ewan, Abbie and Lynette for all that they do, and to my regular Wednesday morning prayer buddies Linda, Mike and John who are a constant source of support, good advice, humour and practical skills.

Finally, as you will have heard, I have decided not to stand for re-election as churchwarden but give my successor my best wishes, prayers and willing support.

Electoral Roll Report – 29th April 2024

There are currently 197 people on the electoral roll – the number on roll has increased by 3 from April 2023. Of the 197 people on the roll:

- 193 declare that they are members of the Church of England.
- 142 are resident in the parish, with 55 non-residents, so 28% are non-resident in the parish. In April 2023 the percentage was also 28%.
- 124 are women and 73 are men, so 37% are men (38% in April 2023).

Would those in church stand, and those sitting at home bow their heads, as we remember those from our church family who have died since April 2023:

- John Holden
- Peter Greenland
- Kevin McWilliams
- Rachel Mitchener
- Norma McGinty

Every 6 years we are required to completely re-do our Electoral Roll, with everybody being invited to re-enroll. The next such revision is due next year in April 2025. Please remember that if you are not on the Electoral Roll then you may not vote at this meeting.

Sue Muldowney
Electoral Roll Officer

Financial review

We ended the year in a better financial position than we were in at the beginning of the year.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed financially during the year. The long list of activities you have read about would not be possible without your generosity.

- Total incoming resources for 2023 were £232,475 compared to £185,257 in the previous year
- Total outgoing resources were £174,902 (2022 - £185,778)
- The result for the year was net incoming resources of £57,573 (2022 – net outgoing resources of £521) giving net assets of £211,558 on 31 December 2023 (£153,985 on 31 December 2022)

Donations through planned giving increased by around 10% compared to the previous year, for which we are grateful. We are appreciative of those many church members who have switched to giving by online methods, through the Parish Giving Scheme or other giving schemes where donations arrive inclusive of any gift aid recoverable. This reduces the administration at a local level considerably. The shift to those who use the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) means that this has become the preferred way of giving for many. We would also like to thank all those who very generously supported our two giving days in March and December 2023.

Two very generous legacies were received towards the end of 2023, which will be used to fund buildings maintenance and improvement projects in both churches.

Expenditure included:

- £96,759 (2022 - £99,755) on Common Mission Fund (Parish Share)
- £17,807 (2022 - £14,518) on church running and maintenance
- £30,852 (2022 - £16,483) on youth and other outreach work
- £3,688 (2022 - £4,399) on missionary and charitable giving

The rental income received from St John's Church Hall did not cover its running costs. This is mainly because we have not been able to find a regular replacement tenant for weekday daytime bookings following the closure of the Pre-School at the end of 2022.

Following a review by the Diocese of its budget, our Common Mission Fund commitment for 2024 is £89,251, compared to £96,759 in 2023.

I would like to thank all those who assist me in my work as treasurer. I am grateful to John Sofrin who banks the money each week for St Boniface, Hilda Ward who is treasurer of St John's Flower Fund and to Biz Arnold for carrying out the independent examination of the financial statements. I would also like to acknowledge

the great support that John Holden was to me over so many years as Gift Aid secretary. He diligently worked behind the scenes preparing and submitting the claims to HMRC, and encouraging donors to use the gift aid scheme if they were able.

I would like to welcome Arnold Rust, who has agreed to take on this role.

Linda Purkess
Treasurer

Foundation Governors report from St John's Church of England Primary School

Thank you to all of you who support the school through your prayers. There is much to be thankful for.

It has been a busy year, and the school goes from strength to strength. With a 'good' inspection with both SIAMS (the Church school version of Ofsted), and Ofsted - which was awaited at the time of the last report, a recent independent assessment by the local authority was also highly complementary. They noticed that the school values of 'love, Joy and Responsibility' ran through the school like a 'golden thread'. Graeme and I met with Tim, the headteacher, to look at how we could really make the values theologically rooted, following a visit from Richard Wharton from the Diocesan board for education last May. The school is now working on linking their values to the parable of the good Samaritan, as a way of really bringing these Christian values to life.

With Andrew Brown stepping down as chair and Foundation governor last year, a Foundation Governor post remains vacant. Now is a great time to join the school as a Governor, please do feel free to talk to either myself or Graeme if you would like to know more about what it entails. It is a real answer to prayer, that Rachel Deboys, also of our congregation was voted in as a parent governor and begins her induction. It is fantastic to have another voice for Christ on the team.

