



## 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 11 October 2020 at 10.00 am

## Contents

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

Please see the main booklet for the agenda, minutes of the last annual meeting,  
Treasurer's report & audited accounts for 2019, reports on fabric goods &  
ornaments, Safeguarding, the Deanery Synod and PCC proceedings.

*The contents of this booklet are available to be read on the parish website at  
[www.stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk)*

## **ST FRANCIS HAMMERFIELD APCM REPORT 2020**

1. As with other churches in the Diocese, St. Francis has had no hall rentals throughout most of the Covid period, although a few temporary rentals have recently occurred. St. Francis has been open for Private Prayer every Wednesday and Sunday between 3pm – 5 pm.
2. A certain number of people have now arranged for their giving to be by Standing Order.
3. The church has good reserves and we are confident that when masses start again, and regular giving resumes, we should again start to have more money. We of course appreciate that the hall rentals will probably not return to what they were until social distancing has vanished.
4. On 16 August we had a well-attended Mass and Benediction
5. Since the last APCM we gave significant sums to The St. Francis Hospice.
6. The Vicar is liaising with The Bishop of Richborough regarding the Bishop presiding and preaching at St. Francis, sometime in the new year (it will be recalled that this had to be cancelled for this year because of Covid)

**Trevor Standen**

## **REPORT FROM ST STEPHEN'S**

As a congregation we try to minister particularly to the elderly which is a great joy and we continue to be a witness to the Church of England in Chaulden.

Our numbers are low at present because of age and illness but our worship is always worthy and enjoyed. 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 until recently, 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.

We now celebrate Holy Communion every Thursday morning and feel it is an important witness to the local community – especially when they hear us ring the bell.

During Lent we again welcomed a number of our friends from St. John's for a Lent group led by Ruth.

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 2020**

## **ST JOHNS CHURCH BEREAVEMENT GROUP**

The Bereavement Group is a Team led by the Vicar, assisted by Rev. Ruth Goatly and our Lay Reader Carole Lewis together with 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. This past year the Clergy have taken 40 funerals and each family have been contacted by the Team to offer support at this very difficult time.

We hold regular meetings in strict confidence to discuss between ourselves the best way we can offer 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**

## **REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MARCH 2020**

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. Our remit includes the magazine, newsletter, website, Facebook page, publicity including posters and banners, and articles in the local press. Communications encompasses every aspect of the life of the parish. The Vicar is keen that all publicity material should have the same parish logo, as our "brand." There are 11 members on the Committee at present, with Anne Lyne as Chair and Sally-Anne Bates as the very efficient Secretary. By the time of the APCM we will have met as a committee 6 times during the year under review.

The monthly parish magazine, ably edited for so many years by Sally-Anne, and the weekly newsletter, now drawn up in the Parish Office, both come under the remit of the Communications Committee. We also produce press releases when necessary, mostly to publicise events. These are sent to the Gazette and Boxmoor Direct, with whom we have developed a good relationship.

The Communications Committee produces the parish Christmas and Easter cards which are delivered through all doors in the parish to send seasonal greetings and inform residents of the times of services and of parish activities. These are printed in-house (thank you Hilary) and we are very grateful to Alan Munford who, though no longer a member of the committee, cuts and bundles the cards and organises them for distribution in "walks" taken on by volunteers. Many thanks indeed to those who brave the weather and deliver cards.

More people took on this task last Christmas, but too many cards were nevertheless undelivered, the worst area being Cornerhall.

A modern website is essential to communication. Stacey Barton developed and set up the new parish website, in cooperation with the Vicar. We are very grateful to Stacey, and although there were initially problems with updating it, the website is now running smoothly and Stacey is training up a web team to reduce her load. We do recognise there is still some work to be done to complete the website. Stacey also set up the current St John's Boxmoor Facebook page. One of the parish MAP goals is to increase our social media presence and we do try to publicise any special or seasonal services on Facebook as well as upcoming events. Social media publicity involves the "sharing" of information from our page to other groups' pages to spread our news. One area in which we hope Facebook publicity has helped to spread the word is the growth of "Messy Church," as social media tends to reach a younger generation. We seek to portray ourselves as a caring parish which is active both spiritually and socially. Very necessary safeguarding regulations mean that we often cannot publish photographs of successful events, particularly where children are involved.

