



The Parish of Boxmoor

St John's Boxmoor,
St Stephen's Chaulden & St Francis' Hammerfield

The Parish of Boxmoor Annual Parochial Church Meeting

at St. John`s Church Hall, Boxmoor

Tuesday 4 April 2017 at 7.45 pm

Contents

Reports from our daughter churches, PCC committees
and other church organisations.

PLEASE DO NOT
REMOVE FROM
CHURCH

Please see the main booklet for the agenda, minutes of the last annual meeting,
Treasurer's report & audited accounts for 2016, reports on fabric goods &
ornaments, the Deanery Synod and PCC proceedings.

*The contents of this booklet are available to be read on the parish website at
www.stjohnsboxmoor.co.uk*

ST.FRANCIS HAMMERFIELD, REPORT FOR APCM 2017

1. The church raised £505 for the Diocese of Mampong.
2. Two tables were sponsored at Crisis at Christmas
3. Around £300 was raised at the Christmas Carol Service for St. Francis Hospice.
4. A ramp has been constructed for disabled access to the church.
5. A plan is in hand for disabled access to be afforded from the church into the church hall.
6. The hall lets have continued to be buoyant, with £8,900 raised, with much appreciation to Ian.
7. A Candlemass Mass was held on 5 February where the preacher and celebrant was the Bishop of Richborough and a well-attended lunch was held afterwards.
8. A full manning of the organ bench has been maintained, with much appreciation to Paul, Peter and Graham.
9. The congregation are gradually cleaning and polishing the church.
10. The numbers attending worship does not diminish. As people die or move, so their places seem to be taken by others. However various initiatives are in place which aim to give the church greater exposure.
11. One such initiative is the plan to have a periodic presence in the hall of items for sale by St. Francis Hospice and to combine this with coffee. Job is liaising with the Hospice.

Trevor Standen

REPORT FROM ST STEPHEN'S

Our congregation are very faithful and enjoy the variety of worship. We appreciate regular visits from the clergy which enables us to celebrate Holy Communion at least twice a month: on the other Sundays, we welcome Carole Lewis to preach and the Ministry of the Word. When they cannot come, then Richard, Anne and I have permission to lead a service and give a message. This all works out very well.

Our service for St. Stephen's Day was much enjoyed.

A few of us say Morning Prayer with a member of the clergy every Thursday morning.

Minor repairs to the building have been funded by members of the congregation and lettings have brought in £5000 this year. Please see the full financial report on St. Stephen's which is included in the annual account and which shows that the congregation contribute generously to parish funds.

Why not come and join us one Sunday at 11.15 a.m.

Jean Garner

March 2017

BAPTISM GROUP REPORT 2016-17

This Group continues to help families wishing to bring their children for Baptism and to encourage them to become involved in church activities. From January to December 2016. 25 children were baptised at St. John's; and 3 more have been baptised since January this

year. We have 4 children whose parents have still to book a date for this year, and another 4 families booked for preparation shortly.

We have continued to offer preparation sessions monthly during the year and have maintained the previous format which includes a presentation of all the activities taking place at St. John's and where they have the opportunity to look more carefully at the promises they will be making on behalf of their children when they are baptised. Since attending a 'Baptism Day' recently, we are hoping to introduce some new ideas to support and help our new families and involve the congregation in these ideas too. We have continued to invite families to attend the next All Age Service following the Baptism to collect their Baptism Certificate and receive a welcome from the whole congregation. Sadly, this invitation is not always taken up, and we still have 6 Certificates from last year awaiting collection. More baptism families have been attending Tiny Tots and we have tried to encourage participation in our main festivals (such as Mothering Sunday, Harvest, etc.) by sending out special invitations, as well as inviting them to our Children's Celebration Services, which seem popular and fairly well attended. We have been delighted to see several of our more recent baptism families who have now become regular worshippers at our 9.30 services.

Linda Gair has continued to organise the distribution of Baptism Anniversary Cards which is greatly appreciated, but we are always on the lookout for new helpers with this card distribution as we have quite a large area to cover. Please let us know if you would be willing to deliver cards **in your road** as this would be most helpful. We are also lucky to have a special team of Baptism Helpers who are on duty at Baptism Services which are usually held twice a month – again, new helpers always welcome! We are very grateful, also, to our team of organists who provide very valuable musical accompaniment at Baptism Services and particularly to those in our team who help to run the Baptism Preparation sessions with the Clergy.

