

**The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish  
of Dorchester and West Stafford**

Registered Charity No 1138023

**Group and Team Reports of 2019  
for the  
Dorchester and West Stafford APCM 2020**

The Team Ministry of  
Dorchester  
and The Winterbournes



## **Contents**

PCC Secretary's Report

Church Reports – St Andrew's, St George's, St Mary's & St Peter's

Diocesan Synod

Deanery Synod

GDPR

Safeguarding

Churches Together in Dorchester

Contemplative, Healing & Friday Benefice Prayer Groups

Monday Group

Mothers' Union

Taizé Worship

Fordington Fishes

Benefice Magazine

Dorchester Relief in Need charity

Manor Park School

Dorchester Churches' Ecology Group

Quiet Space

## **Secretary's Report**

The PCC met five times during 2019. Issues and initiatives discussed included: Mission & outreach, conversations on Lent & Easter services, finance & budget, safeguarding, health & safety, applications for faculties, reports from the four churches and shared stories of hope in our churches and community. A Team GDPR Privacy Statement and GDPR Policy were adopted in March. The present position and support of the Quiet Space was explained and discussed. The Archdeacon's Visitation/Audit took place in July. With current vacancies Team Vicar and Team Rector recruitment processes were outlined. Updates from the Deanery Synod and various parish groups were given throughout the year.

*Janet Cooper*

## St Andrew's Church

This last year has been a time of change for us due to the Church Warden, Esther Brown, leaving the village in April, the vicar, Rev Dr Jane Culliford, retiring last June, followed by the Team Rector, Rev Canon Thomas Woodhouse, moving to pastures new in the Autumn.

On Sunday 7 April 2019 there was a Farewell Service for Esther at St Andrew's Church followed by a Bring & Share Tea at the home of a church committee member - 28 villagers/worshippers attended, and a cheque was presented. On 9 June there was a Songs of Praise to mark Jane's retirement, with Jane choosing the hymns for this Feast of Pentecost. Afterwards she was "surprised" by a party in the Village Hall, when she was presented with flowers and a cheque, with which she purchased a water feature for her garden.

In April 2019 the Service time changed from 10.00 to 11.15 (to enable a new incumbent at St George's Church, Fordington to officiate at both churches consecutively) with coffee being served at 10.45 prior to the start of the Service. The post was advertised in The Church Times in October but unfortunately there were no applicants.

Our Lent Lunch in the village hall was well attended on Friday 8 March, and the Good Friday Walk was blessed with good weather - 22 people & 2 dogs walked from St George's along the River Frome to St Andrew's where they were greeted with drinks & Hot Cross Buns. Easter Sunday saw 30 adults & 8 children attending. The Harvest "Bring & Share" Lunch took place in the church after the morning service on 22 September. Our 2019 Carol Service was, unusually, on a Friday evening in December; the nine lessons were read by villagers and congregation members. Also in December, the St John Ambulance (Dorset) Carol Service was held; the Rev Dr Jane Culliford officiated as she is their Chaplain.

Our monthly Saturday morning "Coffee & Chat" continues to flourish, regularly attended by an average of 15 villagers/congregation - not always cake & biscuits but occasionally buttered toast/crumpets. Churchyard Maintenance Working Groups meet periodically on Saturday mornings (cleaning indoors if wet), again supported by both villagers & worshippers. Indeed, the Flower Team & Mowing Team are generally villagers who do not attend church services but who care tremendously about the church - a special place in the heart of the village and it's residents.

In the Summer our longstanding organist Gerry Sweetman retired at the age of 92!; on Sunday 1 September he was presented with chocolates and Garden Centre vouchers to buy a rose bush for his front garden. We were then fortunate to have two teenage boys who took over playing the organ, alternating on the second & fourth Sundays.

Our church continues to thrive because the Church Committee stepped up and divided all the jobs done by Esther and Jane between themselves. We are very grateful to local retired clergy who have officiated at our Services on a rota basis.

*Janet Ranger-Dennis*

## St George's Church

Well how right we were last year to note that there was a continuing period of change, where to start? The departure of Thomas was unplanned and testing as we all know especially because at the time of his going, he was helping us here with the process of looking for our new vicar and being our help and guide. But our prayers, best wishes and love go with him and the family to his new appointment.

Now here we stand on the cusp of another year, poised and looking still for a replacement but with the Reverend Reji Raj-Singh very much now a part of our family being our help and guide for a mutually agreed 6 month period. God bless you Reji.

We give our thanks to the Fabric committee whilst noting that there are jobs outstanding which we will address and we look to their continued help and council next year.

