

St Stephen's Church, Shottermill



Annual Reports and Financial Statements of the Parochial Church Council *For the year ended 31st December 2009*

Incumbent:
Rev Danny Wignall

Bank:
CAF Bank Limited
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4JQ

Auditor:
Christopher Elsey FCA
Barter Durgan & Muir
31 Bepton Down
Petersfield
Hampshire
GU31 4PR

**Agenda for the Vestry Meeting and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting
on 25th April 2010 at 10.00am**

A: Vestry Meeting

- 1 Election of 2 churchwardens to serve for the year 2010/2011
- Andrew Lee and Colin Short

B: Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

- 1 Welcome - propose that members not on electoral roll can remain
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the APCM of 26th April 2009
- 4 Matters Arising - Notification of Any other Business
- 5 Written reports on the past year as follows - *please take time to read these.*
 - Vicars Report - *Danny Wignall*
 - Annual Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish and Presentation of the Audited Accounts - *Ed Walker*
 - Electoral Roll Report - *Jo Long*
 - Annual Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council - *Robin Andersen*
 - Report on the Church Fabric - *Andrew Lee, Colin Short and Duncan Long*
 - Report on the Proceedings of the Godalming Deanery Synod - *Danny Wignall*
 - Rainbow Nursery report - *Hilary Owen*
 - Worship and media report - *Andy Rigby*
 - Children's and families worker report - *Vanessa Clothier Pratts*
 - Youth Work Report - *Lee Nancarrow*
 - Noah Ark & Rainbow Nursery and Noah's Ark Social Fundraising Committee (SFC) - *Vanessa Clothier Pratts*
 - Outward Giving Report - *Neil Wilson*
 - Prayer Ministry Team/The Marriage Course - *Jean & Michael Clark*
 - Prime Time - *Vanessa Kemp*
 - Care Home Ministry - *Sarah Weldon*
 - Pastoral Care Report - *Jane Saunders*
 - Church Office - *Jo Long*
- 6 Election of Lay Representatives to serve on the Deanery Synod
- 7 Election of Lay Representatives to serve on the PCC
- 8 Annual Report on the Financial Affairs of the Parish and Presentation of the Audited Accounts
 - Verbal report from the Treasurer *Ed Walker*
- 9 Appointment of the Independent Examiner to the Council
- 10 Vicars Report
 - Verbal report from *Danny Wignall*
- 11 Questions
- 12 Date of the next meeting of the Annual Parish Church Meeting - Sunday 24th April 2011 at the church

This will all take place within the context of a service and will be followed by communion

**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting and APCM of St Stephen's Church
10am 26th April 2009**

Opened in prayer by David Bennett
Chaired by Danny Wignall

1. Members not on the electoral roll were proposed to be allowed to remain. All agreed - no objections.

Vestry Meeting

2. **Church Wardens** - Colin Short was proposed to remain as church warden by Robin Andersen and seconded by Annie Barnsdale. Andrew Lee was proposed to remain as church warden by Annie Barnsdale and seconded by Robin Andersen. All agreed - no objections. Thanks given to Andrew, Colin and Duncan Long for all their work.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

3. **Minutes from 2008:** were approved. - Bill Kennedy proposed, Andrew Lee seconded all agreed - no objections.
4. No **Matters Arising** from previous minutes.
5. **Deanery Synod** - Jean Burchell and Erika Glaysher were elected to the Deanery Synod. Jean Burchell was proposed by Val Ponteaus and seconded by M Boxall.
6. **PCC** - Peter Soar, Louise Stevenson, Roger Grimshaw and Jim Honeywood have completed their period on the PCC. Nicky Lee was proposed to join the PCC by Duncan Long and seconded by Donna Rigby, there were no objections. Vanessa Clothier Pratts was proposed to join the PCC by Nicky Lee and seconded by Andrew Lee, there were no objections. There remain three spaces within the PCC and anyone who would like to join was asked to contact Danny, Colin, Andrew or Robin. The PCC were prayed for.
7. **Written Reports** - Danny directed people to the written reports and encouraged everyone to read them and thanked each person for all they have done. The reports are listed below:
 - a. Electoral Roll Report - Jo Long
 - b. Annual Report on the Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council - Robin Andersen
 - c. Report on the Church Fabric - Andrew Lee, Colin Short and Duncan Long
 - d. Report on the Proceedings of the Godalming Deanery Synod - Danny Wignall
 - e. Rainbow Nursery report - Hilary Owen
 - f. Worship and media report - Andy Rigby
 - g. Children's and families worker report - Claire Honeywood
 - h. Youth Work Report - Lee Nancarrow
 - i. Organ Report - Nicky Lee
 - j. Noah Ark & Rainbow Nursery and Noah's Ark Social Fundraising Committee (SFC) - Vanessa Clothier Pratts.

8. **Vicars Report** - Danny thanked Maura and Donna for their work in organising the catering, Nicky for leadership on the new kitchen area and Organ project. He thanked all the congregation for their leadership, ministry and for all that individuals do in Gods name. Danny announced that 18 new people have joined the electoral roll and this represents more people including children and young people. 11 people have left the roll in the last year.
9. **Treasurers report** - Ed provided a summary of the key points of the financial position of the church:
 - a. General income of the church was £166,000 - this was higher than predicted
 - b. General expenditure was £150,376 (this does not include development works on the cross) this is in line with budget
 - c. Income for the work previously carried on the redevelopment of the church was £75,905
 - d. Expenditure (repayment of loans) for the work previously carried on the redevelopment of the church was £82,000 - one bill remains outstanding for cross roof
 - e. Rainbow income and expenditure was about the same (this does not include development of cross)
 - f. Organ Fund - The target was achieved and work commissioned. We are attempting to raise additional funds for a new blower
 - g. Stewardship 2009 - A £13,800 (10% of giving) increase in funds was needed in order to meet our budgeted costs of the year - this was achieved assuming the giving continues through the year. Ed asked that if anyone has a returns form still to complete they should please send this back. Ed also announced that anyone donating by standing order should fill in a new standing order form to the new CAF bank. The building fund needed £7,985 of new pledged over the course of three years and these have been achieved. The cash flow problem of £28,000 in Oct 2010 has now reduced to £17,000. Prayers were requested on the finances of the church. Danny and everyone thanked Ed, Jo and Finance/Stewardship team.
 - h. Outward giving - Danny asked for the congregation to recommend anyone that should be included in the churches donations - contact Danny, Andrew, Colin, Ed or Michael Clark.
10. **Vicars Report (continued)** - Danny talked through some of the events held at St Stephens this year through showing some Photographs of the events.
 - a. The churches Common Purpose is - UP (Loving and serving God), IN (Loving and serving our church family) and OUT (Loving and serving our neighbour; Witnessing; Seeking Justice; Caring for creation)
 - b. Our Common Values -
 - i. Centred around Jesus
 - ii. Built on right relationships
 - iii. Welcoming and open to all
 - iv. Encourages all member ministry
 - v. Embraces growth and the change that comes with growth
 - vi. Generous
 - vii. Compassionate

- c. Our challenge for the next year -
 - i. Make more space for god
 - ii. More space for others
 - iii. Be more thankful
 - iv. Seek new ways to serve God.

