



The Parish of Boxmoor

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

The Parish of Boxmoor Annual Parochial Church Meeting

In St. John`s Church, Boxmoor

Sunday 22 April 2018 at 9.30 am

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 2017, 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 APCM REPORT 2018

We are very grateful to Fr. Ben, The Vicar, Frs Dr. Digby Anderson, Alexander McGregor, Martin Banister, Malcom Grant and Robert Van Der Weyer for preaching and presiding during the year. The Bishop of Richborough preached and presided on 31 December and the congregation of SFH led the liturgy at the Richborough Festival at St Alban's Abbey last August and will do so again this August.

The Guild of the Servers of the Sanctuary have been to SFH for two services during the year. The Hemel Hempstead Singers performed Messiah and having discovered the suitability of the acoustics, are due to return again.

Over £350 was raised for the Hospice of St. Francis at the Carol Service and a programme of fund raising events is being planned with the Hospice commencing with a two-day date in May/Spring when items from the Hospice Shops will be brought to the church for sale. Concurrently there will be an exhibition of vestments and refreshments will be provided.

SFH as well as sponsoring a Christmas Tree, sponsored the provision of refreshments for Crisis at Christmas at a meal given at Christmas. The Hall funds continue to provide a very good revenue stream and we are very grateful to Ian Packe for overseeing this and to Jo Fisher for assembling the accounts.

The numbers worshipping at SFH have not declined during the last 7 years and if anything, have slightly risen. Jana Pick died during the year. Further worshippers have started to appear.

The church is very grateful to Paul Peter and Graham for their regular playing of the organ.

The church is very grateful to Fr. Ben for all that he has done. He has helped very much in the provision of Evensong and Benediction, and has through his handyman skills, performed many jobs around the church (including the provision of the monitor for the organ and the upgrading of the microphone system.

A ramp has been provided, which helps enormously for the disabled and elderly. The fabric of the church is in good order and a working party of volunteers has a programme of ongoing maintenance in hand.

Trevor Standen

REPORT FROM ST STEPHEN'S

As a congregation we try to minister particularly to the elderly which is a great joy. However, this year we have sadly had to say goodbye to Mary Willis and Ann Frogley who have died. 3 more regular members are now in Care Homes and only able to worship occasionally. However, we shall continue to be a witness to the Church of England in Chaulden as long as possible.

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 and Sheena Wilson to lead worship and to preach. 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 and during Lent we have celebrated Holy Communion with a number of our friends from St. John's.

Expenditure on the building has been minimal. 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 2018

BAPTISM GROUP REPORT 2017-18

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 2017, 13 children were baptised at St John's; and 1 at St Francis – quite a significant drop in numbers from previous years. We have baptised 4 more little ones since January this year and another 7 are already booked in for the coming months. 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 gives them the opportunity to look more carefully at the promises they will be making on behalf of their children when they are baptised, in particular bringing their children to church regularly. We have continued to invite families to attend the next All Age Service following the Baptism to collect their Baptism Certificates and receive a welcome from the whole congregation. Sadly this invitation is not always taken up, and we still have several 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 - the turnout for these has been disappointing this year so the Youth Committee has been looking at ways to address this and encourage more families to come along and join in the fun!

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 the card delivery 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 of great help. We are also lucky to have a special team of Baptism Helpers who are on duty at Baptism Services. However, we really need some new helpers as several of our previous helpers have had to retire – please let us know if you would like to join our team – services are usually the first and third Sundays of the month at 11.30, so it's not that frequent, and it is so encouraging for new families to be welcomed by a friendly face. We are very grateful, also, to our team of organists who provide very valuable musical accompaniment at Baptism Services and also 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.

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.

After we have made contact we send a copy of our monthly magazine to the bereaved family together with the dates of the forthcoming Friendship Teas.

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.

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.

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 with the previous issues of people being unable to hear having been resolved. A more family friendly approach was trialled, though it was disappointing that more families and children did not attend. Christmas Carol singing also took place in the Marlowes together with a number of forums with visiting speakers and a (somewhat poorly attended) Hustings before the General Election. A Churches Together rambling group has also been set up, with a successful first meeting.