Amongst all the individuals to whom we owe a debt I would like to highlight Tony Archer our vergers contribution, he has once again selflessly stepped into help not only with the work of aiding the fabric committee and the arranging elements for the Archdeacon's visitation but he also aided with seamlessly continuing the church's administration when Thomas moved on.

The events committee has been so very very busy, not only with St Georges Fair, but with lunches, the Christmas and Easter celebrations, Burns Night and their most recent outstanding success, the Pancake event on Shrove Tuesday. Thank you all so much for the work you do and the help you provide to our mission it could not be done without you.

Now for our younger members in the Dragons, the wonderful work they do and the fact that their numbers are growing, thank you helpers, thank you Mums and Dads and thanks most of all to you Dragons. We look forward to you taking an even greater role in our worship and church life this coming year.

So now we come to us, Yvonne and I, and our joint decision to stand down this year as Wardens. When Thomas asked us to help with the task of finding a replacement we of course said yes but by that time we had been Wardens either overtly or covertly for 4 years, so now it's been 5 years, the standard term for a warden. Whilst we step down at the AGM officially we remain in post (exercising a very minimal touch) until the Bishop's visitation in June/July. We have both loved doing it but feel we would like to be back in the background. Technically we hold office until June/July but will be stepping back in some practical areas. Not abandoning them. So thank you all, it's been great, however for us it's time to move on and give our prayer of thanks for all your help and support.

*Paul Briggs and Yvonne Lee*

## St Mary's Church

The main event this year was Thomas' announcement that he had been appointed Chaplain to the Chapel Royal at the Savoy. We are thankful for Thomas' ministry at St Mary's. An Interfaith Service followed by refreshments gave people from the Benefice and wider community to say farewell to Thomas' Kate and the girls. We also said farewell to Teresa and Jono. Teresa has taken up a new position as Team Vicar in Dorchester upon Thames Oxfordshire. We wish Thomas, Kate, Teresa, Jono and their families well in their new Ministries and future life in London and Dorchester.

We had no major works to the church this year. The annual fire extinguisher check took place in June, also the five yearly electrical testing was carried out and some work was needed to bring us up to standards. The boiler has also been serviced.

Progress with the Served Project has been slow but an application has been registered with the DAC and we wait to hear of a date for an 'Informal Visit'.

Under Teresa's leadership a group was formed to seek ways of making St Mary's more eco-friendly. We now have LED lamps in the church Hall and other areas of the church building along with other requirements we have obtained our Bronze Eco Church Award.

The Arch-deacon's Visitation took place in July and we were pleased that the Reports received were good. Our thanks go to John Heath and Robert Potter for all their help with this.

This year we continued our mission in keeping in contact with our local community. This included the delivery of our Welcome packs, also Easter and Christmas cards in the Victoria Park area. In August we again held our Community Lunch which was well attended. Plans are underway for this year's event. Our thanks go to all involved in this important outreach in the community.

This year we have held a full programme of social events from Parish Lunches, Beetle Drives, Bingo & Pudding evenings to Quiz Nights. This year we were open for Ride & Stride and at our Harvest Lunch we invited John Stokoe to give a short talk about the work of the Dorset Historic Church Trust. Proceeds from the lunch and an auction of the harvest produce raised £500 which fulfilled our promise to raise funds for the trust who granted us £7,500 towards the cost of the repairs to the West Window.

Since Thomas' departure we are thankful for Rosemary's leadership both spiritually as well as practically. We also give thanks to all our retired clergy that give us support in the running of our services. Our thanks also go to all those involved in the many groups and individually who contribute their time and talents to the smooth running of St Mary's in so many ways and enhance our fellowship and worship.

*Ellie Stephens and Trudy Tabone*

## St Peter's Church

As we say a sad farewell to our vicar Claire we give thanks for all that she has developed and encouraged, especially the high quality of liturgy, preaching, and music and the warm welcome and pastoral care given to all.

Claire also helped us to develop a vision and plans to replace our heating system, improve access and reorder the church. We prioritised this work, rather than starting up other new initiatives. We are grateful to Max Hebditch and the other members of the group. We developed a logo and a new name for the project: *Foundations for the Future*. Our research of congregation, visitors, local community and heritage organisations suggested that a majority favoured making the church a more flexible building to use for a wider range of activities, while retaining the sense of the sacred in our beautiful medieval building. We would love to be able to offer a range of services, concerts, talks, exhibitions and events to draw a greater range of people into the life of St Peter's. We continue to pray and to listen to what God is calling us to do and to be in Dorchester.