11. **Appointment of the Independent Examiner to the Council** -The meeting resolved to reappoint Mr Christopher Elsey FCA as independent auditor to the Council for the term of office ending at the close of the next annual meeting on 25th April 2010. All agreed - no objections.
12. **Questions** - no questions were raised.
13. **Date of the next meeting of the Parochial Church Council** - 14th May 8pm at the Vicarage. Date of the next APCM is the 25th April 2010.

Closed in Prayer by Danny

Vicars Report - APCM 25th April 2010
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As I read the reports contained in the rest of this document, I continue to be amazed at the number and breadth of activities that we are engaged in as a church. St Stephen's is a church seeking to discover what it means to be the body of Christ with each member playing their unique God-given part. There is so much to give thanks for and way too many people to thank individually by listing them all here, so I want to thank each one of you for the privilege of leading and serving such an exciting and vibrant community of God's people. Thank you to everyone who has written a report and of course to all the teams of people they represent - many very much behind the scenes - but none the less, equally valuable. Thank you! I do commend the reports to you - they will encourage and inspire you - and maybe prompt you to dip your toe in the water and offer to help in some way. Please remember that it is OK to try something out for a while and then to say if isn't the right thing for you. However, you might discover something you really enjoy! For example I know that many of the parents who have begun to help with Junior Church have been surprised at how much they have enjoyed it.

I wrote in my report last year *"Please continue to pray that God would provide another ordained colleague in the near future. We have applied to receive a curate from the diocese in 2010"* Well Giles Carpenter is the answer to that prayer and we are very much looking forward to welcoming Giles, Rachel, Jessie, Libby and Charlie this summer. Giles is ordained as deacon on 4th July, so please be praying for him as his family as they prepare for this life changing event. Also continue to pray that we would find the right housing for them very soon. Again we give thanks to our Almighty God.

We are a relatively small church doing many things. It seems to me that God is calling us to be deeper and not wider. I believe he is calling us into a deeper relationship with him, into a deeper relationship with each other and into a deeper relationship with those who are not-yet Christians. For those of you who have been around more than a few months, you will recognise that this reflects our ultimate purpose as a church (based on the great commandments and commissions of scripture) to grow UP - growing in intimacy with God;

IN - growing in love and unity in our church community and OUT - growing in mission and service to those outside of the church. In other words, I don't think God is calling us to do more, but to do what we do more effectively as we continue to 'join the dots' between our different activities and ministries - I know that the arrival of Giles and his family is an integral part of helping us to pursue this calling. To use the gardening analogy of the church being a flower pot, we are not wanting to plant any more flowers but to cultivate and tend the ones we have - pruning as necessary to promote growth.

We have seen a growth of new members on our electoral roll of just over 10%, but have also seen people move away or leave this life to be with the Lord. We have a growing fringe of people of all ages who are in regular contact with St Stephens and who more importantly are building relationships with church members. You may remember that one of our values is to be 'centred around Jesus' and my prayer is that all of these people may be drawn closer to Jesus - whether it be through Noah's Ark, Rainbow, Pamper Evening, Holiday Club and occasional events (e.g. Time out for Christmas - new for this year), KidsPriase, ministry to care homes, men@st Stephens, Prime Time events, Alpha, Parenting Course, Celebrate marriage, weddings, baptisms and funerals, Christmas Services (record numbers this year) or our many youth events. In addition each of us are uniquely placed to show the love of Jesus to the particular networks of people that we know - family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues, college friends, those we meet as we go about our daily lives. It is important that in all of this activity, we don't lose sight of the fact that all we do is for God's glory: to announce and build his Kingdom with Jesus as the King.

Therefore, my sense over the past year and going on into the next year has not been to make any radical changes or start lots of major new ministries, but to do what we are doing even better and to capitalise upon the huge number of opportunities we have to minister to those in our community. As we seek to be a healthy church, we will see growth happen organically. We have continued to see our buildings used for more and more activities and the office has become much more of a central hub for all that is going on at St Stephen's. I am extremely grateful to Susan Kennedy and to Jo Long for the way they have made this possible. We are of course sad that Susan has had to step down from this role and we continue to pray for her healing. We are also grateful for the way Jo has taken a broader and larger role. See her report for more detail.

So if God is calling us to go deeper, how do we do this? Well at one of our recent Sunday evening Prayer and Praise services, someone prayed that we and they would let God be in the driving seat. That sums it up really! Are we really prepared to surrender all to Jesus? Do we really need him? I believe that we will really see God breaking through in our lives and in the life of the church when we are utterly dependent upon him. This can be hard for us in this relatively affluent part of the world because our daily needs are pretty much taken care of and we have a lot to give up! I am not suggesting that we should give up everything we have - but in order to follow Jesus wholeheartedly we need to sit very lightly to all we have and be prepared to give it up if we are called to. Partly this is about realising that all we have belongs to God anyway, and that we are simply stewards of our time, talents, money and resources. In turn, the church leadership seek to be good and wise stewards of all that you give to St Stephen's - you can see this for yourselves in the financial reports.

Another key to going deeper is to know that God loves us and is 'for us' - emotionally as well as intellectually: *"If God is for us, then who can be against us"* Romans 8:31b. If we really know how deeply God loves us we will be more prepared to surrender to him - to trust him with our lives - otherwise it is a relationship of fear or duty. This ties in with the prayer from Ephesians 3 that I believe God gave us as a church back in July of last year. The leadership Team and I believe that this is a word for us as a church - to encourage us to pray and to encourage us to continue to seek to be a community that is truly Jesus Centred. Please see my article in Good News for more about this.

We will also go deeper if we are open to learn - after all a disciple is by definition an apprentice, a learner at the feet of Jesus. Special thanks must go to our house group leaders - who provide a place of learning and pastoral care. I know that leading a house group is one of the most challenging and responsible roles in church life and I want to acknowledge the huge amount of time and effort that goes into this vital role, and to thank each of the house group leaders for all that they do. When I first came to the church I said to all of the house group leaders that I felt house groups should have a three year life cycle. Well believe it or not I will have been here for three years in June! So this summer we will be asking all house group leaders and members to review the house group that they are in. This will give everyone the chance for a fresh start and the opportunity for those not yet in a house group to join one. It is also a chance to offer yourself (however tentatively!) to either host or lead a house group. If you are interested in this, please speak to me or Debs

This ties in with my final desire for us as a church in the coming year: that we would be a learning church - where there is a hunger to know more of God both through study of his Word and through experience of the power of the Holy Spirit and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So, as we look ahead to the future, there are some exciting possibilities ahead as we build upon all that God has been doing in our midst. I am looking forward to seeing lives continuing to be changed by the transforming love of God, to journeying together as we seek to be authentic and obedient followers of Jesus in our daily lives - in the highs and the lows.