Under the Chairship Jackie Kerwood, the Governing body has revised its structure, so that both the Standards and Resources committee business is now conducted as a full governing board. This means that now more than ever, the growth of the spiritual side of the school is now even more explicitly everyone's business. Some really good conversations are happening as the governors get to grips with concepts of faith. Several recent Governor visits to school picked up on areas of the Church life of the school and giving feedback. Several have volunteered to attend a collective worship.

There are currently 327 children on the role and there continue to be a number of children on the waiting list.

Another governor in school day is planned for June, and it's a wonderful opportunity to see first hand the work that the school is doing with the children. It is so rewarding to see the good work the school is doing, first hand, and to see the world through the eyes of the children.

There are many opportunities to make the links between the school and church stronger, so if you had an hour or so free from time to time, and would like to share your passion with the children, from simply listening to youngsters read, through to arts, crafts, gardening or music, please do get in touch with the school office, they would love to hear from you.

Sarah Shatwell

Safeguarding report

The Parish of Nursling and Rownhams is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, and safe environment for all, including children and adults who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in activities in our two churches is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the parish community and over this last year I am pleased to report we have continued to meet this commitment.

We continue to access the Winchester Diocese Parish Safeguarding Dashboard which helps both the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and the PCC to track and monitor key safeguarding activities. Through the dashboard we regularly download an action plan so we can clearly see what needs to be done to meet our safeguarding responsibilities. This process continues to be very helpful for us to ensure the; necessary policies in place are updated timely; risk assessments for activities are updated annually; role descriptions for our volunteer and paid roles are in place. We still have some more work to do to finalise safer recruitment processes and to tighten up on our monitoring of church related social media accounts.

All DBS checks continue to be processed on a 3-year cycle in line with National guidance. Over the past 12 months, 15 DBS checks were processed and 14 people completed safeguarding training at the required level for their role.

All current regular activities and risk assessments are in place and reviewed annually. In addition, we have job descriptions for most volunteer roles. All these documents are in SharePoint and can be accessed by the office. I encourage anyone who has not received a role description or risk assessment to ask the office or me for a copy.

For anyone working with children or adults at risk and for all in leadership roles in our churches, the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, published by the National Church, is an essential resource. A link to the most up to date version can be found on the safeguarding page of our website along with Parish and Diocesan safeguarding contact details.

Finally, on behalf the PCC we would like to thank Gill McKay for all her hard work getting our parish Safeguarding and Safer recruitment processes and practices to where they are now. Gill has been in PSO the role for the last 10 years; thank you Gill for your dedicated service. And thank you personally from me too for your support in my first few months in the role, I only hope I can follow in your footsteps.

Sue Muldowney
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Youth, Children's, and Families report

I want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to everyone who has helped with any of our youth groups or events that we have run in the last year. It has been such a blessing to be surrounded by such an incredible team and I am so grateful to each of the leaders and volunteers for all their time and efforts. There have been so many blessings this year after such a great first year in the role last year and it has been great to add onto and grow from the foundation that we had previously set. I

think for me the youth children's and families work has been playing a huge role in the church vision of working within the community which has been so exciting to be a part of. One of the themes I feel like we are really working towards as a church into the community is the idea of loving everyone and really opening the church and church hall to the community and through so many events this year we really have been able to work towards that. Obviously, there are still limitations that we are reaching within that such as the church hall. With the removal of the pews however it then becomes easier for us to do more activities and events in the church where we are able to set more things up in a shorter amount of time.

Light Party

Looking back at the beginning of the year we decided to run our light party this year. This was incredibly well attended again where so many people who came last year were glad we were running the event again to have somewhere safe to bring their children and have fun which I believe really sums up why we run this event so that we can be the light in the darkness using Jesus' example. There were great craft activities, games, disco, and a bonfire as well as refreshments all pointing towards Jesus being the light of the world as well as being able to build relationships with those who attend church and those who do not. A big thank you to all those who helped to run the event and donated sweets because otherwise we would not be able to run events like this.

Easter

Easter is always one of the busiest times of the year on the Christian calendar and this year was no different. We had a special Tots group session where we decided to run in the church rather than the community centre so that we could have puppets tell the story of Easter which the families loved. We also had the joy of the children seeing the Jesus puppet going into 'the tomb' (pop up tent) before then rolling the stone away to see that it was no longer there which really illustrated the idea that Jesus was risen again and was a great way to share the easter story with that group.