Russell Dawson joined Val Potter as churchwarden in March 2019 and his friendly and supportive presence warmed all who met him. He was also a supremely talented musician who gave some unforgettable violin solos. Very sadly Russell was diagnosed with cancer in the summer and died in September. Mike Farley briefly became churchwarden but ill health meant he needed to stand down in December. We are very grateful to our five assistant wardens.

Many people support and enable the work and worship of the church to continue: our team of retired clergy, our treasurer David Elliott, Lay Pastoral Assistants, verging team, readers and intercessors, sides-people, coffee makers and flower arrangers. We are grateful to them all.

St Peter's continues to value highly its strong musical tradition and the choir have continued to flourish under the leadership of David Fawcett. This year we commissioned David for an anthem which was premiered at a service marking the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood, which Bishop Karen attended along with a number of women who had been ordained 25 years, including Rev Eileen McLean, who presided.

Our fundraising and social events team led by Rosalind Thorpe organised a range of events which both raised money and provided us all with opportunities to get together outside of worship. Huge thanks to Rosalind and Anthony for all their energy, commitment and great ideas. This Christmas we held our first Blue Christmas Service with lunch, for those struggling with bereavement or sadness at Christmas. We ate a hot meal together and then shared in a simple and reflective service.

Two new initiatives this year were a bereavement group called Time to Mourn, which enabled anyone struggling with issues of loss and bereavement to share experiences together, and the introduction of bell tower tours during Architecture Heritage Day. These proved to be one of the most popular activities of the day, many thanks to Will Haydock and the volunteers who made it happen.

One duty of the wardens is to ensure that all the property and records are kept and itemised properly and we were delighted that the Archdeacon was very favourable when she visited and inspected all the relevant items and paperwork. (These visitations are nominally every 3 years but the last one was over 6 years ago).

Our building is old and needs constant care and attention. The hall roof was finally repaired and various electrical and alarm systems had minor work. The boiler needed only minor work after its service but we were warned that it may fail in the next year or two. Our thanks to Brian Hellin who keeps a watchful eye on these things for us.

We offer our deepest thanks and very best wishes to Claire and her family as they begin their new life in Upper Weardale and we look forward to exciting new possibilities and opportunities for the future with our new rector and as the project develops.

*Val Potter*

## **Diocesan Synod**

Diocesan Synod is the statutory governing body of the Diocese of Salisbury. Synod considers matters concerning the Church of England and makes provision for these matters in relation to the Diocese, considers and expresses an opinion on matters of religious or public interest, advises the Bishop on matters on which he may consult Synod. Jill Minchin, Margaret Morrissey and Margaret Walters are Laity members for our Benefice. During the last year 2019 these are some of the issues Synod has discussed:-

### **February**

Getting to Know You - Synod heard the Bishop of Sherborne in conversation with the Rural Field Officers for Dorset, Sarum and Sherborne.

We Pray, We Serve, But Are We Growing? Part 1

### **June**

Annual report and appointing of Auditors

We Pray, We Serve, But Are We Growing? Part 2

### **November**

The Church and the Environment "That this Synod recognises that there is a Climate Emergency and encourages every part of the Diocese to engage with the Fifth Mark of Mission as exemplified in the Strategic Aims set out in the Diocesan Environment Policy.

The Channel Islands - The Bishop reported that the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on the Relationship of the Channel Islands to the wider Church of England had recommended that in future they be attached to the Diocese of Salisbury. He stated that he would agree to this if supported by Synod. The ensuing debate demonstrated that there was strong and mutual enthusiasm for the proposals. That this Synod welcomes the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission regarding episcopal oversight of the Channel Islands and commits to working with the report's recommendations." The vote was carried unanimously. The full report is available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/Report%20-%20FINAL%20-%208-10-19.pdf>.

Diocesan Priorities and Five Year Financial Framework.

It has been a busy and interesting year.

*Margaret Morrissey*

## **Dorchester Deanery Synod**

At the last Standing Committee meeting it had been decided to ask Rev Claire McClelland to speak on 'Diverse Dorchester'. There was some discussion as to the range and depth of this topic and whether it impacted upon rural as well as urban parishes. It was suggested that perhaps a speaker from the Muslim community might also be required. There was some concern about the diversity of views and denominations in Islam, as in Christianity, so that any representative would only be able to speak for themselves and possibly their particular group. In the event it was agreed that Claire be asked to 'paint a picture of the community as it exists in Dorchester today'.