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, including in October at St John's. After much planning, the new Liberty Tea Room in Bank Court is now open, and it is 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

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MARCH 2018

The Communications Committee of the PCC is responsible for all the various aspects of communication within Boxmoor Parish and for the parish's representation to the wider world.

By the time of the APCM 2018, the Communications Committee will have met 6 times since the last APCM. We gained 2 extra members from the PCC after the last APCM. I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their participation. Since September, at the Vicar's request, meetings of multiple committees have been held concurrently in the Hall so that he can attend more than one meeting in an evening. For Comms this has meant a change from the congenial surroundings of Marion Roff's home and we are very grateful to Marion for her kind hospitality over the years.

We are constantly trying to improve our communications outreach, to bring the parish communications into the 21st century and hopefully reach a younger generation. The parish now has 174 followers on Facebook. Alan Munford and I have both been "sharing" parish event publicity with other local Facebook groups to spread the word. This clearly works, as we were contacted by one group who wanted to share publicity for Mothering Sunday services. Unfortunately, the big screen in the Marlowes seems to be out of action and we have been unable to make use of it. The Vicar is keen that all material generated by the parish for whatever form of media should bear the same logo, to create a visual parish identity for all events and publicity.

The parish magazine has been produced mostly by the efforts of Sally-Anne Bates for many years, and we are immensely grateful to Sally for her efforts and to Alan Munford for organising the printing and distribution. During 2017, when Sally had to take 3 months' sick leave, Alan Munford and Alison Jackson in the Parish Office took on the production of the magazine until Sally's return to fitness. The magazine forms part of our outreach to parishioners who cannot come to church and we are grateful to the volunteers who ensure the delivery of the magazines. Our thanks also go to Annie Mitchell who, with the help of Alison Jackson manages through thick and thin to produce the weekly Newsletter, keeping us all up to date. Each week 71 copies of the Newsletter are now being sent out by email.

The Committee is responsible for the production and the printing of the parish Christmas card (6,900 copies) and Easter card (4,000 copies.) This year, the cards were designed by the clergy in consultation with the Committee and we would like to thank Fr Ben and Alan Munford for the printing (in-house at St Francis) and Alan for organising the distribution so efficiently both at Christmas and at Easter. We are indebted to volunteers who take on the various “walks” to deliver the cards and we would ask the congregation to volunteer for this task, if at all possible. Too many “walks” were left undone at Christmas, but all the cards were delivered at Easter.

Stacey Barton has devoted a great deal of time and expertise to the development of the new parish website, in conjunction with the Vicar. This eagerly-awaited new website was nearly completed and due to be launched at Advent 2017, but sadly those working on the website found themselves suddenly locked out of it. The unlocking process is proving much more complicated than initially thought and taking much longer. We are very disappointed that it has not yet come on-line and hope that it will be unlocked very soon so that we can have access to our new site. Until then, we will maintain the old site as best we can while it is still functioning, although elements of it will soon become obsolete.

On behalf of the Committee I have been able to develop a working relationship with Boxmoor Direct magazine and now have a contact at the Gazette, but we are constantly seeking other means of communication and suggestions are welcome. Our attempts to reach local radio have been unsuccessful.

It was decided not to produce a parish calendar this year following poor returns for a lot of time and effort in recent years. Once more we are grateful to Fr Ben who, for the second year running, obtained Christmas cards containing the names of our churches, to be sold on behalf of parish funds.

I should like to record my gratitude to Alan Munford for all the work he does in publicity and communications for the parish, despite no longer being a member of the Committee. The eye-catching banners which appear outside St John’s to advertise Church Seasons or events, are organised by Alan. The noticeboards also rely on Alan’s work and also that of Fr Ben. Fr Ben has contributed enormously to the parish’s public outreach in many ways and we will miss him when he moves on in the summer.

Good communication can only be achieved if it is coordinated and well-directed and has to be from top down and bottom up, to ensure that those who need to know do know what is happening. It is essential that the Communications Committee should be informed of services and events in good time if we are to be involved in publicising them properly. We must ensure that we are a parish working together to form a coherent whole if we are to be efficient.