Finally, three challenges to you and me for the coming year:

- 1. Give everything you have to God in prayer** - acknowledge that it is all his anyway and ask the Lord how you can best use all that he has given to you. Is there anything that makes you reluctant or hesitant to go deeper in your relationships with him and others?
- 2. Ask the question: what is God calling me to do?** - ask the Lord if there is anything he is specifically calling you to do. Are you in the right job? Could you work less hours and give more time to serving the community or church? Is he calling you to spend more time with certain members of your family or friends? Is he calling you to get involved in local politics or a voluntary organisation? Is he calling you to have more fun and join a club of some sort or make more time for friends?
- 3. Take responsibility for your own learning as a disciple** - we are all called to be disciples and to make disciples. As a church we can provide teaching through sermons, supporting materials and house groups etc, but only you can make the choice to be an active learner (that is the definition of a disciple!)

Together we can go deeper, so that we become even more rooted, ground and established in the love of God so that we *“may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you [we] may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* Ephesians 3:17-19.

Danny Wignall, April 2010

TREASURER’S REPORT FOR 2009

The Finance Team and Auditor

In my third year-end report as Treasurer, I am proud to report that I continue to be ably supported by Michael Clark (Paying in) and Jo Long (Paying Out). During the long January nights preparing the accounts, I was also supported in the painful bank reconciliation process by my wife, Ali, for which I am also very grateful. The financial affairs of the church would be much harder work without all of their continued support.

In addition to the finance team a separate stewardship committee continues to meet from time to time with a focus on wider initiatives such as funding the curate’s housing needs and promulgating the importance of financial stewardship throughout congregations.

As for the 2009 accounts, I am pleased to be able to report that Chris Elsey of Barter Durgan & Muir has again agreed to conduct the independent examination.

The accounts have a different look and feel this year. This is mainly due to the use of a new Church accounting package but also, as regards the notes to the accounts, to reflect the fact that mid-way through the year the PCC was registered as a charity in its own right and as a result we are using the Charity Commission’s standard form documents for a charity of our size.

Assets

The regulations require us to show in the accounts all the assets that the PCC has at its disposal other than Consecrated Land and Buildings thereon, which are considered “inalienable”. The Church and graveyard are Consecrated and thus not shown in the accounts. It is believed that The Cross is built, in part, on Consecrated Land and the redevelopment plans envisage connecting it to the church to form one building, using Consecrated Land. The PCC continues to hold the view that it, too, should be considered inalienable and not included in these accounts.

The PCC owns Flats No 2 and 3 in Glovers House opposite the church. One flat is occupied by the Youth Minister and his wife and the other is let on a commercial basis. The value of the flats is shown on the Balance sheet but has not been updated this year and remains at the valuation provided by Keats Estate Agents at January 2008. I took the view that any valuation in such uncertain financial times would be close to meaningless and that a valuation at the end of 2010, perhaps with the benefit of efforts to sell Flat 3 in 2010, would be a better yard-stick for the accounts in due course. The accounts have been presented to the Independent Examiner on this basis.

The PCC are trustees for the Pitcairn Trust which was set up in order to provide an income for the maintenance of the Pitcairn graves. The trust income was £45 in 2009. Small restricted trusts like this present all PCCs with a considerable problem because the income is minimal, the capital inaccessible and the administration the same as one ten or even a hundred times larger. However, in 2010, with the help of the Diocese, this Trust will at last be wound-up and the funds received used for the continued maintenance of the Church and its grounds.

The PCC arranges and pays for insurance on both the Cross and the Church and maintains Employers Liability Insurance cover for both buildings.

Income

The PCC encourages all the church members to give to the work of the church using one of the established planned giving schemes; a regular standing order, via the Charities Aid Foundation, through Give As You Earn or in the weekly envelope scheme. Tax is recovered where the donor is a tax payer and the donation is net of tax.

The general voluntary income (direct giving) for the year (£166,941) was a significant increase from last year (£146,658). The increase was mainly as a result of one-off items and is not expected to be repeated during 2010.

The restricted income for repayment of the redevelopment loans and general contribution to a new Building Fund (£81,594) is again an increase against the adjusted pledges received in 2008 (£75,905). The pledged income for the repayment into the Building Fund remains roughly constant and the increase is largely as a result of a marked increase in one-off pledges to this fund.

The restricted income for the organ redevelopment work was £4,474 (as opposed to £12,153 in 2008) bringing the total funds roughly in line (a small shortfall of £617) with the committed expenditure to the organ restorers.

Overall the number of donors has remained roughly constant. It is worth reminding ourselves that the tax we reclaim accounts for around 20% of our giving income. The accounts will show that the figure is around 15%, however, this hides the fact that a small but increasing number of donors choose to give via their employers (GAYE) or via CAF, where the payment received is made "gross" i.e. it effectively includes the tax element already.

Our Glovers House flat (No 3) was tenanted for the entire year. Rental was received in January 2010 but, in preparation for sale in 2010, the flat now remains empty.

Other fees for weddings, funerals etc. were considerably up on 2008.

On the face of it we appear to have a very healthy bank balance (£173,500). However most of it (£134,786) is earmarked to settle various items that are due in 2010, in particular building redevelopment loans repayable in 2010 (£76,000), outstanding invoices in respect of the redevelopment project (£6,610), other bills payable in 2010 in respect of 2009 including the organ restoration costs (£33,237) and accrued but unspent outward giving (£24,854). They have all been provided for in these accounts.

The statement of financial activities shows net incoming resources of £70,208.

Outward Giving

We allocate 10% of our regular income (as well as any special collections and the Christmas collections) to be given to a broad range of Christian and secular charities and projects locally, nationally and internationally.

Overall, at the end of 2009 £24,513 was available to be given to our selected causes including funds held over from prior years. The Christmas collections raised a fabulous £828 which was donated equally to CRISIS at Christmas and the Children's Society.

The accounts do not show all of the money that the church donated during the year (totalling £23,000) including £1,800 each to 12 organisations throughout the year. These organisations were: China Hearts, EMCF International Church Derby, Age Concern Haslemere, Chernobyl Lifeline, Christian Missions Charitable Trust, Church Mission Society, Foundation for Reconciliation and Relief in the Middle East, Latin Link, Open Doors, Tear Fund, Mr and Mrs Rocke and Crossways Counselling Service. This is not shown in the accounts because this expenditure was primarily from our 2008 outward giving accrual. The 2009 accrual noted above will be allocated in the next few weeks in accordance with the continuing guidance of the outward giving committee.