We also had Rownhams school and Nursling school come to the church to do their easter services which is always a blessing to have them in the church. The Rownham's school service was led and run by myself and the Christian Union group I run in the school and was nice to have the children take charge and be excited to lead an easter service.

We also ran a big, good Friday event in the church for the community. One thing that has really hit me this year is that we need to use the momentum of our events to continue to engage with the community and days like good Friday are often overlooked and so really wanted to remind the community and use it as a great outreach opportunity to set up an afternoon to share the incredible story of Easter. This day was run with crafts, games and refreshments all pointing towards the easter story before Graeme did a small service looking at the Easter story and was incredibly well attended by the community. A big thank you for all who helped with running crafts, games refreshments and welcoming people because events like this would not run without lots of volunteers.

More

More has transitioned from being a discipleship group to being more of a drop-in group for our young people just because of where they are at with their faith. It has been a great privilege to me to see that group grow not just in number but also in their faith. When I first attended the group in September 2022 there was just one young person however we are now regularly getting five young people who will come and play games and have very open conversations about faith and life and are willing to discuss different ideas. Each week we still look at a biblical principle but look at how it can affect them in their daily lives as well as looking at what the Bible has to say about problems that they are facing as teenagers. For example, at the beginning of the year we did a series on healthy relationships which is so important for young people who are constantly being told how they should look as well as social media and sex and so is so key for the church to be speaking on now. A real highlight for me this year was that all that group attended the light party and were involved in the activities and so shows that they do not just come for the games but are also really interested in the faith side of it as well.

I want to say a big thank you to our leaders Andy Ball and Marie for their dedication to coming to this group so regularly but want to point out that there have been several weeks where either Steph or Graeme have had to step in because we are so low on leaders in this group and so do need people to step forward to continue this group going.

Parents and Tots

This year we have continued with our parents and tots' group. This has been an incredible way to reach out to the community and to build relationships with people who otherwise would not come to church-based activities. This has been a great way to lead people towards the other things we run as well such as our all-age worship services and Lego church and is a great entry way to introduce them to church. After first starting our tots group in the church we had such a big response we have had to now move to the community centre however we now get nearly 30 families coming to this each week and so are now considering our options to move to a new building to accommodate this and so is such a clear way that God is working through this group. Each week we have different activities and crafts set up for the kids before then providing a snack time and a bible story and songs which the kids love. A big thank you for all who help with this group including Steph who we have all said on regular occasions that if it was not for her, we wouldn't be able to run the group.

School involvements.

One of the biggest blessings in my role is how much the schools love having myself and Graeme in to do assemblies and Christian unions. On a Wednesday morning, I do Nursling's assembly before going to Mountbatten school to do a Christian union alongside Romsey Abbey. I then run a Christian union in Rownham's school before then doing their assembly. I also do a Christian union at Nursling school on a Friday lunch time. It is a real blessing to have such an involvement in all the schools and to build relationships outside of the church and to share the gospel through all of them and know that the kids are excited to see me and run those groups. We currently have around twenty kids attending the Christian union at Nursling and five at Rownham's. We also have two lads who regularly attend the Christian union at Mountbatten.

Lego Church

This year we have also set up Lego church every 3rd Sunday afternoon of the month. This is a great informal service where we get the families to make the various parts of a bible story before we then get them to recreate it with us. We will then have a time of reflection and worship making it applicable to everyone and the kids love to be able to show their creativity alongside all the refreshments. We on average get about thirty people attending this and is a great way to include those who would not necessarily go to church regularly,

Net

Net has been a great joy to run as a younger version of More. Aimed at year 3 – 6 (7-11 years old) we get an average of fifteen kids per week. Since January we looked at the story of Jesus' life to really emphasise the easter story and why Jesus was such an important person rather than just looking at the easter story in isolation. Although motivated by the tuck shop the kids do love coming and hearing the different bible stories and the games and we do have a great group of regular kids who come each week. I want to say a big thank you to all the leaders who help run this group. One exciting thing for me is that we are getting kids coming to the group who we don't interact with throughout the week meaning that the young people love the group so much that they are inviting their friends to it as well clearly showing we are doing something right!