Annie Mitchell - Baptism Co-ordinator

ST JOHNS CHURCH BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The Bereavement Group is a Team led by the Vicar assisted by Fr. Ben, our Lay Reader Carole Lewis and four members of the congregation.

This year we have welcomed Fr. Ben and Sue Horsnell to our team.

Following a funeral taken by our Clergy we contact the bereaved families and offer our help which usually consists of providing a good listening ear.

We hold regular meetings in strict confidence to discuss between ourselves the best way we can help and to ensure the appropriate person makes contact.

Invitations to the Remembrance Service in November are sent to the families of the bereaved where our Clergy have officiated at the funerals during the past year. We have found that this Service provides a focus for the bereaved and provides comfort to the families.

The friendship teas provide an opportunity for the bereaved to meet new people and make new friends at a very difficult time. We try to encourage those now left on their own to come along.

Valerie Darvill - Bereavement Group Coordinator

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

The primary focus of Churches Together is the Walk of Witness and service in the town centre on Good Friday. This was a great success last year despite some issues with people being unable to hear. This year a more family friendly approach is being sought and it is hoped that families and children will be encouraged to attend. Christmas Carol singing also took place in the Marlowes together with a number of forums with visiting speakers and a very well attended Hustings before the European referendum last year. The trustees are currently investigating setting up a Churches Together rambling group if there is sufficient interest.

Churches Together also continue to work closely with the Night Pastors who provide an important ministry in the town centre on Friday nights, and Christians against Poverty.

Regular 'Pray Hemel' meetings continue to be held at various locations and attract a steady attendance. One such session was held at the site of the new Liberty Tea Rooms in the town centre, after much planning this project is now progressing well and it will be good to have a prominent Christian presence in the town centre. It is hoped that many congregants of local churches will drop in when in the town. Other Christian organisations will also be based there. Further funds need to be raised and people are encouraged to pledge £1.00 a week.

Father Ben

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Communications Committee is responsible for all the various aspects of communication within Boxmoor Parish and for the parish's interactions with parishioners, the general public, the local press, our website and our representation on social media.

The Committee has met 4 times since the last APCM in April 2016. Alan Munford stood down as Chair at that time and left the committee. I agreed to take over the position in May. We are enormously grateful to Alan for his work as Chair and also for his continuing work outside the Committee, without which the communications of the parish just would not happen. Among other things Alan organises the distribution of the parish Christmas and Easter service cards, keeping up to date with new housing developments in the parish, the printing of banners for events, posters for events, and not least the distribution of the parish magazine. More volunteers as always needed to deliver magazines and the seasonal cards. We are grateful for the help of some of the Tiny Tots mums. We acknowledge the support of David Doyle estate agents in the village who kindly sponsored some of our banners.

Marion Roff usually hosts our meetings, and we appreciate her kind hospitality. Gratitude is owed to Peter Garner who has managed to do most of the printing work in-house at minimal cost. Sally-Anne Bates has continued her sterling work on the magazine and Annie is still striving against the odds to produce the Newsletter each week. These are both demanding tasks and need support from all of us. The newsletter is now sent out to around 50 people by email each week.

Our meetings always discuss the magazine, the newsletter, the website, past and future events viewed in the communications context. It is hoped that the new website will be up and running before too long. The process has unfortunately taken much longer than anticipated. Stacey Barton has kindly taken on the responsibility for the Facebook page and

is liaising with the Vicar on updating our profile. We have undertaken to constantly review our purpose in communication within the parish in the modern world. The Committee can only communicate if people communicate with us.

One revolutionary departure this year was the video advertising the Christmas Tree Festival which appeared on the big screen in the Marlowes. This was made possible by Stacey Barton's expertise.

A decision was taken not to produce a parish calendar for sale this year following disappointing sales the previous year. Instead packets of Christmas cards, which included the names of participating churches, were sold at a small profit to the parish.

We look forward to improving the parish's communications in the next year.

Anne Lyne

March 2017

CRAFTY COFFEE

Crafty Coffee meets occasionally on a **Saturday morning** in St John's Church.

We have enjoyed a variety of crafts and fellowship.

People are always welcome to come and join in and have a coffee and a chat and perhaps try a new skill.