It is worth remembering that we also expend money on a number of causes and projects which are outwardly directed but which for historical reasons are not classified as outward giving by St Stephens. Examples of this would be significant parts of the children and youth ministries.

Expenditures

The general account expenditure directly relating to the work of the Church increased by £18,000 when compared to 2009. This increase included expenditure on the coffee facilities at the back of the church which were funded by additional one-off contributions to the Church. By in large, the increased expenditure was predicted and publicised to the church in the 2009 stewardship Sunday initiative.

Reserves

The sum of £7,000 is set aside annually for contribution to the relatively new estate maintenance fund. Expenditure on this fund is managed by Duncan Long. Under his careful stewardship, this fund is beginning to grow again at the same time as important maintenance projects completed. At the end of 2009, the maintenance fund cash balance stood at £14,591. This fund has enabled the funding of new Church gutters in early 2010 and proposals are currently being assessed to, at long last, fix the heating problems in the Cross.

The Cross

The Cross has once again been run at a loss (£3,385) as a stand alone building. The “rent” from the Nursery School for 2009 (£5,500) was increased again in 2009 but there are no plans to increase again in 2010. The “rent” is designed to broadly reflect the costs associated with that building and the proportion of time utilised by the Nursery School. It is recognised that this level of rent is not yet set at a commercial level, in part because the building does not meet generally accepted commercial standards but also as a recognition that the Nursery School is an important part of the Church’s activities and outreach.

Building Fund

For those of you that do review the detail in the accounts, you will note that the 2008 numbers have been re-stated to reflect an accounting error from last year. The Building Fund loans from members were overstated in the 2008 accounts by £25,000. Our new Church accounting software, implemented at the beginning of 2009, identified this error. The result is that the Building Fund is in a much better state than previously reported.

Committed pledges during the year from members of the congregation and one off donations towards the building fund amounted to £77,119. The original 4 year pledges were in large part renewed in June 2008 for a 4 year period and the new normal annual pledge receipt (including tax) going forward is approximately £31,500, dropping to £20,300 for the last 2 years of the pledge period. I would like to use this report to thank all those who have supported this fund during the last 6 years and continue to do so.

At the end of 2009 we had a total debt of £117,500 (2008: £164,000). A provision for the 2010 repayments of £98,500 has been made in the accounts.

The final builders invoice was paid during 2008 and the remaining accrual relates to part of the Cross roof and continues to be provided for in full. This accrual will be reviewed again during 2010.

The Rainbow

The Rainbow Nursery School made a tiny surplus this year of £661 after paying £5,500 for the use of the CROSS. It does, however, carry forward an accrual of £1,503 (£3,209 in 2009). The Rainbow Head reports in more detail on the activities this year in her report.

Diocese Parish Share

This amount, at £63,376 is our largest expense, albeit slightly reduced from the 2009 level of £64,328. It pays for the salary, pension and housing expenses of our clergy, the training of new clergy, the central expenses of the diocese in Guildford and a subsidy to the parishes which do not cover their costs. It is not expected to rise as a result of our new curate joining in July.

It is worth mentioning again that this is not something we can opt out of unless we do not want to have a Vicar, and from July, a curate! When one considers that we have the full use of two large buildings, the full time service of a resident dedicated Vicar and access to the resources of the diocese for £63,000 it is not an unreasonable charge. We just need to make the best use of the resources at our disposal.

Ed Walker

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

Last year, 2009, the Electoral Roll was revised and the total was 150. It has been updated again this year and 12 names have been removed and 16 new people added.

This gives a new total for 2010 of 154.

Jo Long

PCC REPORT APRIL 2009 - 2010

- Vicar: Danny Wignall
- Elected PCC Members (max 12): Helen Mitchell, Erika Glaysher, Robin Andersen, Lynne Brown, Annie Barnsdale, Nicky Lee, Sarah Weldon, Vanessa Clothier Pratts (retired on appointment as children's worker - now ex-officio)
- Co-opted/ Ex-officio PCC members: Ed Walker, David Bennett, Tony Owen, Lee Nancarrow, Jo Long, Susan Kennedy (retired February 2010), Ian Gee and Jill Soar
- Church Wardens: Andrew Lee and Colin Short
- Synod Reps (max 3): Jean Burchell
- Retiring members: Helen Mitchell and Erika Glaysher
- 6 vacancies for PCC
- 3 vacancies for Deanery Synod

The PCC have had seven meetings in the last year. We begin each meeting with a time of prayer and listening to God. We also ask the question 'How is it going?' and think about what has gone well as well as those things that we could do better. Below are some of the key areas that we have been discussing.

Services

Start and end times of services were reviewed throughout the year. We discussed some improvements that could be put in place in order to start and finish the services on time. Being in church before the start time, sitting down for the start and ensuring you arrive in plenty of time if you have a role in the service would help.

We discussed the success of the Kids Praise services and other similar events, for example we had 290 attendees at the Christingle service - our highest ever!

We discussed the content of the services and whether we are meeting the needs of the congregation and for new people. We decided that if we all focus on being welcoming and loving it can help make people feel comfortable. We also observed that more people feel comfortable in speaking out in church - which is great.

Church building

We spent some time talking about the building work needed within the church to fix various items such as the church floor, baptistery cover and apse roof. The building team have done a fantastic job in their discussions with the building supplier to achieve a result that the PCC agreed with. We also talked about the replacement of the guttering as this looked like it could be a significant cost. Further investigation and organisation from the building team has led to the guttering already having been done. We also talked about future building works including a memorial plaque, improvement to the apse area, and improving the heating in the cross.

Stewardship

The primary discussion on giving within the church has been around our ability to pay for the Curate housing as well as the response to Stewardship Sunday. As usual Ed has done a great job in presenting the information (including the accounts) to us in a way that even I can understand!

We agreed that in order to invest further in our expansion as a church that we should attempt to sell Flat 3, Glovers House. This remains on the market. We also discussed the housing required for the Curate and options of whether to rent or buy. A group within the church have offered to buy a suitable house for the curate and then rent this to the church. This is the preferred option both from a cost and stability perspective.

We have reviewed Stewardship Sunday and how we can improve the response from the congregation to this in terms of returning the forms to enable us to plan our expenditure for the year as well as meeting the targeted levels of giving to realise those plans.

Staffing

In this year we have discussed the appointment of the new children's worker, Vanessa, and about the need and opportunity of our planned Curate, due to be with us in July. We've also discussed the churches ongoing strategy for DNA students and other roles such as administration.