Anne Lyne

March 2018

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

First may I thank everyone for the warm welcome and endless encouragement that I have received at St John’s from the choir, the congregation and the clergy. I am particularly grateful to Paul and Marian Davies for all they do and have done to maintain the music since my predecessor left.

I've been engaged to some extent with the choir now for almost a year, though mostly in the background. It's a pleasure to work with such a capable group. During this Lent and Holy week, I've felt much more fully engaged both with the clergy and the choir. The highlight so far has been the liturgical performance of the Faure Requiem on Passion Sunday. This was with orchestra and also benefited from a good deal of help from members of my former church in Chipperfield who greatly enjoyed participating. Such ventures are quite costly, and I am grateful for the financial support from MASJ and the PCC which enabled it to happen. I hope that it will be the first of such events as we move forward. Since then we have all continued to work together to provide music at numerous Lent and Easter services both at St John's and St Francis.

The success of the Faure was at least in part through its drawing in of a much bigger congregation than we normally see at Evening services, including Choral Evensong, into each one of which much effort goes. It would be great if this were a trend!

Numbers in the core group of the choir are of concern, highlighted by the recent valedictory of Fiona Hadley as Head Chorister. I have no magic solution to this and in some ways, I feel it reflects changes of our times. The continued loyalty of Amy and Josh is admirable, and I think everyone needs to tell them so! One solution for special services in my short time has been to pay singers, as do London churches. Whilst this is costly of course, its benefits go well beyond providing a voice or two where parts are actually missing but enables the entire ensemble to sound fuller and more confident. This doesn't mean that I don't heartily celebrate and thank the regular group for their continued devoted loyalty. However, the extent to which recruitment of new volunteer voices, young and mature, can solve this problem is one that needs to be in the mind everyone in church who cares about maintaining the strong choral tradition at St John's.

Keith Beniston March 2018

REPORT ON THE WEEKLY ENVELOPE SCHEME

During 2017 26 people contributed to Planned Giving through the use of coloured Weekly Numbered Envelopes (as opposed to the white gift aid envelopes provided for occasional giving in our churches). Gift aid was recovered on half of these. The Scheme yielded £9,152 net; £10,442 after gift aid recoveries and remained a most worthwhile part of our Planned Giving Programme.

For further details of how to give regularly through the Numbered Envelope Scheme, Standing Order giving or the Parish Giving Scheme please contact me on 01442 244158.

Chris Angell, Parish Treasurer

2017 REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GIVING COMMITTEE

Apart from the routine of the quarterly management accounts and projected cash flows prepared for the PCC, the committee discussed and agreed significant loan repayments, reviewed cash handling controls, proposed the establishment of a new (restricted) Music Fund and oversaw outward giving.

Note 11 to the Annual Accounts details the charities supported, either directly or through special collections.

The terms of the new Music Fund were agreed by the PCC as “The Music Fund will provide for expenditure restricted to the Repair, Replacement and Purchase new of musical instruments, choir robes and music (sheet, book or electronic equivalents) for use in the churches of Boxmoor Parish. Excluded will be expenditure on the maintenance of musical instruments (e.g. organ and piano tuning), fees for the Director of Music and Choir (including any augmentations thereof for regular or special services) and music licences which will be met from the General Fund music budget”

Chris Angell, Parish Treasurer
24/3/18

FRIENDSHIP TEAS

As they approach their 14th year, Friendship Teas are still flourishing. They continue to offer 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 a tree at the Christmas Tree Festival, and donated to Bibles for Children in our local primary schools.

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. Everyone’s help is much appreciated. Further assistance in any of these areas would be very welcome; we are particularly in need of help with transport.

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).

Gill and Ian Williams

2017 REPORT FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The committee met under the Chairmanship of Cathy Shaw regularly during 2017 to plan and organise the Parish's major fundraising events. The net surpluses are set out below:

Flower Festival £3,357 (no event in 2016)
Grand Draw £1,729 (no event in 2016)
Christmas Tree Festival £3,212 (£4,216 in 2016)
Countdown to Christmas Fair £3,206 (£2,616 in 2016)
Quiz nights £1,365 (£1,386 in 2016)

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, the Money Tree initiative, various sales of work and produce and the sale of Church Christmas Cards raised further funds making the net total raised for the General Fund a very substantial £13,221.