We recently did a "show and tell" of needlework skills of a bygone age and we have discovered many treasures which we hope to incorporate in a future display.

Sue Horsnell and

Dee Fisher

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC'S REPORT: 2016

In the absence of a Director of Music this report has been written by the Vicar.

The musical life of the Parish continues to be the envy of neighbouring parishes. Throughout 2016 we were fortunate to have in post Linden Innes-Hopkins as our Director of Music. Her sensitivity and skill in playing and leading a choir have been much appreciated. It is with sadness that she announced she would be leaving the role in February 2017 and the quest for a new Director of Music has already begun.

Recruitment and retention of singers has proved difficult during the year. Our senior trebles, (Gina, Tegan, and Faye) with the demands of school exams, employment, and family circumstances have needed to leave the choir whilst some younger members have been recruited. The back row has also suffered this year through ill health. But despite all this, the standard and quality of music offered in praise of God has been truly astounding.

Sincere thanks to Marian Davies for helping with the trebles and to Paul Davies – both for his role in producing the monthly Music List and for his honorary role as organist at St Francis. I should also like to thank all our willing amateur organists for the fabulous job they do in helping lead us in worship.

2017 will be a difficult year without a fixed person at the helm but it is hoped we shall be able to appoint someone to the role as soon as possible.

ST. JOHN'S FREEWILL WEEKLY OFFERING ENVELOPE SCHEME 2016-2017

There are currently 23 members of the Envelope Scheme (from St. John's and St. Stephen's) who valuably contribute to church funds in this way on a weekly basis through our collection plate. We are very grateful to all who assist the financial planning of our parish by pledging and donating in this way. The total amount given through the Scheme this year was **£9,405** of which £1,126 was Gift Aided. New members of the Scheme are always welcome. If you would like to join the Scheme, please contact David Mitchell 01442 254480 for details.

When counting the offertory money, the St. John's numbered envelopes (**blue** last year, **yellow** this year beginning April) should be opened carefully along the top, the amount inside written on the envelope, and both envelope and contents placed in the appropriate bag for that service. **It is very important that the number is not torn off. If this should happen inadvertently, please sellotape it back on again!** This is very important for our records and Gift-Aid reclamation.

Please do not forget to fill in the Service record slip and place it in the bag.

During the past year on several occasions the above instructions have not been followed and this has resulted in great difficulty in our record keeping.

David Mitchell

2016 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GIVING COMMITTEE

The committee's main focus during 2016 was on Stewardship. Letters were sent seeking increased giving to all existing Planned Givers (whether giving via Standing Order, Envelope or cheque) seeking increased contributions. All members of the Electoral Roll not currently Planned Givers were also written to asking those who could to join one of the schemes for regular giving. Sermons in our churches promoted to all the need for regular contributions and introduced the new Parish Giving Scheme for those who are able to Gift Aid their giving. Responses were mixed with fewer new givers materialising than hoped for. However, uptake of the Parish Giving Scheme was higher than anticipated and overall income from Planned Giving was increased by over 16% p.a., beating the 15% p.a. target the Committee had been challenged with.

Thus, from annual receipts of £60,950 in 2015, Planned Giving rose to £67,431 in 2016 and the full year effect is reflected in the 2017 budget of £71,000.

Chris Angell, Parish Treasurer.

4/3/17

FRIENDSHIP TEAS

Now in its 12th year, Friendship Teas are still flourishing; offering a feast of fellowship, food and friendly conversation, on the second Thursday of each month. We seek to offer a friendly ear and an understanding heart, as well as companionship, frequent fun and occasional frivolity.

Again, this year, we have been pleased to sponsor 'Hope for Children' at the Christmas Tree Festival, and donated to Bibles for Children in our local primary schools. We have also donated goods to 'Dacorum Food Bank'.

None of this would be possible without the help of those who bake, make sandwiches, or prepare and serve. In addition, many people would not be able to come at all, without the transport so thoughtfully provided by our drivers, whose help is much appreciated.

If you know of someone who is going through a difficult time, or would simply enjoy some extra company once a month, they would be very welcome. Of course, we would, love to see you too; come as a helper or a guest, and bring your friends.

There are details in the magazine, on flyers and posters in the church, or from Gill and Ian Williams (256216).