And other things

We discussed a need for more people to volunteer for the many things that are done in the church and also a commitment to carrying these through. This would enable Danny to focus on the leadership of St Stephens.

We talked about the current status of our house groups and where God is leading us in this area.

And did you know that the PCC minutes are now published on the internet and also put up on the notice boards?

Robin Andersen, PCC Secretary

REPORT ON THE CHURCH FABRIC

Hopefully by the time you read this report the Church floor will have new Baptistry covers, the cracks repaired and the whole floor sanded and re-sealed. The water leak in the apse will also have been dealt with, these repairs have been carried out by the original builders under the 'latent defects' guarantee.

We received several quotations to have the guttering replaced around the church, in the end we opted to replace with PVC with a matching profile to the old cast iron gutters. The original down pipes were retained as they were in good condition and have now been painted black to match. The saving using PVC compared to cast iron was approx £10,000. The wet patches on the inner walls will now dry and be re-painted in due course.

We have had two maintenance days where various jobs have taken place, another day will soon be arranged, if you can spare a few hours to help your time will be very welcome.

The next major project will be to replace the heating system in the Cross with a modern and efficient system, quotes are being obtained and the work will take place in the Rainbow summer holidays.

Unfortunately we had a water leak in the Cross loft last month and this has resulted in new carpets and vinyl flooring being fitted along with new lights and sensors in the toilets and foyer.

Andrew Lee, Colin Short, Peter Soar and Duncan Long

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

As the parish of Shottermill we are part of the Church of England and of the Guildford Diocese. We are also part of a regional group of churches called the Godalming Deanery. The Deanery Synod consists of clergy and parochial representatives from the seventeen parishes in the Godalming Deanery which stretches from the Sussex Border to the Hogs Back.

The synod meets four times a year and receives information from the Diocese for onward transmission to their PCC's and parishes and discusses and plans matters of common interest. We also receive feedback from General and Diocesan Synod.

All clergy are members of Synod and lay people are elected by their respective parishes - our lay members are Jean Burchell and Erika Glaysher. We still have one vacancy. Our Rural Dean is Rev John Fellows who is the Rector of Compton. At the start of each meeting, the vicar of the host church explains a bit about the life and mission of the church.

We then go on to discuss a variety of matters. Over the past year we have talked about encouraging generosity in our Parishes, the role of the church in the community and about the importance of churches being open to visitors or as a venue for concerts. We have discussed pensions for the clergy, and are continuing to work on a Mission and Pastoral plan in order to help us to share resources and expertise across churches. In particular we are looking at how to better serve youth and children across the area.

Danny Wignall

RAINBOW NURSERY REPORT

With God's grace we continue to flourish and we are as busy as ever, thanks to the hard work and efforts of the staff team and volunteers, and the support and prayers we receive from so many of you at St. Stephen's. Thank you.

In last year's parent's survey we again scored well. For standards of care and standards of education we rated 95% and 93% out of 100, so we know we continue to provide a worthwhile and valued service to the community and can uphold our church mission statement. "Honouring God, following the example of Jesus and sharing His love in our community"

This year we have had to say “goodbye” to our wonderful Mrs “Peachtree” We all miss her (and the porridge) terribly - Dear Brenda I don’t know how I would have managed without you, you have been the most wonderful and loyal friend to the school and we are all very sad to see you go. However, pleased indeed that your health continues to improve, thank God, and that we shall still see you to share the odd cup of tea from time to time.

We also bid adieu to our lovely Laura as she left to have her baby Connor, and to Claud as she left to run her own setting, but we have welcomed Sharon to the team and have been able to promote staff from within, so as we start the summer term we are fully staffed and fully booked.

We continue to see some major growth in the outreach activities we offer. The numbers of “non - church” children and families attending Kid’s Praise, the “Time Out for Christmas” event, Nativities and the Easter craft morning etc. have been really encouraging. We have seen our liaison with Vanessa Clothier Pratts as St. Stephen’s children and families worker really blossom and bear fruit, strengthening and enhancing existing initiatives and helping develop new.

Vanessa wears two hats at school. As well as being a representative of the church, she also heads up our social and fundraising committee, a group of dynamic and hard working parents and carers who together have co-ordinated a number of wonderful and far- reaching events such as the ladies Pampering Evening, in addition to supporting Kid’s Praise each month with coffee and crafts. It’s been a very successful year for them and we have been able to purchase new toys and equipment for the school.

The school also greatly benefits from a support group chaired by Ann Fitchett who meet termly to help and guide me in a variety of different ways, including praying for the staff and the children, and from a number of regular volunteers. Thank you, all of you. May God continue to bless you and enable you in this important aspect of our church ministry.

Hilary Owen

WORSHIP & MEDIA REPORT

People

New Recruits This year we have been very lucky to gain several new “recruits” to the Worship Team - all of them young people - new joiners include Jacob Wignall, Ella Caie, Grace Barnsdale, Chloe Mandry and Sophie Rigby. We are also pleased to have Lucie Barnsdale (also young!) back after her travels overseas.

Organists We are blessed to now have 3 accomplished organists, where many churches struggle to find one. Our organists are now Peter Buckley, Nick Lee and Kenneth Lockwood.

Equipment

New Projector Last year the right-hand projector (the one nearest music group) had to be replaced, and for a while we had two projectors of very different quality. In the past month, due to a kind donation from a church member, we have been able to replace the left-hand projector also, so that both machines have almost identical images.

The picture quality is much better than the original projectors, and it now means that we have a spare (old) free-standing projector which can be used in the Cross or for other occasions where a portable machine would be useful.

Video Capture Card For less than £25 we managed to obtain the necessary gizmo to allow the church computer to display video from a camera during services, overlaid with the words. We have successfully used this during the adult baptism services, and it also means that people in the crèche and chancel can see what the camera is showing for the first time.

Internet The link from the church computer to the internet has been improved. The previous “wireless” link was too slow. Now we can show Youtube videos, websites and other online content during services. We still plan to use this facility to communicate face-to-face with some of our overseas mission partners - watch this space !

Services

The service pattern has remained fairly constant over the past year, but the Sunday evening “Time and Space” has slowly changed to become more of a general service and the slot has been used for other, similar, purposes - such as for the recent healing service and a prayer service with Taize content during the Week of Prayer.

Training

Danny, Andy and Jim attended a one-day seminar and workshops at Guildford Cathedral last summer called “One Heart One Voice”, This was a great day of varied content, bringing together musicians from all over the Guildford Diocese for corporate worship and training.

Website

Thanks must go to David Mitchell for his consistent work on keeping the church website up to date, and to the office staff for maintaining the online calendar. For those of you who have not checked out the website, why not take a look - you can listen to past sermons, find contact details, read the weekly news sheet, Good News magazine, search for Bible passages and check the church calendar.