For 2018 it was agreed to reinstate the Easter Appeal and add a Silent Film Night and Summer Fayre to our regular roster of events.

Chris Angell
24/3/18

ST JOHN'S HALL MANAGEMENT REPORT

The St John's Hall Management Committee met on four occasions during the year. At the beginning of the period we employed a new lady to clean the hall and toilets in both the church and hall; we are pleased with her standard of work.

The major project during the year was to re-decorate the hall, passage way, entrance hall and toilets. We are most grateful to Mark Harbour, Andy Fisher and James Proehl who undertook this work. The remainder of the work is scheduled to be completed during the summer months of 2018.

The main 'hall dividers' underwent their annual service in October.

Hall bookings for the hire of the hall facilities were slightly down in 2017 compared with 2016, but we are most grateful to the U3A our largest customer, for their continued support. The U3A contribution to hall bookings is up year on year.

Peter Garner
Hall Co-ordinator

THE KNITTING CIRCLE

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

This year we again knitted Easter Chicks and Bunnies to sell in church and raised £100 for church funds.

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.

We have been knitting white teddies for children who come to us for Baptism and enclose a prayer card in the gift bag. We have a stock of about 50 so will now think of another project!

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 2018

MUSIC AT ST JOHN'S

Music at St John's has had another successful year helping to support music making in the church and for the local community.

Partnership with Dacorum Music School

Many of the musical events organised for school children at St John's are undertaken in conjunction with our neighbours at the Dacorum Music School. These include the UniSong (singing) day and UniSound days (for playing of wind or string instruments) and the visit of the WOOFYT (which involves an explanation of how the organ works with hands-on experience with this strange device).

Lunchtime concerts

We held two series of Friday lunchtime concerts in 2017: the first in the Spring/Summer and the second in the Autumn. We will be starting our next series on 11th May this year.

Music Festival

With no Director of Music in place we decided to abandon plans for a Music Festival in 2017. This year, however, we will be holding a Festival and, unlike previous years, we will hold it in May and hope that the weather will be kinder to us than November. It will commence with the Friday lunchtime concert on 11th May and will feature the regular Saturday morning concert given by pupils of the Dacorum Music School and a special Choral Evensong on the Sunday. In a new venture for this year we will hold a choral workshop on the Saturday afternoon to which we hope all who like to sing (not just the local choral societies) will come along to sing some of Parry's marvellous works.

Other events

We have also held a number of evening concerts including the very successful New Year's Concert. This year we look forward to a return visit by the Vale Symphonic Wind Band.

The Annual New Year's Eve "10K Run and 5K Walk" was also a great success with more participants than in previous years.

The “new” Organ at St John’s

The Nicholson Organ was installed in November 2011 and Music at St John’s is proud to have played a major role in fund-raising for this project. In September we will be celebrating the fact that it will have been fully paid for – with a series of organ recitals commencing with one on Saturday 22nd September given by James O’Donnell of Westminster Abbey.

Music Bursary

We have been providing bursaries to young people who are musically active with a school, church or musical organisation in the Boxmoor area to help them with their studies (for example for buying books or music directly related to their music studies, the cost, in full or part, of attending a course, assisting with the payment of examination fees and associated costs and even some essential instrumental accessories or repairs.

In September we invited recipients of the awards to come and perform in an informal concert at St John’s and this proved to be very successful and so we aim to repeat it this year.

Paul Davies, Chairman

PARISH MAGAZINE

300 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, The Reverend Benjamin Weitzmann, Carole Lewis, Alan Munford, Peter Garner, Jean Garner, Graham Gibbs, Chris Angell, Mark Harbour, Paul Davies, Philippa Graham, Nicholas King who has undertaken Parish Profiles 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. I would also like to personally thank Alan Munford and Alison Jackson who stood in for me during my three month break last year whilst I recovered from my recent ill health and surgery.