Sunday Club

On a Sunday morning, we still run our Sunday Morning group Sunday club for those aged 4 – 11 years old to receive the word of God at their level and in an appropriate way for them. This group is always such good fun to run with lots of high energy kids always excited to tell you about their week and what life looks like for them but also excited to hear about the word of God and the impact that can have on their lives. We get about eight kids per week for this group with a real mix over the ages. I want to say a big thank you to Andy Ball for heading up Sunday club.

Icthians

Icthians is our older version of Sunday club for those ages' year 7 (11 years old) and up. It is fantastic opportunity for the kids to receive and look at the parts of the bible that they want to look at. For example, at the beginning of the year we did a series on difficult questions that the kids wanted to look at because they were asked them at school and so means that they are going to receive teaching that will be really relevant for their lives. As always, a big selling point for that group is the breakfast element to it as well which the kids really enjoy. Thank you to Chris Bird, Danny Hyam, and Isobelle Murray for helping to run that group alongside me.

The future

As I have been reflecting on all our groups now is the time of year where I also look toward the summer holidays and September so that we can start planning ahead. This year has a lot of changes for our young people where our More kids will become sixth formers and a lot of our Net young people will be moving into year 7 and so will be transitioning between groups. Ideally what we would do is to set up a new More group for those moving in from year 6 so that we keep the current More group as it is so that we do not lose those young people. However, in order to do this we desperately need more leaders to safely run the groups. I appreciate all of our current leaders so much however one thing I am very aware of is over working them because we don't have enough other volunteers and so, please do be praying for more volunteers and consider what you could be doing to get involved! I promise all the young people are not that scary!

We are currently working alongside Romsey Abbey to see if a weekend away would be possible for our young people as well as starting plans for another holiday club this year and so there is still plenty going on! We are also looking at starting a new youth group for those in Reception to year 2 (4 – 7 years old) however are currently unable to do so until we get more volunteers.

Please be praying for all the young people and those groups.

Creche

Creche continues to be supervised on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month. We have a small team of 5 volunteers who on a rota basis ensure both parents/carers and young children (under 3) are welcomed to this space and shown the toys and other resources available.

This last year has seen the creche relocated from the Vestry to the South Transept to the righthand side of the dais. This has been a supportive move for all involved, with positive feedback from both helpers and parent/carers. The key benefit of this change is that all involved are now able to listen and take part in the service.

Sue Muldowney

St John's Eco Group report

Over the last year we have organised the following:-

- The monthly litter pick
- The Churches Count on Nature
- The Tearfund Big Quiz Night
- A 'make your own eco friendly Christmas presents' session
- The gas used at St John's was offset via Climate Stewards at the end of the year.
- This year's carbon footprint of both churches was submitted to the C of E as required
- A scavenger hunt was organised as part of the Coronation celebrations.
- Fair Trade fortnight was marked with a Fair Trade stall at both churches
- A table for recycling Christmas presents with donations going to Basics Bank.

There was an environmentally themed service and certificates were handed out to all those who had engaged with the website creationcare.org.uk for the first time or who had moved up a level. We continue to submit regular articles / eco tips to Twin Spires News, Village News, the weekly newsheet and Facebook page.

We are very glad that David Hammond has joined the group and is working hard on trying to reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings by investigating the following

- how the insulation can be improved
- the best form of electric heating when the gas boiler needs replacing
- Installing double glazed window units outside the stained glass

We are also grateful to individuals who take on specific projects. Andy has looked into what the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust could offer and Vanessa has worked on suggestions for engaging with schools in creation care. Caroline finds green tips for the newsheet.

As usual we'd love to hear from anyone who would like to join us.

Claire Thompson

St Boniface Flower Arranger's Report

Thank you very much to all the generous people who give money to our flower fund. We rely totally on donations and manage to provide fresh floral displays throughout the Church every week. We particularly pride ourselves in providing themed decorations for Mothering Sunday, Easter, St Boniface Day, Sea Sunday, Harvest Festival and Christmas - and of course, in particular for this year - the King's Coronation Day!

We were very excited there was 1 wedding in 2023 - on Coronation Day! It was an honour to be arranging flowers for this glorious occasion. The bride and groom were sorry Charles was busy on that day and unable to attend - he missed a delightful ceremony.

We have also arranged flowers for memorial services and funerals as well as bespoke arrangements in the Memorial window, for which relatives/friends have provided funds.

In today's climate of challenging prices for flowers, we have been very blessed with peoples' generosity.

Angela Wright, Avis Wood, Christine Cheetham