2016 REPORT FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The committee met under the Chairmanship of Cathy Shaw less frequently in 2016 than in 2015 as the PCC had asked that only "regular" events be organised to allow the Parish to recover from the unprecedented raft of events and appeals undertaken in 2015. Nevertheless, net receipts from the events held exceeded their 2015 levels as under:

Christmas Tree Festival £4,216 (£4,047 in 2015)

Countdown to Christmas Fair £2,616 (£2,608 in 2015)

Quiz nights £1,386 (£1,315 in 2015)

and a great deal of enjoyment was generated through the hard work of the many volunteers involved and the enthusiasm of those attending. Whilst fundraising is vital the outreach achieved through our regular events is equally important.

In addition, various sales of work and produce and the sale of Church Christmas Cards raised a further £731 making the net total raised a very useful £8,949 for the General Fund.

Direct giving to the Organ Appeal (largely generous donations from Music at St John's) amounted to £3,047, reducing the transfers needed from General Fund to repay loans, whilst donations to the Fabric Fund totalled £2,225, largely to support essential repair works at St Stephen's.

Chris Angell

4/3/17

ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL MANAGEMENT REPORT 2016-2017

The re-formed Hall Management Committee met for the first time in October 2016 and a second meeting has now been held.

Our first task was to employ a new cleaner following the resignation of Ms. Poulter. Our new cleaner Ms. Martin, now works two mornings each week, from 07.30 to 09.30, and is undertaking the role very well indeed.

The Hall Hire fees were increased from January 1st and all hall users were advised of the increase.

The hall dividers were serviced in November.

The intention is to redecorate the Hall, Passageway and Toilets using voluntary labour during the summer months, firm dates for this work are still to be confirmed.

Peter Garner – Hall Co-ordinator.

THE KNITTING CIRCLE

The Knitting Circle has continued into its fifth year and meets from time to time on a Monday afternoon at Marion Roff's flat.

At the start of this year we again knitted Easter Chicks and Bunnies to sell in church and raised £100 for church fund.

We produced a variety of goods for our stall at the Autumn Fair but our most successful item is still the knitted crib which sells well so we are knitting away on the crib figures throughout the year.

After Easter, we shall be knitting little blankets for children who come to us for Baptism.

If you like knitting, come and join us for a chat and a cup of tea and know that at the same time you are using your talents to help church funds.

Jean Garner

March 2017

ST JOHN'S MENS CLUB

Following discussions at the Annual General Meeting in May, every member was contacted and asked for their opinion on the future of the Club. It was decided that with falling numbers and it becoming increasingly embarrassing to invite speakers to our meetings only to find they were talking to a very small audience to discontinue as a group.

We did, however, complete the programme of events already arranged. Our outing in June took us to Bentley Priory Museum at Stanmore, which in the Second World War became the headquarters of Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain in 1940. In July, we held our annual dinner at Old Hunters Lodge at Whippsnade, which proved to be a very convivial evening with an excellent meal.

One of the aims of the Men's Club was that we should meet for fellowship and so when we disbanded it was requested that we retain our annual men only Christmas supper (duly held at our usual venue of the White Horse at Bourne End in December) and continue with the annual dinner with guests in the summer.

The Men's Club had been in existence for over 30 years and it is interesting to note that of the 25 original members, three were members throughout all that time, namely Alan Darvill, Andreas Ioannou and Ian Williams.

In September, we joined with the Home and Family Group on an informal basis, which was formalised at the AGM in February when the name was change to Together on Monday, a title encompassing both ladies and gentlemen.

Graham Gibbs

MUSIC AT ST JOHN'S

I am pleased to report that *Music at St John's* enjoyed another very successful year organising 6 fundraising events which raised money for our charitable funds. In addition, we also sponsored a further 6 events, particularly focusing on young people, helping to further the aims of the charity of promoting "Music and the Performing Arts to the local community" and strengthening still further our links with Dacorum Music School and other Primary schools in our parish.

Our Annual New Year Concert in January set the high standard of music making for the year. The St John's String Ensemble were joined by The Aurora Trio and under the direction of Rufus Frowde provided a high-quality concert which was attended by a large audience.

In April, we welcomed our old friend and virtuoso concert pianist Alexander Ardakov who delighted us with some of the most popular pieces in the piano repertoire.

The St Albans Abbey Girls' Choir made their first visit to St John's in May and under the direction of Tom Winpenny they delighted the good audience with some wonderful singing. We were grateful to Linden Innes-Hopkins for making the arrangements for this very special concert.