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 2018

Fr Mike (chair), Fr Ben, Carole Lewis, Jane Prew Bridgewood, Jean Garner, Nicholas king, Sue Brown.

The remit of the pastoral team is 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. 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 the consent of the person involved.

Carole Lewis

POETRY GROUP

As a poetry group we are few in number but determined to keep the reading of poetry alive. Next month we are meeting at Marion Cowe's home to read Easter poems and to share her Birthday. So on 9th April no doubt there will be cake with our tea. We also decided that it would be nice to look at the beautiful poems written by Jean Stevens in her book "impressions". For 15 years she led the group and has won many awards, one being from the Society of Women Writers and Journalists in 1974 and another as Poet of the Year for Dacorum.

Carole Crowhurst

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social committee remit is to arrange social events for the Church which are non-profit making, so we work in conjunction with the fund-raising committee who arrange anything on which we hope to make a profit.

Since the last APCM the committee provided refreshments and a cake when Rev. Jeanette Gosney left us to take up a new post in Bury St. Edmunds. We also held a St. Johns day lunch.

The Parish fun day held on 9th July was held after a combined 10.30 am service at St. Johns. The weather was very kind to us, unlike the previous year and the barbecue team comprised of Alan Darvill (who obtained all the meat at a very competitive rate), Andreas Ioannou, John Kyriacou, Harry Sherriff and David Martin who all did Stirling work for several hours in the heat. The bouncy castle was once again a great success and we are very grateful to the Hart family for providing and erecting it and supervising the children all afternoon. Various other activities were laid on for the children, and some adults, to play with or make.

It was decided that we would revert to holding a Harvest supper the evening before Harvest festival rather than the Harvest lunch we have held in recent years. Fr. Benjamin arranged the running order for the entertainment, which was a great success and showcased our multi-talented congregation. We enjoyed a three-course meal with beautifully laid out tables and we all enjoyed a good old-fashioned sing-song. With any thanks to F. Ben for his organisation and input.

In February of this year we held our Annual pancake party for children under 11. We had more children attending than last year which we think was due to the fact that this year Shrove Tuesday fell during half term. It followed the usual format, starting with quizzes or colouring followed by pancake tossing races. We end with pancakes to eat-but not the same ones that have been dropped on the floor during the races! It is amazing how many pancakes little children can consume.

The committee is very grateful to the many people who make puddings, salads, cakes etc. when we put out an appeal for donations. This helps us to keep costs reasonable.

The family fun day will this year be held on 24th June. If anyone has any ideas of social events they would like us to arrange please speak to Lorraine, Di, Emma or Mike Macey.

Lorraine Ioannou

TINY TOTS REPORT 2017-18

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 introduction to the Christian faith. However, we have noticed a significant drop in numbers from previous years although we have a core of faithful members who come regularly. At the end of the summer term we had 37 on our Register, and since starting with about 16 names in January, we have been

able to welcome 15 new members already, with our numbers usually between 10 and 16 most weeks.

We are grateful to our stalwart team of helpers, both in the kitchen and in the hall, especially to Di Tovey and Yvonne Munford, and have recently welcomed Sue Brown to the kitchen team of Jean Garner, Linda Gair, Christine Waters and Jane Prew-Bridgwood, and to Angela Green for helping out now and again. Once again we were blessed with good weather for our annual picnic in August and thanks to Yvonne for her organisation were able to raise quite a bit for church funds from our Toy Stall at the Fayre. The party in January was a bit down on numbers again, but all our little ones (and bigger ones) enjoyed themselves. As ever, we are very grateful to our pianists, Jean Garner and Mary Bennett, for helping us with our singing, and Auntie Carole for bringing Mr. Monkey and his new friend, Dai Jones, for story-time, which enhances our joyful, informal little service of action songs and prayers. Thanks also to Fr Mike and Fr Ben for leading our procession and sorting out the furniture in church too!

All of us involved with Tiny Tots feel that this is such an important part of our 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 and running the toy stall at our winter fayre.