Revd Ronnie Crossman, the new Diocesan Vocations Co-ordinator, had asked to be allowed to address synod and that she had impressed them greatly. She was previously Vicar of Highbridge and Rural Dean of the Axbridge deanery.

There was some discussion about a replacement General Synod (GS) representative to replace Rev Canon Thomas Woodhouse. There may be a new member elected by May but it is the responsibility of GS to appoint someone to liaise with Dorchester Deanery. It was argued that, despite the circulation of the Synopsis and the comprehensive coverage on the internet which provides deaneries with news from GS, an individual was essential to convey the views of Deanery back to GS.

Venue of the October Meeting: It was decided that, this being the first of the 18th Triennium, Charminster would be preferable as it is central and easy to find. Yet to be confirmed

Alan Neades, Deanery Synod Secretary, had previously informed members that Synod should look for someone to take his place as he had been in post for 21 years and another three years would take him past his 80th birthday and a smooth and orderly transition was desirable. Members undertook to identify someone to take on the role and Alan said he would attempt to draw up a Job Description. Oddly, while these exist for the Lay Chair and Treasurer, there is none for the Secretary.

## **The Committee on the General Data Protection Regulations**

The Reverend Canon Thomas Woodhouse created this committee, of which he was the Chair, in June 2018 to produce an action plan for the Benefices in relation to the Regulations. The plan was to take an Audit of the personal data which each church holds, which would be subject to the Regulations, and how that data is being handled. Any necessary processes would then be put in place. There would be a single Policy for the Benefices. The Policy was drafted.

Advice was taken from the Parish Resources website and from the Diocesan website leading to the creation of a suitable audit form. The Team Chapter came up with suggestions for further types of data to be added to the general form of audit. A single standard format was then sent round to each church.

Audit returns were received from the nine churches. These were examined line by line with a view to identifying when a change to data handling or storage was required to ensure compliance. This lengthy process was completed just as the Chair announced his departure to London leaving some final changes which had been approved by him to be made to the audits.

The committee met once more (with no chairman) to approve the final form and the resultant documents, including the Policy, were sent round to the churches showing the required changes in data handling and storage approved by Thomas. The Committee is now disbanded *functus officio*.

*Tim Dennis*



# Safeguarding

**1.) Personnel Changes:** There have been several changes to the Safeguarding Team in the past year. After a period of dedicated and excellent service Mark Green has stepped down from the role of Safeguarding Officer. Following discussions with Thomas Woodhouse prior to his departure the role has now been taken up by Sara Adams. Sara, who worships at St George's, is a recently retired Secondary School Headteacher with a long career involving leading and managing Safeguarding within an educational context. The Safeguarding Group would like to formally thank Mark for all his service and appreciate that, with the support of Judy Cowling at St Mary's, he is still involved in DBS verification for St George's. The group has also said farewell to Sue Wilson who has served the group admirably in the task of administering agendas and minutes as well as providing invaluable professional advice and expertise. She will be missed and the group would like to thank her for all she has done to support the Safeguarding work in the benefice. Following the departure of Rev Thomas Woodhouse as chair of the group we have been very grateful to Rev Jean Saddington to taking up the clergy mantle in the group. Moving forward there will be an expectation that the new Rector for the benefice will take up the chairing of this group. Thankfully the group has been blessed with the continuing support and expertise of Judy Cowling and Rosie Dukes who are both to be commended for the amount of time and work they put in to ensuring that all thing Safeguarding run smoothly. The group continues to be sustained by the warm hospitality and excellent cakes of Judy Cowling!

## **2.) Safeguarding Review Group (SRG) meetings.**

- The Safeguarding Review Group (SRG) has continued to meet on a quarterly basis to take forward safeguarding issues across the team ministry. Much of this year has involved introducing new member ( see above 1.) to the group and adjusting to the departure of Thomas as chair and incumbent.
- The benefice has adopted the Salisbury Safeguarding Policy and Procedure document.
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking arrangements for all those working directly with children or vulnerable adults, together with development of the database, are well established with Judy Cowling doing an excellent job as lead verifier.
- Sara Adams, Judy Cowling and Rosie Dukes have completed training for the new Diocesan data base (DBS Microsite) and are, currently, responding to further updates as they are rolled out by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.
- Sara Adams, as Safeguarding Officer, has undergone Level 5 Safeguarding update training.
- Those clergy requiring update training have undertaken this as required in the last year.
- Heather Bland (Diocesan Safeguard Lead) has met with Sara Adams and has supported the clergy and Safeguarding team with any Safeguarding matters that have arisen in the last year.