In September, The Vale Symphonic Wind Band made their annual visit to St John's and as always provided us with lasting memories of a special evening's musical entertainment. Thanks go to Sheena Wilson who organises visits from 'The Vale'.

Our Music Festival in November went very well, but once again the Saturday evening's concert was not well attended. This was such a pity as the Next Stage Choir from St Albans gave us a real treat with some community choir favourites.

Our final fundraising event of the year was our Annual New Year's Eve Run/Walk. More people join us each year and we are grateful to John Garner for organising this for us.

Turning to the events which were sponsored by *Music at St John's* three 'Unisound' days were arranged when children from our local primary schools come to St John's and play either Recorders, Stringed or Wind instruments together. They learn pieces of music during the morning in readiness for a concert which they give to their parents in the afternoon. These events are organised by Dacorum Music School, and in Camille Malaway's absence on maternity leave, we were very pleased to welcome Andy Nice onto our board for the year.

We also sponsored and arranged our annual 'Unisong' and 'Woofyt' days at St John's and it is clear from the response from our local Primary Schools that the popularity to participate in these two events grows each year. I am extremely grateful to Paul Davies and Richard Lyne for organising these two events for us.

We promoted two series of Friday Lunchtime Concerts through the year, one in early summer and one in the autumn. I am extremely grateful to Anna Le Hair, Paul Davies and Linden Innes-Hopkins for booking the artists and organising the publicity for these concerts which are now becoming part of the 'musical scene' in Hemel Hempstead. Our very grateful thanks also go to Di Tovey, Janet and Ian Packe for providing lunches to the concert goers. All the proceeds from these Lunchtime Concerts, together with the profits from 'Pipe Sponsorship' and our 'Percentage Club' are given to the PCC for the 'Organ Fund'.

I am also so pleased to record that during the last year we launched our 'Music Bursary' scheme. This new award is aimed at helping and providing financial support to local young musicians. It may be that we can help towards the purchase of books or music directly related to their studies or appropriate training course, and in certain circumstances we can provide financial help with examination fees etc.

Having launched the scheme, it is even more pleasing to record that a number of successful applications for Bursary have already been awarded.

In closing I offer my very grateful thanks to my fellow MASJ board members for their commitment, hard work and loyalty to our charity throughout the year. In conclusion on behalf of us all can I thank you our supporters who give of your time to support the events we organise throughout the year – thank you.

Peter Garner – Chairman

PARISH MAGAZINE

325 magazines are printed monthly by KallKwik Printers in Marlowes. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Alan Munford for all his hard work in collecting the magazines from the Printers and for making up the bundles for distribution and collecting the money in. Thanks also to Gill and Ian Williams who send out the postal copies. Special thanks to Trevor Boyce who looks after the advertising side so well and we are still getting new advertisers even in this difficult economic climate and to Annie Mitchell for the support she gives me on the editorial side and to David Mitchell for providing all the wonderful photos for all the events in our parish life. I would also like to personally thank Reverend Michael Macey, Reverend Jeanette Gosney, The Reverend Benjamin Weitzmann, Carole Lewis, Alan Munford, Peter Garner, Jean Garner, Graham Gibbs, Chris Angell, Mark Harbour, Philippa Graham and the various Groups and Organisations for all their contributions on a regular basis and also to Alison Jackson, Parish Administrator for her monthly support in preparing the Parish Diary and Registers to send to me and to everyone else who supports me as Editor of the Parish Magazine. Thanks also to all the distributors who work so hard in delivering the magazines on a monthly basis and would always welcome anyone new who wanted to join the team.

Items can be e-mailed direct to me at magazine@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk which helps to make my job as Editor much easier but, of course; items can still be left in my pigeonhole or delivered direct to 27 Beechfield Road. *Would you please note that any article sent by e-mail should be produced in A5 portrait format (preferably in MS Word or MS Publisher format).* I would welcome any ideas, comments or even complaints regarding the Magazine (*how it can be improved*) or to receive "letters to the Editor". Also, if you know of anyone who would like to receive this publication on a regular basis, please contact either Alan Munford (242543) or myself with their details or ask them to complete the slip which appears in the magazine, our distribution numbers are still low and we would welcome new readers or any suggestions on how to promote the magazine to reach more members of our local community. The monthly price has remained at 60p or £6 for the year.