For event publicity, we are indebted to Alan Munford, who still frequently undertakes the tasks of producing posters and banners, sometimes liaising with the likes of David Doyle to gain sponsorship.

In September 2019 we developed and launched the Boxmoor Parish Flower Festival Calendar for 2020 as a fundraiser. Of the 200 printed we sold well over half, making a profit of £299 for the church. It was a worthwhile task but involved a lot of hard work and we do not plan to produce calendars on a regular basis. Many people no longer hang calendars on their wall.

"Comms" are also responsible for the merchandise in the glass cabinet at the back of the church. It was suggested that we should produce notelets using the cover photo from the calendar, a very attractive aerial shot taken specially for us. This is under consideration for the future, but some of the previous batch, using David Mitchell's lovely springtime photo, still remain unsold. Until these are sold, we cannot order any more.

The Communications Committee try very hard to ensure our communications are effective and efficient, but we can only process and pass on information which is given to us in the first place.

**Anne Lyne**

## **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MUSIC**

The core choir is now mostly an adult group of immensely loyal members though remains compact in size! It is rare though, that a Sunday morning goes by without delivering a communion anthem, with music planned within the available resources. Of late, we have been lucky to have a number of additional members on some Sundays. Harvey remains the only child member of the main choir. An enormously encouraging development is the gathering success of the Junior Choir led with unfailing patience and dedication by Katherine Boyce. The group meets fortnightly and Marian Davies kindly provides rewarding refreshments at rehearsals and activities include various instructive musical games as well as straightforward singing. The choir has managed a contribution at almost all "All Age" family Sundays at the start most months with a pattern gradually being established. Credit goes to families for bringing the children along regularly to rehearsals.

Outside Sunday Mornings the monthly service of Choral Evensong has maintained an excellent standard, greatly assisted by many regular visitors who love the service format and its repertoire. A very few paid singers –rarely more than one or two–have ensured that all the parts are represented. Usually accompanied by Nicholas King, a number of seriously challenging anthems have been delivered over the past year. After Easter, choral Evensong will be taking place on the FIRST Sunday of each month. With such fabulous music it disappointing to find that congregational numbers are so remarkably small given the real quality of the services, including both the music and the spoken word. There was a good deal of music making over Christmas but the climax was our second orchestrally-accompanied carol service. The feeling, conveyed through feedback, that it was a service and not a concert, was greatly satisfying as much effort went into creating just that. It is always wonderful to hear the congregation singing enthusiastically at all our services, but especially at Christmas.

In the year past, where couples pay for the choir at weddings, we have been fortunate to have entered into a partnership with a local choir, the Hemel Hempstead Singers, which has sung effectively at these occasions. It had become almost impossible to gather sufficient members from the regular choir, particularly as the Trebles gradually moved on. The cost of this to wedding couples is only marginally higher than it was, with the music fund benefitting from a small administrative fee. This successful arrangement is to continue.

MASJ's twice-yearly series of Friday lunchtime concerts continue to attract a loyal audience including regular church members, and others also. The MASJ New Year Concert was an exciting highlight with almost the same orchestra as at the carols. It is now referred to as the "St John's Ensemble" but turned its hands (and fingers) deftly to the ever-cheerful world of British Light Music, mixed with hints of Vienna. Such was the enthusiasm for this orchestral concert, that a similarly-styled one is planned for Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> as part of the MASJ Festival, just ahead of the National VE day commemoration. Orchestral concerts are, of course, expensive to mount and MASJ is looking at the possibility of attracting sponsorship from local businesses to enable ticket prices to remain realistic. A Festival Choral Evensong will follow, the next day.

On March 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a performance of "The Crucifixion" by Stainer, the ever-popular setting of the Holy Week story, in a tuneful and atmospheric account. There will be two outstanding professional soloists, Alex Haigh and Thomas Isherwood. We hope that this will be well attended, having not been done at St John's since about 2012.