## **3.) Summary**

There have been significant personnel changes this year with both clergy and lay support changing. During the coming year the group will continue to meet and it will be important for us to work closely as a team with those clergy serving us during a period of vacancies to ensure that our, historically, strong practice around safeguarding is maintained.

*Sara Adams (Parish Safeguarding Officer)*

## **Churches Together in the Dorchester Area**

David Bowen has been the Chair for the past year and reported to the AGM that his appreciation of Churches Together lay in the fact that it didn't do very much as a separate organisation but what it does do is to enable and encourage other people and groups to do things together. When David became chair, he set out with a mission to try to re-engage with some of the other worshipping communities in Dorchester. It is really exciting to see these churches joining or re-joining Churches Together.

The Enabling Committee had reviewed the constitution to maintain our principles but to express them in ways that everyone can be clear what we stand for. The constitution was accepted at the AGM.

Applications for membership were warmly received from:

- Roger Frapwell of Dorchester Community Church who said that they are thrilled to be able to re-join Churches Together, the congregation is in favour, and the efforts by David and Brenda Stephenson (Chair in 2020) to bring in the other churches have been very unifying.
- Ben Martin of the Family Church said that they are very happy to be part of CT.
- Mark Topp of the Storehouse (formerly Dorchester Pentecostal Church) said that they were looking forward to working with the other churches of CT.
- Jane Smith of the Baptist church explained that although they are already members, they haven't been active of late, so they are happy to be 'reanimated'.

One of the first needs for the new combination of churches was to learn more about each other and a morning of prayer was arranged in January for each church to use patterns and styles of prayer that are part of their tradition. This was an excellent time together with a version of the Daily Office, singing from Taize, prayer for each other's churches and an introduction to the prayer adopted by the Storehouse to express their identity and mission priorities.

Under the new Constitution the Enabling Committee includes the officers, representatives of the member churches and also of the associated groups: Dorchester Poverty Action, Chaplaincy, Ecology Group, Quiet Space, Christian Aid and the Friendship Club.

All of these groups have been active in serving our town, community and wider world in their varied ways and all would welcome new members. Contact Kate Forrester for contact details for each of them.

*Val Potter*

## **Contemplative Prayer group**

The contemplative prayer group continues to meet each Wednesday in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at St Mary's Church at 5pm and is now in its 10th year. Various people come regularly, and some come as and when they can attend. The other group now meets every week at the Quiet Space at 6.30pm on a Thursday. In June we had a Quiet day in the peace and stillness of the Quiet Garden at Sedgemoor Manor near Shaftesbury and in August a bring & share lunch at the Quiet Space joining with other meditators in the area. Over 60 people attended another very successful day, this year at the Brownsword Hall in October, when our speaker was Professor Mark Burrows, poet, author and scholar of medieval theology who spoke about Meister Eckhart. If anyone would like to join us, you would be very welcome just come along for 20minutes of silence.

*Rosemary Bassett*

## **Healing Prayer group**

The healing prayer group continues to meet regularly to pray for the sick and on a rota basis to offer prayer ministry after every Eucharist at St Mary's on a Sunday. Over the year this has met a need not only for the people themselves, but we are often asked to pray for friends and family. The votive candles are regularly used and the book for prayer requests is also used widely. This year we have continued our Healing Eucharist on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday at 9.45 with a visiting preacher which has been widely appreciated with many people coming forward for prayer and the laying on of hands and anointing.

*Rosemary Bassett*

## **The Monday Club at St Mary's**

The Monday Club membership list attracts one or two new people each month, some who sign up as members and some who are attracted by the speaker of the month. Our 'list' now contains over 30 names, and we continue to have attendances of 20 people or more monthly.

The year began musically with an illustrated talk on Handel's Messiah and continued in that vein with a light-hearted description of life in amateur dramatics and operatics. March saw us investigating the history of the sewing machine, with some beautiful examples of sewing, and in April we were given an illustrated account of a walk round the centre of Cerne abbas and the history of its buildings. Our May visit from Wendy Williams and her alpacas was a great success, and photos of that afternoon show the joy these animals brought to many people. The talk by Robin Cooke about his life in Harrods behind the scenes was enjoyed by about 30 people. His description of retailing in the 1960s and 1970s brought back many memories, indeed he was such a success that he will be returning to us in 2020 to continue his tale.