The Magazine is a very important "vehicle" for communicating what is going on in our Boxmoor Parish including any fund-raising events towards "Music at St. John's", a community project. Please keep reading the Magazine! and let me have your suggestions of what you would like to see appear, which I will try to accommodate, space permitting!

Sally Bates, Editor HH 266912

REPORT FROM ST JOHN'S PASTORAL TEAM FOR APCM 2017

The remit of the pastoral team has remained during the past year to ensure as far as possible that people's pastoral needs are met and that vulnerable people do not fall off the church's radar. Some of the team are licensed to take Home Communion services and all have people whom they visit on a regular basis. The team meets regularly to share information and bring needs to the attention of the group for action where necessary. Meetings are chaired by the vicar. Due to the sensitive nature of such information, minutes of the meetings are not published and the information is kept within the team unless it is necessary to involve outside agencies, which is always done with care and with the consent of the person involved.

Carole Lewis

ST. JOHN'S POETRY GROUP 2016-2017

The Poetry Group is still meeting on the second Monday in each month, at 2.15pm at 53 Beechfield Road, Boxmoor. Although numbers are down to seven people now, there is an enjoyment in reading poetry to each other on the topic for the month, be it Christmas, Easter, seasonal, romantic, humour, etc., with tea, biscuits and a chat in the middle.

Ken Farmborough still looks after the finances but can't attend often because he is caring for his brother.

In December, Marion Cowe invited us all to her house for a special meeting and also to celebrate Christmas. We sponsored a tree in the Festival to the carol:-

Who can tell what other cradle,
High above the Milky Way,
Still may rock the King of Heaven,
On another Christmas Day.

We are still hoping more people will join our little group.

Carole Crowhurst

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The remit of the Social Committee is to arrange non-profit making events to encourage members of the congregation and members of the public to meet together socially in a relaxed atmosphere.

In July, we held another very successful Family Fun Day. Although it was damp to start with Andreas, Alan and John did a splendid job cooking the chops and sausages on the barbecue and people sat inside the church to eat lunch. Then the weather cleared up and we were able to sit outside and chat while the children made use of the bouncy castle and other games and crafts provided. We are most grateful to Matt Hart and family who very kindly lend and run the bouncy castle every year (with no charge).

The next event was the Harvest lunch. The menu this time was a roast beef dinner. The desserts were provided by members of the congregation which helps to keep the costs down, lightens the catering load and provides a wide variety of puddings from which to choose. It is a shame that we cannot persuade more of the younger families to join us. It would be lovely to see more children there.

Posh Nosh was held in the Hall on New Year's Eve which followed the usual pattern of a three-course meal interspersed with games and quizzes. The evening ends with the singing of Auld Lang Syne and New Year greetings exchanged all round. We then go outside and watch the fireworks going off all around and then home to bed.

On Shrove Tuesday, we held the pancake party in the hall with 14 children and several babes in arms accompanied by mums, dads and/or grandparents. The children raced excitedly up and down the hall tossing their pancakes. There was no rematch this year between the Vicar and the Curate, Ben having found he needed to attend a meeting and arrived back too late to race. One nil to Mike. Di and Marion Howard were on pancake duty and at least forty pancakes were consumed.

2017/18 will probably follow the same pattern. The Parish Fun Day and barbecue is booked for Sunday, 9th July - so pray for fine weather.

If anyone has any for ideas of family activities we could lay on please speak to a committee member. They are Lorraine Ioannou, Emma Macey and Kim Morgan.

Lorraine Ioannou

SPARROWS AND EAGLES REPORT TO APCM APRIL 2017

I am pleased to provide a report to the APCM on behalf of the Sparrows and Eagles children's groups at St Johns.

As always, we are hugely grateful for the support we have had over the last year from those who have helped in our groups, and want to express our thanks to all. I would also like to express my thanks to Sheena Wilson for the commitment she has continued to give to the work of these groups over the past year, despite the considerable time pressures of lay reader training.

The last year has seen a few developments in the activity and operation of our groups which are worthy of report. The two groups have been meeting as a single group since last Easter. This has in part been driven by the number of leaders available over the past year (= 2 regular) and by week-on-week shifts in the age-ranges of children attending, meaning the attendance at each Sparrows and Eagles grouping was hard to predict. However, the bringing together of the two groups has offered opportunity to work together on longer thematic pieces of work across a number of weeks (e.g. 'The temptations in the desert', 'Epiphany footsteps' as well as following the series of 7 sermon topics that were followed in Church in the autumn with matched thematic junior church sessions). We hope this offers greater coherence across the sessions and provides increased opportunity to review stories and concepts discussed in previous weeks.