This Coming Year

Lower Screens I know I said it would be done last year - but it hasn't yet - we plan to lower the projector screens to ease the strain people's necks - it just needs a few strong men, a ladder and some big screws.....

New Loop The main expense this year will probably be a new hearing loop for those with hearing aids - the one we use is over 20 years old, and not very efficient. We often have to switch it off because it is causing interference with the sound desk or video screens. I will be looking into this soon to see what the costs are likely to be.

And Finally

Thanks to everybody who helps with the music, sound desk, computer, website and all the other jobs that make the worship experience at St Stephen's one of the most varied, rich and forward-looking aspects of our church life. Many people from other churches visit us just to see how we do things! Be encouraged!

Andy Rigby

CHILDREN'S & FAMILIES WORKER REPORT

Junior Church has been given a boost by the parent/carers of those children attending becoming involved as Leaders and Helpers. It has supported the existing fantastic team and rejuvenated us with new talents! The children have enjoyed the variety in the teaching too. Due to the expansion in the team, we have also been able to extend Junior Church to the pre-schoolers who join the crèche for the end of the session. The older members are also able to get more input in their teaching.

The Crèche has also changed in that it has been moved to The Cross and has received a lot of positive feedback from parent/carers - they can even make a cup of tea and the children have access to a craft activity.

We have said goodbye in the last year to two very longstanding members of the Junior Church Team, Jo Long and Maura Howard. Although Maura still provides us with all the refreshments at the Kids Breakfast and the recent Good Friday event, we want to say a very big thank you for everything they have done and still do!

Vanessa Clothier Pratts

YOUTH WORK REPORT

Wow another year, I remember when my dad said that time goes so fast when you get older and I used to think he was really old for saying that! Well, "Doesn't time go so fast as you get older!" This year has been a real roller coaster emotionally, spiritually and physically. We have seen such victories and some real defeats. But as Gods word shows, he meets, ministers and moulds us through the sunshine and through the storms:

Psalm 18 v 32-36

'It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights. He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great. You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn.'

James 1 v 2-6

‘Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.’

We have seen tens of young people come to know the Lord, three of them were baptised and the vast majority have deepened their relationship with God, are passionate about His word, are encountering the Holy Spirit and are evangelising like it is going out of fashion.

But we have been hit with the losses as well, we have seen young people hear and know the truth but walk away. We have seen broken families, broken relationships, utter despair and torment and many other things that would not be appropriate to share in this report.

But our God is victorious and our hope is found in him. Laura and I have cried as we have seen our young people come to us and say “why would Jesus let this happen to me?” I can’t say that we have always had the answers and sometimes we have just said ‘we are so so sorry’ and then started to process of rebuilding. But we have also cried when we have seen our young people become more like Jesus, not being fake but God using their characters and personalities while moulding them to stand as soldiers for christ.

So the following pages are a little insight into the sorts of things we get up to in the youth work of St Stephen’s church. Laura and I looked at the time table of the past year and saw that each week with the exception of very few weeks there are 9 events put on for young people to in some way relate to each other, God or the community around us. Yes Danny..... up, in and out....TEE HEE!!!

Schools Work

As of September 2009 we have been running a lunch club at Woolmer Hill every Tuesday in one of the classrooms where we set up an Xbox, iPod dock, magazines and sweets. We’ve also done some hair straightening for the girls! This club has been really successful, attracting a lot of young people every week. Now that we are heading into the warmer months of the year we will be doing more detached work and putting the club on hold as most young people want to go outside when it is warm enough.

We have also done some teaching at Woolmer Hill - Lee, Laura, Sam and Liam (DNA student at Three Counties Church) went in on an Enrichment Day in February to teach Year 10s about the Christian point of view on sex before marriage. These lessons were very well received and allowed us to build relationships with the Year 10s, some of who are now regulars at our evangelistic event “Glimpse”.

We continue to do a lunch club at the Royal School every Thursday. The team has lunch with the girls and then head over to a classroom to play games, chat and invite the girls to other youth events that are going on. This, again, is very successful with a core group coming back each week and relationships being built.

We also do regular assemblies at the Royal School - our latest topic was "forgiveness". Assemblies are always a great opportunity for us to talk about what God's views are on these issues.

Amplified

Our 11-14s group has also gone through some changes since last academic year. From September onwards, on Thursday nights, we have been adopting a two-week cycle of God Slot one week and an activity the next. On the God Slot weeks we have been going through a course called "Check It Out" which seeks to inform the young people of what it means to be a Christian. It also explores how we can know God is real, how important our choices in life are, etc. This course was aimed at non-Christians and we were pleased that some of our regular young people brought friends along from school who were able to join in with the course. On our activity weeks we have enjoyed a quiz night, baking cupcakes, a chips challenge, valentine's dinner and bowling to name just a few! These nights have been a great way of getting new people involved, having fun, learning new skills and bonding as a group.

In December we got together with the youth leaders of St Bart's and Three Counties Church and put on an event (called "Xmas Factor") for 11-14yr olds that was all about getting our local young people together to have fun and to hear a gospel message. The idea was that this would be another opportunity to bring friends along from school and to build relationships between the youth of different churches. The event included lots of games, xbox and wii competitions, food, karaoke and a testimony - all within a Christmas theme. We did not get as many people coming to this as we would have liked. We think this was because the event is brand new and it needs to build a reputation for itself so we have not given up on it yet and will put on another event in the summer term.

In May we will be taking our young people away for an activity based weekend with some Bible teaching included. The annual weekend away is always an awesome time of group bonding, learning new things, beating fears and having fun! We're really looking forward to it and will hopefully have lots of photos to show you afterwards!

Amplified also runs on Sunday mornings during the service and is held at Lee and Laura's flat. We always leave the church after the block of sung worship as we feel it is important for our young people to be involved in that part of the service. This means we don't always have a lot of time for our group session but we put it to good use - sometimes we pray together, other times we chat about issues/questions that arise, but most of the time we follow Scripture Union Bible sessions called "The Grid" which teaches our young people about what the Bible says and how we can apply it to our daily living.

The Wave

So as you know the wave started in the summer of 2008 from the vision God gave a young lady called Kate Burt which was that she was to start a project that is just there to love Haslemere and serve the people. We have now held another Summer event and we plan to have the same thing happen again this Summer

During the summer event we set up a big tent on Lion Green and serve the community in many ways like gardening, car washing, sports, litter picking.....the list goes on. We do this for 5 days and during this time the young people sleep at the Methodist Church, get taught spiritual principals in the morning then serve in the afternoon and evening. Apart from sleeping at the Methodist Church many of the adults join the young people in all activities.