We celebrated July with our annual cream tea outing, this year to a new-to-us venue at Groves Garden Centre, Bridport. We were made very welcome and the choice of teas, cakes etc., provided something for everyone. In September Bonny Sartin of The Yetties gave us a trip down memory lane with his talk including poems and songs about growing up in Dorset, much enjoyed by all. We have just learned some fascinating facts about numbers, ranging from calendars, via dates of death and Tax Years to binary numbers and followed this with a talk about the buildings on the bank of the River Thames to Tower Bridge. We finished the year with our usual convivial December lunch outing to the New Inn, West Knighton, and now look forward to a varied and interesting programme in 2020 for our thriving and friendly group.

*Jill Minchin*

## **Mothers' Union**

The two Mothers' Union groups continue in the Benefice – St Peter's MU & Dorcas MU. Both are Prayer & Fellowship Groups, more informal groups than Branches so not requiring officers. St Peter's meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.15pm, in St Peter's Hall, where they run 'Getting to Know You', for new and established members of the congregation to get to know each other over tea and cake and a chat – further details from Penny Blaby (Tel 753556). Dorcas MU meets in members' homes on alternate Wednesday mornings, in term time, at 10am for prayer, bible study and fellowship, details of our meetings are published in Pews News & Parish Magazine – further details from Janet Cooper (Tel 260259). Both groups welcome newcomers to our meetings, you do not have to be a MU member. In September St Peter's MU hosted, and were joined by some Dorcas MU members, a Holy Communion service in church led by Rev Canon John Wood to which the MU Archdeaconry Chair, Jo Higgs, attended.

*Janet Cooper – Dorcas MU member*

## **Taize-style Worship at St Mary's Dorchester**

Our regular opportunity to worship in a Taize-style has continued uninterrupted throughout 2019, starting just before 6pm on the first Sunday of every month. The services are led by Cynthia Fry and Penny Fennell. For those that favour it, it has provided a great time of praise with the singing of well-known chants to an organ accompaniment and a time for combined and personal prayer. Above all, it has provided an invaluable shared 'stillness', enjoyed away from the malaise of our busy everyday lives. Each service has always included a short, but rich, time of silent reflection and meditation and is presented in a simple and non-threatening manner. Yes, it may be regarded by some as 'traditional', but most who attend feel a sense of joy and refreshment at the unhurried pace of the time we spend together.

Each month, we bring together about 15-20 regular folk, attracting from all types of church fellowships in and around Dorchester. We often have visitors and recently it was a special joy to share our service with a party from the Friary at Hilfield.

In September we said our "goodbyes" to Rev Teresa Stewart-Sykes who had been our leader for a number of years and has now moved on to her new church fellowship in Dorchester (Oxfordshire). We miss her loads and have had to form a committee to take her place! We seem to be coping, however, and God continues to bless our meetings. People still come back, month after month, so there is obviously a desire for this style of worship for our community – we seem to be doing something right!

Our thanks go out to all those who now lead and play in our services, especially to those who set-up and clear away, read prayers and scriptures, light candles, meet and greet, print out the 'orders' and do all the other necessary tasks with such dedication – you've been wonderful!

If you have never joined us or simply haven't been for some time, do come along – we'd love to see you.

*Andy Burton*

## **Fordington Fishes**

Fordington Fishes is a baby and toddler group held in St George's Hall on Fridays in term time.

Following Judith Kinnersly's resignation, due to serious health problems, as leader of Fordington Fishes in December 2018, myself and Geraldine Moxham have taken up the reins. With the continued support of the group of eight lovely helpers we have been able to continue to support the families of Dorchester and surrounding areas.

We started in January with a good number of family attending. We celebrated Easter with the children exploring the church in an egg hunt. The children also created a beautiful Easter garden that was displayed in the church over Easter.

At the end of the summer term we had our usual end of year party. All helpers were invited and Judith was able to join us as we wished farewell to a number of regular families as they moved on to school.

During the summer we had our usual toy clean and sort out. Fordington Fishes started back in September at the slightly earlier time of 1pm until 2.30pm. We have adjusted the times after feedback that some families have avoided coming as they would have to leave early to get older children from school.

Numbers were low at the start of September but soon started to pick up with more advertising, posters, email to all registered families and word and mouth. We are now welcoming an average of 8-10 children a week. It would appear that the drop in attendees what not unique to Fordington Fishes, with other groups also seeing lower numbers.

The children of Fordington Fishes have created a number of Christmas cards to be sent to older isolated people receiving care in the local community, to share a little love at Christmas.

Once again Fordington Fishes decorated a tree in the Christmas tree festival. This year's title was Row, Row, Row your Boat. They will be enjoying a Christmas party joined by the entertainer 'Jessie the Cow Girl'. All families will be given dates of services over Advent and Christmas.