We've been delighted to welcome several new young members into our midst over the past year and are enjoying the increasing overlap in attendance with those who attend mid-week children's activities at the Church.

We would be delighted if the congregation at St John's could continue to support and connect with the children by following what we are doing week-on-week through looking at the children's altar and the board on the window ledge next to it. We are trying to keep the board up-to-date with what we have been doing week-on-week, so it is a good way to get a flavour of what we are thinking about and creating through in the hall each Sunday.

We look forward to the year ahead, with the prospect of a new leader joining with us to support this work. As ever, if people would be interested to support our sessions by helping on occasion we would be delighted to talk them through what's involved and to welcome them!

Rosie Shaw

March 2017

TINY TOTS REPORT 2016-17

Our weekly term-time meetings and services at Tiny Tots have continued to attract new families during the year. Many of these have come along through Baptism enquiries and it has been rewarding to welcome some of these on Sundays as well, especially at our All Age

Services. It is also good to see more grandparents bringing the little ones along once their mums go back to work, and to offer an opportunity for them to meet, as well as mums with their first babies. Many long-term friendships develop from introductions at Tiny Tots, and our service of Action Songs and Prayers provides a good start on our Tots' Christian journeys. At the end of the summer term we had 74 names in our Register, and most weeks between 15-20 little ones attended. However, having lost a few children to Pre-School in the autumn, we still have about 65 names in our Register, with several new babies being born boosting our numbers, more on the way and a few new families joining us this term!

Last summer's picnic went well – we were blessed with a glorious day and many of you will have seen the wonderful collage of photos which 'Auntie Carole' produced, showing what fun was had by all. Thanks to Angela Green with grand-daughter Felicity, and others, the 'toy shop' at our Autumn Fayre was a success. We decorated a Christmas Tree with 'our little angels' this year for the Festival in December. Our January New Year Party was another joyful occasion and all the children went home with a little book, balloon and a chocolate treat.

We are fortunate to have piano accompaniment for our singing each week from Jean Garner and Mary Bennett – it is much appreciated.

I would especially like to say a big thank you to Di Tovey for all the help she gives, especially with the setting up of the hall and clearing away afterwards, keeping the Register and welcoming newcomers, and I have been extremely grateful to Yvonne Munford for her help too, especially with the craft activities, as well as all the other support, ideas and help she gives each week. We are so grateful to our wonderful band of ladies in the kitchen – Jean Garner, Linda Gair, Christine Waters, Josie Gower and Jane Prew-Bridgwood, and to Angela Green and Barbara Higgs who have been helping out on a regular basis. Dear Josie has recently decided the time has come for her to 'hang up her tea towel', and we shall really miss her, but are so grateful for all the many years she has dedicated to our group. Thanks are also due the groups who help to set up the hall the night before, and to Father Mike and Father Ben for helping with the new layout of seating in church and also being with us whenever they can - it is so much appreciated by us all and lovely for the mums to have the chance to get to know the Clergy. We are also fortunate to have 'Auntie' Carole Lewis, our Reader, as our story-teller most weeks – our older Tots really enjoy the Bible Stories and the antics of Mr Monkey!

All of us involved with Tiny Tots feel that this is such an important part of Christian ministry – as ever, we would really appreciate **more help** to keep this vital work going in all sorts of ways – please contact the Vicar or me if you are interested, particularly with setting up the hall or helping with craft activities on Tuesdays.

Annie Mitchell

TOGETHER ON MONDAY

Since the last APCM report there have been big changes in our Home and Family group. It was suggested in September that we amalgamate with the Men's Club as their numbers were diminishing. This proved successful so at our AGM in February 2017 we became one group and changed our name to Together on Monday.

Our programme has ranged from a very interesting and informative talk about the work of Remap, who we decided would be our charity for 2016, to an evening of song by the

Chiltern Ladies choir. We also had a talk about the Donkey Sanctuary at Sidmouth and we were given an insight into the invaluable work of the Medical Detection Dogs. Our "Home Grown" speakers included Father Ben who talked to us during Lent, Noel James told us about his Norwegian cruise and Jean Garner spoke about the Magic Roundabout and reminded us how Hemel Hempstead used to be.