Later on, in July, we shall be holding a Songs Of Praise service, again using the orchestral ensemble to accompany familiar hymns with new, exciting orchestrations (“BBC Style”) by the Director of Music.

Taken in the round, music is very much alive and well at St John’s, including numerous external groups using the church for concerts. PCC support for music in services is generous in maintaining a high standard within the services. However, ideas for fostering better congregational attendance at choral evensong, into which much effort and resource is poured, might be a topic for reflection along with seeking to encourage growth in regular choir membership. We do not audition, and merely ask potential members to come along and “sample” what we do by joining us for some rehearsals. Fluent music reading is not essential though at least a basic knowledge of it probably helps people to feel involved in what we do more quickly and to contribute with greater confidence. The positive benefits of singing in a choir are universally acknowledged. It needs but a little courage to try it!

**Keith Beniston**

**Director of Music March 2020**

#### **REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND GIVING COMMITTEE**

Apart from the routine of reviewing the quarterly management accounts and projected cash flows prepared for the PCC, the committee oversaw a Stewardship campaign that successfully reversed the recent downward trend in Planned Giving.

Two major projects were facilitated – the “Regulars” Car Park and the replacement of boilers at St John’s. The latter required further Parishoner Loans which the Committee solicited.

Text giving was established and approval gained for the purchase of a card reader to be placed in St John’s to further facilitate electronic donations.

Going forward the Committee intends to review legacy giving once the current cashflow emergency, occasioned by the Coronavirus pandemic, has been negotiated.

Note 11 to the Annual Accounts shows the outward giving recommended to the PCC by the Committee and details the charities supported, either directly or through special collections.

**Chris Angell, Parish Treasurer 11 April 2020**

## **2020 REPORT FROM THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

### **PCC Fundraising 2019**

Event	Income £	Expenditure £	Net Proceeds £
Christmas Tree Festival	4,285	1,089	3,196
Easter Appeal	3,094	-	3,094
Flower Festival	4,514	1,577	2,937
Countdown to Christmas Fayre	2,936	-	2,936
Grand Draw	3,427	1,676	1,751
Merchandising	1,432	450	982
Quiz Night	870	-	870
Film Night	431	96	335
Historic Churches Bike Ride	290	-	290
Pancake Party	45	-	45
	<u>21,324</u>	<u>4,888</u>	<u>16,436</u>

Notes: Merchandising includes Plant, Craft and Produce sales, Christmas cards and Calendars

The £20 cost of the Lotteries Licence is shown against the Grand Draw but is an annual expense

**Chris Angell, Parish Treasurer January 2020**

### **ST JOHN'S HALL MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The St John's Hall Management Committee met on three formal occasions during the year. It is pleasing to report that bookings for the hall have remained on a level plateau recognising that our hire charges were increased from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. It was subsequently agreed that we would not increase our charges for 2020 but would review the position in September this year regarding 2021 rates. The U3A remain our largest and most

valuable customer and we are very grateful for their continued support. Graham Liddle our Hall Booking Secretary continues to undertake his duties in organising all our bookings – ‘Thank you’ Graham.

Our Hall Cleaner is undertaking her work well and ‘fits her working hours’ around our bookings.

Further ‘touch up’ decoration has been undertaken to the hall and kitchen and two clocks have been installed, one in each hall, our hirers consider their addition to be a very useful and worthwhile addition. Our thanks go to Mark Harbour and Andy Fisher for this work, we are extremely grateful to them both.

The Hall Dividers were again fully serviced in November and still appear to be functioning well; we hope this continues to be the case accepting that the manufacturer of the dividers went into liquidation in 2019 and ‘spare parts’ are not now available direct.

Finally, a big ‘Thank you’ to Di Tovey who continues to manage the day to day duties of running the hall.

**Peter Garner**  
**Hall Co-ordinator**

### **JUNIOR CHURCH**

Junior Church had another successful year in 2019 with a relatively constant number each week learning about a wide variety of topics. Our young people ranged in age from 5 up to 15 with the older children helping with the younger ones. During the Sunday morning sessions, we make use of Roots on the Web, which provides activities to do with the children, based on one of the readings for the day. This can range from making something, writing prayers and talking about people who are important to us and who help us.