*Lisa Copas*

## **Benefice Magazine**

Part of our Mission for the community is our magazine as we seek to reach out to as many people as possible with the messages given by the churches and encourage people to come along and join us.

650 magazines are distributed each month some by our churches and we ask please if you have copies spare just before the end of the month take them around your area and make sure as many people as possible have the opportunity to read it. If I accidentally leave magazines in Tesco whilst I do my shopping almost before I reach the end of the first aisle shoppers have picked them up. Spreading the word of the gospel is our aim.

The process is that each month the Editor receives copy from Church correspondents, clubs, clergy and others. It comes in all forms - written, through the post, email, Diocesan publications, Grapevine and email attachments etc. All needs to be edited put into correct fonts and word counted. Pictures need to be sourced from internet or if we are lucky photographs added. Often it is necessary to chase copy to meet deadlines as we have a tight printing schedule to keep for Sarum Press.

The revenue brought in by the adverts pays for the printing of the magazine and we are able to also make a contribution to Parish Funds, so the job as editor is vital, as with the IT job, and none can function without the other, qualification and a good sense of humour foremost .

10 editions are produced per year, they take an average of 2/3 hours most days and many more as printing date gets closer. I and my helper enjoy the work and are proud of the magazine we produce; we thank you for the copy we receive from church correspondents and individuals.

We still do not have an Advertisement Editor in place which put quiet a burden on the Editor who is still praying someone will feel it is their calling to give the post a try.

A recent email: I am just returning home to Austria having spent a few days visiting my family in Dorchester. Having worshipped at St. Mary's for around 15yrs. prior to moving to Austria I always welcome the opportunity to keep up to date with the parish news through the monthly magazine which my sister Margaret collects for me. The contents are always very interesting and relevant and are a valuable insight into the life of the local community. Without the time and effort that you and others contribute to produce this publication, we would be so much the poorer. Thank you for your input. I look forward to following the activities of the parish in the year ahead. (All part of our Outreach and Mission)

*Margaret Morrissey – Magazine Editor*

## **Dorchester Relief in Need Charity**

This charity is an amalgamation of a number of small charities set up by earlier philanthropic families (the Popes, Ashleys and others) and it exists to help individuals and families in need – ‘need’ being fairly broadly interpreted by the trustees of whom there are six, two from each of the C of E town churches, with the rector the ex-officio chairman.

The only limitation is that the charity can help only residents in the ecclesiastical parish of Dorchester, an area which corresponds fairly accurately with the DT1 postcode. Requests for help need to come through agencies like health visitors, social workers, the CAB, the Credit Union, churches, schools and so on.

In 2019 the charity made 21 grants covering the costs of furniture moving, university travel, replacing freezers, carpets and washing machines, legal fees and many others and two grants to the Holiday Food Club and the fund for Christmas hampers.

This charity has always tried to work closely with Dorchester Poverty Action and this year we held a meeting for the trustees of both charities and agreed a policy for the sharing of information and for improving the ways in which we can co-operate. Both charities have an upper limit to the value of grants made and we can meet a more costly need by sharing that cost between us.

Although we strive to publicise the charity we are aware that our existence isn't as widely known as it could be. Churches are agencies which should be aware of financial need and yet we receive very few referrals from them. There are many families (and individuals) in Dorchester which manage to keep going financially week by week but are completely thrown by an unexpected expense – a boiler failure, fares to a distant hospital - anything for which there are no savings and no official funding. If members of a church know of such need it should be referred to a priest or the wardens who can then make formal application to the charity

Or talk to one of the trustees -- Ellie Stephens & Robert Potter at St Mary's, Trish Taylor & Tim Bullick at St George's, Judy Cowling & (at the time of writing) Revd Claire McClelland at St Peter's – if a need is revealed.

*Robert Potter*

## **Manor Park First School**

Manor Park School has, for many years, come under the purview of St. George's Church and, quite appropriately was regularly visited by the last Team Vicar, Rev. Fiona Hall. I was the LLM attached to St George's during her time here in Dorchester but have since moved to the Winterbournes. I did, however, visit and assist the staff at the school during the times that Rev. Hall was unwell.

When the Rev. Hall moved to Oxford, at the request of the Rector I contacted the school and informed them that I would be available to take the usual End of Term services and to offer such assistance as they might need until the vacancy at St. George's is filled.

During this past year I have presided at their Leavers service and also their Christmas services and ensured that the school use St. George's Church when appropriate. I have had a number of conversations with the Head teacher, given advice to the R.E. Co-ordinator, and had a formal meeting with the SIAMS Inspector.