We played bingo and had a cream tea in July. Sue Brown showed us how attractive a cup and some flowers could look which was great fun. Sue Proehl arranged a very enjoyable visit to the Swiss Garden. We also had talks on Berkhamsted Castle, the Mercy Ships, Work Aid and the Blood Runners, all very different topics but all interesting. At our Christmas meeting, we saw two very amusing films and had an excellent buffet.

There are copies of our programme on the table at the back of church. Why not come along to one of our meetings and see what goes on, you will be most welcome.

Di Tovey Leader

REPORT FROM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP FOR THE APCM 2016

The Fellowship meets at 2.30 p.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month throughout the year and as our name suggests, we enjoy the fellowship of meeting friends, old and new.

This past year all our speakers have been from the church including Fr. Ben, our curate, Lorraine, our church warden and Rev. Austin James, the vicar of Grovehill. Austin amazed us with his puppet skills and explained how he uses them in his Ministry. In June at our garden party, we celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday and in November we made the decorations for our Festival Christmas Tree.

Our numbers are quite small and we welcome new members. You can be sure of a warm welcome and fellowship. Dates and details of meetings are in the magazine and the weekly church newsletter.

Jean Garner

March 2017

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee, chaired by the Vicar, has met three times during the year to discuss the liturgy of St John's, planning services and reviewing their outcome.

Membership comprises representatives from all three churches in the parish. At our last meeting we thanked Linden Innes-Hopkins, who resigned in February as Director of Music, for the time she had spent training the choir and for her ministry among us.

Among the topics which have been discussed are :-

1. The continual monitoring of the weekly attendance in all three churches which show that generally numbers are holding their own. Despite parking being an issue at St John's attendance at the Sunday 9.30am service remains at about 100. It has been noted that numbers at the Wednesday morning Communion service have increased.
2. Arrangements for special services held during the year, of which there have been a number of memorable ones, such as the Civic Service, Choral Evensong to mark The Queen's 90th birthday, a Thanksgiving Mass at St Francis to mark the Curate's

ordination as a priest, a liturgical version of Faure's Requiem, Confirmation, Britten's Ceremony of Carols and the Christmas cycle. It was particularly gratifying to record that a total of 1470 (1116 adults and 354 children) attended St John's on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.

3. Review of the major services which take place between meetings, commenting on what has gone well and noting those things which need to be improved in the future. The Sermon series, which took place in the Sunday morning services in September and October had worked really well. It had united the parish with all three churches doing the same thing, including the youth, and resulted in eight people being confirmed. The booklet which accompanied the series had been particularly helpful in the discussion groups.
4. The work of the choir which was reported by the Director of Music. Choir numbers have fallen and there are now a small of choristers. Recruiting from local schools has not produced a response and much careful thought needs to be given on how we move forward.
5. The meeting with Sidespersons, who are the welcoming "face" of the church.

We would like to express our thanks to all those who, in their various ways, work to ensure that services in the parish are offered to the highest possible liturgical standard.

Graham Gibbs

YOUTH MEETS AM

Since last writing the Youth Meets AM group has undergone a few changes with a couple of members leaving as they reach school leaving age and a couple of new members joining as they started at secondary school. The ethos of the group has remained the same, helping to develop and deepen the faith of the younger members of our church.

As a group, we finished looking at The History of the Church and are always looking at different topics that we can discuss. During the summer break, when the clergy take a well-earned rest, an opportunity arose for me to take one of the Sunday evening services.

However, I thought it would be a good opportunity for our younger members to broaden their repertoire and add the writing and taking of the service instead. So, with the help of myself, Richard, Marian and Philippa the group picked the theme and then picked the hymns, wrote the prayers and importantly who was doing what and when. They all enjoyed the challenge and delivered a meaningful and thought provoking service.

Since the summer, we have followed the sermon series, discussed prayer, discussed Remembrance Sunday and on Stir up Sunday Marian made Christmas Cakes with them to take home and bake themselves. Following on from the sermon series one of our group took the decision to get confirmed, congratulations Lesley, we look forward to all being part of your faith journey.

We are looking forward to learning and experiencing many new things as we grow as a group.

Jo Fisher