Annie Mitchell

TOGETHER ON MONDAY

We have had a very successful and enjoyable year of talks both by outside speakers and from within the group.

Linden started the year by telling us about her life before she came to St. John's, Ian Packe told us "The internet can be fun" Fr Ben spoke about Sea Palaces, Graham Liddle took us to Wimbledon, Graham Gibbs told us about "30 yrs at the chalk face" and we finished by exploring Venice and Florence with Janet Packe. We heard about the marvellous work done by those involved with the Rennie Grove Hospice, how Maggie Taylor lives with a deaf dog (whom many of us would like to have taken home). We learnt what happens to the shoe boxes once they leave us and saw slides of some of the children receiving their box. The Chiltern Ladies choir sang for us and Marie Graham had us all singing----so a very varied programme.

Our AGM was preceded by a buffet and in August Graham and Ian arranged an evening meal for us at The Old Hunters Lodge at Whipnade and in December the ladies had a Christmas meal at Felden Lodge while the men went to The White Hart. Our outing was to Chenies Manor in July with a conducted tour for those that wished it.

Our group has grown during the year but we are always pleased to have new members or indeed those who would like to come along and see what happens at our meetings before joining.

Di Tovey

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship meets at 2.30 p.m. on the 3rd Friday of each month throughout the year. Most of our members are elderly and numbers have been dropping. We have therefore decided to change the format of the meetings slightly. In future we shall not invite outside speakers to our meetings but will gather round the table to share thoughts and ideas on a chosen topic which have included the meaning of Lent and the lives of our Victorian grandparents.

Do come along if you want to enjoy fellowship and stimulating discussion!

Jean Garner

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee has met three times during the year to discuss the liturgy of St John's, planning services and reviewing their outcome. Two were chaired by the Vicar and one, held while he was on Sabbatical, by the Curate. Membership comprises representatives from all three churches in the parish. Sheena Wilson, on becoming a Lay Reader and Keith Beniston on his appointment as Director of Music have been added to our numbers.

Among the topics which have been discussed are: -

1. The continual monitoring of the weekly attendances in all three churches. It has been noted that parking continues to be an issue at St John's, especially at the Sunday 9.30am service whose numbers have fallen slightly. Sadly, some of the regular members of the congregation at St Stephen's have died in recent months. Particularly encouraging is the numbers at the Wednesday morning Communion services, which continue to flourish, and it is gratifying that a total of practically 1600 people attended St John's on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.
2. The arrangements for special services held during the year, of which there have been a number of memorable ones including the one on St John's Day when the memorial plaque to Alan and Margot Freeman was dedicated and in which two former Vicars took part; the Confirmation and Corpus Christi services with the re-affirmation of the Eucharistic Ministers at the latter, both held at St Francis; Harvest Thanksgiving; annual services for the Departed; the Royal British Legion Remembrance Day service; the Christmas cycle; and more recently the liturgical version of Faure's Requiem for Passiontide.
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 Bible Study in the Autumn, the sermons on the four saints associated with October and the Lent course on the theme of 'The Eucharist Explained' have all been much appreciated.

4. The work of the choir. We have been grateful to those who stepped into the breach in the period between Linden Innes-Hopkins resigning and Keith Beniston taking up the post – who played the organ, conducted Choir Practices - and to Paul and Marian Davies who worked hard behind the scenes to ensure things ran smoothly. We have said goodbye to several younger members of the choir during the year.

5. The work of the Chalice Assistants.

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

Each Sunday the secondary school age children have the choice to join the YMAM group. We currently have 3 leaders (who also act as helpers) – as always more leaders / helpers required please. The format is mixed with different leaders taking alternative approaches – whether leading sessions on the relevant Sunday or Church calendar period or specific subjects from youth development books and courses. In the past 12 months we have covered a wide variety of topics and have hopefully challenged the members of the group. We are in the process of deciding how best to take our Youth meets forward as with some of our younger members leaving the choir our numbers have dropped. It may be that we open the hall for a few hours after school, offering somewhere for children to come and have a drink and something to eat and have some time before having to go home. Any suggestions are welcome.

Jo Fisher