In January 2019 we had our first Messy Church session, focusing on Epiphany, at which we had about 10 children, we wanted to start small and see where this new venture went. During the year we had another 3 sessions, which covered Trinity, peace & working together and Advent. The number of children attending with their parents grew and we had over 20 children attending. A large number of these did not regularly attend Church on a Sunday morning, so our outreach was much greater.

Sadly we had to say goodbye to Sheena Wilson, who had co-ordinated Junior Church for the last few years, as she moved away. It was her work with Mike wanting to introduce Messy Church that saw us get this off the ground. I would also like to say a huge thank you to Mary McCluskey for organising the posters, games and activities, along with some excellent sessions on a Sunday morning. To Rosie Shaw for her continued support of the young people and the activities that she has put together, including prayer angels amongst other things. To Yvonne Munford for her skills in making people and her suggestions of crafts that can be done. To Marian Davies for her baking with the children, something we all enjoyed. To Annie Mitchell for making sure that the parents and children all signed in when they arrived and helping with the activities. To Di Tovey and others for helping with the catering and providing an enjoyable tea for the children at the end of each session. Finally to Mike and Ruth for their worship and prayer and for allowing us to take the plunge.

**Jo Fisher**

### **ST JOHN'S LUNCH CLUB**

St John's lunches have had a successful year. The numbers attending have increased and the atmosphere is welcoming and the guests enjoy the food and the company.

The only downside is that the cooking is done by a select few who would appreciate some help.

**Marian Davies**

### **THE KNITTING CIRCLE**

The Knitting Circle has continued into its seventh 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; the money will go towards church funds. We have also knitted a number of small white teddies for Baptism babies.

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.

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 2020**

### **MUSIC AT ST JOHN'S**

Our charity has continued to promote music for all in the local community, especially the younger members. It has also helped to enrich the music at services in the church, including providing a significant grant to the church for the instrumental ensemble at the Parish Festival of Carols in December 2019. Sadly, all events have had to be cancelled for the time being in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lunchtime concerts We continued to hold lunchtime concerts on Fridays during the Spring/Summer and Autumn months of 2019. It is pleasing to be able to report that audience sizes were generally higher than hitherto.

Educational events Dacorum Music School worked closely with us by running instrumental and singing days at St John's for young musicians. The last of these (before lockdown) was the very successful WOOFYT day on 12th March which involved 4 classes from local primary schools.

Bursary Scheme After an initial surge in interest in the Bursary Scheme (due to the publicising of the scheme by our friends at Dacorum Music School) the level of applications remains disappointing. No applications were received for the most recent round. We have continued to promote the scheme, particularly at the Education events hosted at St John's.

Other Events We held our annual 'New Year's 10k Run and 4k Walk' on 31st December 2019 and this attracted many serious runners as well as a happy crowd of walkers (some with dogs).

Our New Year Concert took place on Saturday 4th January. This year Keith Beniston, Director of Music at St John's Church planned and conducted the programme of 'popular' classical music including two pieces for 'cello by Bach and Fauré with the soloist Zoë Martlew. The event was a great success in musical terms but sadly we did not attract sufficient audience numbers to enable us to cover our costs. As this is intended to be a fund-raising event, we will look very carefully at what sort of event we should hold in future at that time of year. Options might include more vigorous promotional activity beforehand and seeking sponsorship from local businesses.

Please visit our website at [www.masj.org.uk](http://www.masj.org.uk) for an update on the situation regarding future events and activities promoted by Music at St John's

Membership We held our most recent Annual General Meeting on Friday 4th October 2019. This took place after the lunchtime concert that day (after lunch) in the hall. We tried this new format (as opposed to an evening) in the hope that we would attract a larger attendance. In the event we did, and a number of our regular supporters at these concerts expressed a wish to become members.

Trustees We said farewell to Richard Lyne with many thanks for his major contributions to the running of the charity over the last eight and a half years.