Apart from the summer event we also do 'Wave Weekends' when young people and adults go into the community and continue to serve where the needs are every other Sat from 10am to 1pm

Liquid Sunday's

Liquid meets every Sunday evening between 7pm and 9pm. We have a theme for the term (last term was understanding the Father Heart of God, this term in encountering the Holy Spirit). This is then presented to the youth in a few different ways.

Every other week we have group evenings when we split liquid into school and college age groups and then present the theme to them in an age appropriate way and then the weeks in between we are all together and have someone preach a message to them in light of that terms theme.

The structure of the liquid nights is social time, games and announcements, worship, groups/preach and then ministry time and chill time.

United

This is always the first Sunday of each month. We hold liquid at St Stephen's and make it an all age event but the young people lead the service, lead the worship and preach.

Glimpse

This is an outreach event held instead of Liquid once every half term when we have an xbox 360, a Wii and a Dj set up. We have competitions and open mic slots and then a short gospel message.

Lads and Girls Cell

Every Tuesday evening we hold a girls cell at mine and Laura's flat and a boys cell at Jon and Sarah's house. We open the scriptures and really get to grips with what God is saying to us through his word. These are also led by the young people when they are allocated different parts to lead each night

Worship School

This is a teaching course for everyone who is involved in the worship group at liquid. It is held before liquid on a Sunday and it gets to grips with what it means to be a worshiper and worship leader and what the bible teaches us about that.

Jamming Session

For those people who are not quite ready to be in the worship group, but are up and coming musicians, we hold a jamming session every six weeks which aims to teach them how to play as a band and what the difference is between a secular band and worship band is.

Liquid Meals

Every six weeks we have a themed meal at St Stephen's. Some of these themes have been Super Hero's, Mexican night, 50's night, film stars and so on. We play games or do activities that are appropriate to the theme and have a meal together while St Stephens has an overhaul of decorations appropriate to that nights activities.

Liquid Weekend Away

Once a year we take all of the youth away to Dalesdown in Horsham. We have a weekend of activities with 5 worship and teaching sessions on a given subject. This year the subject was "who are you living for?" Three young people became Christians and most of them really encountered the Holy Spirit as they were challenged on what and who was their priority in life.

So please continue to pray.....

As I stated above we see God move in incredible ways but we also see real hardship but it is prayers sent up to our Lord that cover us as we as leaders continue to fight his fight and turn these young lives around for the glory of our God in heaven.

Without you and without Jesus.....we are nothing.....Thank you!

Lee & Laura Nancarrow

NOAH'S ARK REPORT

Noah's Ark has been continuing to provide a safe, warm, relaxing environment for children to come and enjoy a craft, play, snack and song time and for parent/carers to have a cup of tea and biscuit!

The group is so well supported by the community and the parent/carers are a wonderful friendly group who enjoy a good chat! We are very blessed to have two new members join us, Jean Van Jeffries and Barbara Gittins who prepare the snacks for the children and provide free flowing tea and coffee for the parent/carers. They have been invaluable this term and have been a real asset to the team.

With Emma Cunningham purchasing the snacks each week and Isobel Smart providing fantastic imaginative craft, we have never been so organised! Our very treasured Ann Fitchett and Jean Clark oversee proceedings each week, and with Holly Day setting up with great speed, we are a very happy, efficient and effective team! We have so much to be thankful for!

We are still providing stalls from local businesses at the group, and recently ran a joint craft activity morning with Rainbow's Nursery and Junior Church on Good Friday for children/families from pre-school age to 11 which was very well attended and a great success.

RAINBOW NURSERY AND NOAH'S ARK SOCIAL FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Committee has blossomed over the past year and has continued to provide support and fundraising for Rainbow's Nursery and Noah's Ark.

Tea, refreshment and a craft activity are still provided at the monthly Kid's Praise Service led by Hilary Owen and Michele Webb. The services have such great support from the parent/ carers and are immensely enjoyed by all!

We have also raised nearly £300.00 at the Christmas Craft evening and £525.00 at the recent Pamper Evening, both events being so well attended by the parent/carers, our Church family and the community as a whole.

The Committee has really enjoyed running the events and some great friendships have been made. As most of the members have children who will be leaving for school in September, we will be saying goodbye to a great team and be hoping to pass the baton on to the next group of parent/carers.

Vanessa Clothier Pratts

OUTWARD GIVING

The Outward Giving group has met formally three times during the last year to discuss, plan and make decisions for our outward giving. We have kept in regular touch by e-mail, informally discussing issues arising from these meetings and some related questions, such as guest speakers, keeping missions at the heart of the church, missions education, teaching on missions and emergency giving.

The current members of this group are:

Danny Wignall

Fiona Short

Ed Walker

Neil Wilson

Michelle Webb

Michael Clark has been a longstanding member of the group but has recently stood down

As a group we are developing a strategy for giving for St Stephens to support the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ locally, nationally and internationally, by supporting a range of charities/ministries with whom we have relationship.

In the last year we have given £23,000 to local and international ministries. From this, £1800 has been given to each of the ministries we support or have supported. Other smaller 'one off' donations have also been made.

Regular giving to local and international charities/ministries are over a three year cycle and then reviewed.

Each of the ministries we currently give regularly to has a link person or group:

Adam and Karina, Derby	Laver's Housegroup
Age Concern	Vanessa Kemp
Chernobyl Children's Lifeline	Liza Caie
CMCT (Colleen Redit)	Fiona Short
C.M.S. (Grace How)	Laver's Housegroup
FRRME (Canon Andrew White)	Jo Long
Latin Link (Cowan family/Lizzie)	Richard Parker
Open Doors	Vanessa Kemp
Tearfund	Michele and Sally Webb
Rocke Family	Neil Wilson
China Heart	Neil Wilson

It's part of the vision of the group that some of the causes supported would provide opportunities for members of the congregation to visit and become directly involved in their work.

Currently the Outward Giving group is keeping St Stephens in touch with missions by

- Organising guest speakers
- Planning to display materials on our mission partners

We are keen to involve more people. Sandra Gee will be helping with displays. Jenny Parsons is interested in joining and will attend the next meeting as an observer.

Neil Wilson

THE PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM

Do YOU get excited about the power of prayer?

WHAT is Prayer Ministry? Speaking to God & listening to God on behalf of others

WHO do we pray for? Anyone and everyone who expresses a desire for prayer

WHEN: 9 a.m. available during and after the Communion Service

10.45 a.m. available after the sermon

Other special services e.g. Bereavement Service

WHERE: Usually in the Chancel, where there is privacy and peace

HOW: a combination of listening to requests and listening to God
complete confidentiality is observed

WHY: because we believe that God loves us, and longs for us to find healing in every part of our lives, and that He has promised to answer our prayers!