I am known to the staff and always receive a warm welcome. Perhaps more importantly I am a familiar face to the children and parents.

*Allen Knott*

## Dorchester Churches Ecology Group

The Churches' Ecology Group exists to raise awareness in the churches of environmental issues and climate change and to support action in our churches and the wider world. We believe that this is our Christian responsibility. Currently the group includes representatives from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches, the United Church, the Friends (Quakers) and Hilfield Friary. Other faith groups share these concerns and it was good to welcome to our recent meeting a representative of the Muslim community.

Issues and activities in the past year:--

- Encouragement and support were given for the declaration of a **Climate Emergency** by the Town Council and new Dorset Council. Many of us also joined the council-led town litter pick in March.
- The internationally observed '**Earth Hour**' was marked by a gathering at the Quiet Space on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Fewer attended than last year but we shared poems, readings and thoughts on this beautiful and fragile earth and how we can cherish and preserve it.
- The Baptist Church hosted a '**Boomerang**' session to make cloth bags for people to borrow in shops if they had not brought their own.
- Churches were encouraged to collect certain items not taken in kerb-side recycling and take them to **Damers School** who send them to specialist recycling centres.
- Members attended the launch of a new local branch of **Extinction Rebellion**, the international movement inspired by the Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg. We agreed to help to publicise their events and actions, though some had reservations about their methods.
- A few members, including Hilfield Friary representatives, joined the **Climate Lobby of MPs** in London in June. Following this and through pressure from the new Extinction Rebellion movement Parliament declared a state of Climate Emergency.
- **The Church Tent at the Dorset Show** had an environment theme. The group provided displays and activities.
- **Eco-Church:** St Mary's has now achieved a bronze award. Hilfield Friary has the gold award and can advise on actions needed for the awards.
- The Climate Emergency was the subject of an evening with **2 excellent speakers, Bishop Nicholas Holtam**, the Anglican Bishop with the environment brief in the House of Lords, and **Lyndsey Fielder Cooke**, representative on climate change at the Quaker United Nations office, Geneva.

We are an open group to which anyone from any local church is very welcome. We meet at the United Church approximately 4-5 times a year. Please contact me to join us, or to go on our email list to be kept informed of our work and activities.

Val Potter 01305264416 [valrobin22@gmail.com](mailto:valrobin22@gmail.com)





The  
Quiet  
Space

## The Quiet Space

The Quiet Space was envisaged as a place offering peace and tranquillity to individuals and for the sponsoring churches to use for prayer, retreats and activities to serve the local community. We have also served the local community by providing a space for fledgling community groups to use, to see if they can become viable and to grow. We have seen this as our Christian offering and ministry of hospitality in this place.

It has always been a challenge to meet the costs of running the Quiet Space, which include the commercial rent to the Duchy of £10,000 a year (This is after a subsidy from one of the HRH charitable Trusts has been applied). We have relied on our reserves to make up the deficit each year and these have now been depleted so that we are no longer financially viable. The Community Church continues to support and appreciate the Quiet Space but has ended its financial support because of the high costs of their own new church building on Poundbury. The Family Church decided to transfer their financial support for Poundbury to the Community Church.

A meeting was held with the Duchy representative in July but their suggestion of increased commercial hiring was not acceptable to the Trustees (or within the terms of the Lease) so, with sadness, we decided to send notice of termination of the lease.

The Duchy then made an offer of partnership with the Trust, with a financial contribution equivalent to the annual shortfall. The current trustees felt unable to accept the new arrangement and reinstated the notice for July 2020. A new group of people, including some of the current trustees, are working towards a remit to enable them to take over the lease that would satisfy existing supporters from the churches and community users.

Current and new users this year have included:

The CAB, now using the Quiet Space on Mondays; weekly meditation sessions; retreats and prayer times; a group from the Stroke Club for relaxation and gentle stretching sessions; a group of pregnant women for relaxation classes; charity coffee mornings; monthly Celtic Communion services; monthly teas for those who need company.

Currently the sponsoring churches are:

Dorchester Baptist Church; Church of England Parish of Dorchester; Dorchester Parish of the Roman Catholic Church; Dorchester Quaker Meeting; Dorchester United Church. Churches Together in Dorset appointed a Trustee to represent the wider structures of the sponsoring churches.

Contact address: [office@thequietspacedorchester.org](mailto:office@thequietspacedorchester.org)

*Val Potter, Chair of Trustees*