Catherine Holness also indicated that she will be relinquishing the role of treasurer at the end of this financial year (31st May). So, we are looking for someone with the necessary accountancy skills to take on this role. Do let me know if you are able to help in this way or if you know of someone else who can. Ideally the new treasurer should be available to work alongside Catherine until 31st May 2020.

**Paul Davies, Chairman 22nd March 2020**

### **PARISH MAGAZINE**

250 magazines are printed monthly in-house by Hilary Kemp, Parish Administrator. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Hilary for undertaking this task and to Alan Munford for all his hard work in making up the bundles for distribution and collecting the money in and being my proofreader! Thanks also to Gill and Ian Williams who send out the postal copies. I would personally like to thank Trevor Boyce who has looked after the advertising side so well and after twenty eight dedicated years has now stood down from this role and to Annie Mitchell for the support she gives me on the editorial side and to Janet Packe and other members of the congregation who provide photos from the different events held. I would also like to personally thank Reverend Michael Macey, The Reverend Canon Dr Ruth Goatly, Carole Lewis, Sheena Wilson, Alan Munford, Peter Garner, Jean Garner, Graham Gibbs, Chris Angell, Mark Harbour, Paul Davies, Philippa Graham and the various Groups and Organisations for all their contributions on a regular basis and also to Hilary Kemp, Parish Administrator for her monthly support in preparing the Parish Diary and Registers to send to me and to everyone else who supports me as Editor of the Parish Magazine. Thanks also to all the distributors who work so hard in delivering the magazines on a monthly basis and would always welcome anyone new who wanted to join the team.

Items can be e-mailed direct to me at [magazine@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk](mailto: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. 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 the upkeep and running costs of our three Churches and promoting community spirit. 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**

### **PASTORAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

The Pastoral Coordinating Committee was formed at the end of 2019 and was formally constituted as a Committee of PCC in January 2020. Its role is to co-ordinate pastoral work in the church through two existing groups: the Pastoral Visiting Group and Bereavement Support Group. A report from the Bereavement Support Group is provided separately. The Pastoral Visiting Group has as its primary role to identify, and respond to, pastoral need in the church and ensure as far as possible contact is maintained with church members in need of support or help, usually through visiting, but also phone contacts, The group met quarterly through 2019. Members of the group also assisted in taking Home Communion regularly to seven people and to others on an ad hoc basis in response to illness or similar circumstances.

The Pastoral Coordinating Committee was due to meet for the first time in March 2020, but events overtook that, and the focus became the establishment and coordination of pastoral ‘buddy’ contact during the initial period of the covid crisis. 145 individuals were contacted regularly during this time by a ‘team’ of 33 people. A further 79 individuals or couples/families were added during June 2020. Many contacts are ongoing. The groups will continue to function as appropriate given current covid restrictions.

**Ruth Goatly**

## **SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Social Committee had arranged a full programme of non-profit making events for the parish this year, most of which the virus has put paid to.

We did, however, manage to hold the children's pancake party on Shrove Tuesday. We had 25 children, which was slightly fewer than last year, but much more manageable for the vicar who was in charge of the pancake tossing races up and down the church aisles. The children then came back into the hall to do quizzes, play games and consume vast quantities of pancakes.

In the evening, for the first time, we held a pancake cocktail party for the adults. In earlier life the vicar must have been a bartender judging by the number of different cocktails he kept on producing throughout the evening -of which we tried several. We also served a selection of sweet cocktails to go with the cocktails. Keith Beniston's wife brought a group of young people from her school to provide musical entertainment which was beautifully performed and very well received.

Shortly after this everything closed down and since then we have not been able to proceed with any of the other planned events.

Hopefully we will be able to hold more events next year and we look forward to your support then.

**Lorraine Ioannou**

## **TOGETHER ON MONDAY**

Together on Mondays is flourishing as a group and we have 42 members with between 25 - 30 people at each meeting.

We have had a variety of speakers either from within the group or someone who has been recommended.