Extras: There is a permanent 'prayer area' in the Chancel with comfortable seats, a Bible, notebook and supply of paper hankies! Please use the notebook to record 'answers to prayer' to encourage others to seek prayer for their needs.

The Team meet regularly to share ideas and to pray for the church and each other. These sessions have been a great blessing and encouragement to us all.

If you wonder whether you might join the Team, or simply wish to know more about praying for others, do sign up for the **Training Day on Saturday 8th May** and benefit from the teaching of John Ryeland, Director of the Christian Healing Mission. Pick up a flier or read a poster, and then apply to Jean!

THE MARRIAGE COURSE

This excellent Course whose aim is to 'make good marriages even better' was written and produced on DVD by Nicky and Sila Lee at Holy Trinity Brompton. It is delivered to couples in a relaxed environment; at tables for two where they have a delicious main course before viewing the DVD and embarking on the exercises, which are entirely private to each couple. The Course consists of seven sessions which cover all the main areas of potential difficulty and/or conflict! The questionnaires completed by the couples consistently endorse the Course as giving a great boost to their marriages. Nearly 100 couples have taken the Course during the eight years for which it has been running. It has taken place in variety of venues from homes to halls, with one in a pub! Like Fun after Three and Crossways Counselling, The Marriage Support Group (which runs the Course) had its origins in St. Stephen's, but operates as a Christian Service with wide ecumenical support. Our hopes for a Course 'across the A3' last September came to nothing, but there are strong hopes for such a Course to take place starting this coming September. We will also plan for a Haslemere Course; venue and leadership to be decided later. We ran only one Course in 2009 which took place during the autumn, for one couple in Bethany! Sadly there is always a serious problem recruiting couples, and we depend so much on those who have been blessed by the Course persuading their friends that it is an opportunity not to be missed, and which will never be regretted!

Michael & Jean Clark

PRIME TIME REPORT

During the year we have had many successful Prime Time trips, including a canal boat trip on the Wey & Arun Canal followed by supper, our usual evening visit to see the outdoor play at Lurgashall preceded by a picnic on the green. We saw 'A School for Scandal' and as usual the weather behaved perfectly. We've had a visit to Denbies Winery, a private visit to the gardens at Little Shalford, Sunday lunch followed by Apple Tasting at Blackmoor (not so good weather!) and great fun with a Beetle drive.

However, we have also had our disappointments with a comparatively small turnout to the Quiz afternoon in January and a complete lack of interest in the Strictly Have Fun Dancing afternoon which we had to cancel. We were surprised following the success of this event in January 2009. However, I think everyone enjoyed the tea we provided and the film 'The Young Victoria' although it was not easy to see it properly on the church equipment.

We have decided to slightly alter what we do during the year and to concentrate on one big event and although we will continue a monthly programme they will not be so labour intensive for the committee. We are intending to organise a visit by coach to Bletchley Park in September and this event will be open to anyone who is interested in seeing and learning more about the role played by those who worked there during the war. Many of you are of course familiar with the Enigma Machine book/film. Also open to everyone is the Great Big Tea Party in aid of Open Doors in June.

With our thanks to Michael Clark (our new Prime Time Treasurer) we have a new events programme so please pick one up and come and join us.

All the people on the committee are tremendous, and put in such hard work so many thanks to you all, and many thanks to all of you who come along to the events.

Vanessa Kemp

CARE HOME MINISTRY REPORT

Over the last year a team of 5 people from St Stephens have offered a service of Holy Communion once a month in 5 care homes around the Parish. Holy Communion has been provided to the residents of Home Green, Chestnut View, Holy Cross Hospital, Chase House and Brownscombe House, in all to approximately 35 elderly or disabled Christians who are not able to get to church helping them to know that they are still part of the body of Jesus Christ. For the coming year the number of people able to give time to providing this service has risen to 7 and we will be adding Shottermill House to our list.

Sarah Weldon

PASTORAL CARE REPORT

When I was reflecting on what to write for my report this year, I found myself thinking of the very ordinary human needs of Jesus the man. Like us, He needed food, warmth, clothing and shelter. He also needed His family, and the companionship and support of His friends. In Matthew 25:37-40 the Bible tells us 'Then the virtuous will say to him in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did it to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.' Surely this helps us grasp the depths of God the Father's attachment to the world He created and to His children living there? Our response must surely be to help him care for them.

I do not personally provide Pastoral Care at St Stephen's and in the Parish of Shottermill. I am simply a point of contact. I aim to support, resource and co-ordinate the care that others give, and I am frequently humbled by all that you do. At no time was this more evident than during the severe weather we had in January. I telephoned everyone who was elderly, sick or on their own on our church register. Whilst I am sure my call was appreciated, I had nothing to do. Someone had always got there before me.

Church members without me having to ask had cleared paths, slogged through the snow to provide shopping, and taken round home cooked meals. There were a couple of people I was worried about because I could not immediately contact them. I later found they were out helping others! A crisis always draws people together, but this attitude of service exists quietly throughout the year too.

Since my last report we have held training sessions for our Pastoral Visitors, and we plan to hold some more focussing on specific issues such as money and debt, relationship difficulties and living with a life limiting illness. By the time you read this we will have held our latest Pastoral Care Meeting, looking at how we can be effective with limited resources - we are after all a relatively small church trying to do great things in God's name. I believe we need to be focused, realistic and pragmatic - it is much better to do a great job in the most important areas, than to try to be everything to everyone and fall short. I am not lacking in vision or doubting God's provision, but even Jesus was discerning about how and where he used his time and energy. However that discernment came from a close relationship with His Father built on prayer and obedience. We need to follow His example and let Him set the agenda and decide what is important.

Most of you are involved in Pastoral Care in some way. If I do not know what you are doing or you are overburdened, then tell me so I can support you. If you would like to be more involved then come and have a coffee and we can explore your gifts. We all have them, and yours might be just what we need. If you are in need in some way, please let me know. Thank you for all you do - it is a privilege to see God's love in action through you in our community.

Jane Saunders

CHURCH OFFICE

This year has seen more change in the Church Office, sadly Susan Kennedy has had to stand down from her role as part-time administrator. This has led to Jo Long taking over a more coordinating role, with several people volunteering to man the office during the mornings. The aim is to still be able to have the church open 4 mornings a week, enabling people to call in, maintenance work to be carried out and the telephone to be answered.

Many queries are now dealt with through the office. We are in the process of updating the church directory again and are hoping to set up a data base which will be useful for advertising events and keeping in touch with people who have had children baptised or been married in the church etc.

The church online calendar is kept up to date (providing people pass on information to Jo) with many forthcoming events and from this you will see how busy the church is. The church continues to be a busy place and the office being open enables this to happen more smoothly.

Jo Long