Topics have ranged from hearing about houses Noel and Sheila James have lived in, a potted history of Hemel Hempstead, a quiz night a talk by Keith Beniston, a Lent talk by Mike, running the London Marathon and a visit to Australia

Our outing in the summer was to Ascott House although due to heavy rain we were unable to walk round the gardens.

We had a dinner at Little Hay golf club in August and we went again for our Christmas meal in Dec.

Our charity in 2019 was in support of the continuing work in Kagera, a place which means a lot to Ruth Goatly our associate minister.

Meetings take place on the first and third Mondays in the month at 7 45 pm in the church hall.

New members are always welcome.

**Di Tovey**

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

We meet at 2.30 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month throughout the year.

“Fellowship” is the main purpose of our meetings and we usually gather round the table and share thoughts and ideas on chosen topics. It is quite a revelation to discover the depth of knowledge and experience of our members.

This year we have studied the new statues of saints in St. Alban's Cathedral and learnt about how the “magic roundabout” came to Hemel Hempstead. We shared memories of the railway that originally ran through the town from Boxmoor to Harpenden and, as a complete contrast, looked at the purpose of Lent and how we could best use it. In this context we looked afresh at Psalm 23 under the guidance of Carole Lewis, one of our Readers. In the summer we look forward to our annual garden party and at Christmas we make decorations for our Christmas Tree at the Festival. Finally, we are always happy to welcome Denise Chennells to one of our meetings when she entertains us with her colourful talks.

This year we have continued with our support of Mercy Ships and also made a donation to church funds from our annual Bring and Buy Sale. Do come along if you want to enjoy fellowship and stimulating discussion!

**Jean Garner 2020**

## **WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Worship Committee, chaired by the Vicar, has met three times during the year to discuss the liturgy of St John's, planning services and reviewing their outcome. Membership comprises representatives from all three churches in the parish. We have changed the day and time of our meetings from a Monday at 9.15 am to a Wednesday at 11.30 am which enables our Associate Priest, Ruth Goatly, and Director of Music, Keith Beniston, to be present.

Among the topics which have been discussed are: -

1. The continual monitoring of the weekly attendances in all three churches. The average number at the Sunday 9.30 am service at St John's continues to be between 90 and 100. The new parking spaces by the Hall are well used by people coming to this service. The Wednesday morning Communion service is still popular, but the Monday evening Communion has been discontinued as no one was attending it. Age and illness still affect numbers on a Sunday at St Stephen's but the Thursday morning Eucharist is maintaining its own and means St Stephen's has a communion service at least once a week. St Francis' average attendance has gone up slightly for the Sunday morning services, and they are committed to Wednesday Evening Prayer.

On the special occasions, such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Week and Easter, services have been well attended.

2. The arrangements for special services held during the year, of which there have been, as usual, a number of memorable ones. These included the Combined Service on St John's Day; the Music Festival Choral Evensong; the Service on the Parish Fun Day when The Reverend Jeanette Gosney preached an excellent sermon; Confirmation taken by the The Bishop of Richborough; the Service of Lessons and Carols; and finally, the Licencing and Commissioning of our Vicar as Rural Dean.
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 Good Friday Stations of the Cross on the Moor continued to be popular and Easter Day had been excellent; the Sermon series had been appreciated ; Advent and Christmas services had been good; while the celebrations for St Francis' Day was a great success; and Messy Church events continue to thrive. It was, however, noted that attendance for a number of major services had been lower than expected and, in some cases, rather disappointing. These included the Deanery Ascension Day service at St Francis, which occurred during Half Term; the Corpus Christi service to which Chalice Assistants were invited; the Annual Memorial Service and All Souls' Commemoration; and all services held on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day when it appeared a number of the usual congregation had gone away.
4. The work of the Choir. Our Director of Music, Keith Beniston, has continued to enhance Choral Evensong services by bringing in extra people to augment the Choir. The Service of Lessons and Carols was a triumph, once again supplemented by a small orchestra and there had been a tremendous atmosphere in church. All this is offset in that we can only manage a small choir for Sunday mornings, and Keith is working on how this can be improved. Katherine Cox, has been a welcome addition to the All Age Services on the first Sunday of the month.

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**