

St. John's United Reformed Church, Orpington

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Annual Reports 2019

Registered Charity No 111135421

FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Thank-you once again for an inspiring set of reports, reflecting just about every aspect of our church life, in all its' diversity. And thanks, as always, to our Church Secretary, Jon Henderson for gathering the reports in (with patience and perseverance in fairly equal quantities) and compiling them for us all to enjoy.

Despite the huge level of continuing support for the worship and work of our church, it is becoming obvious that things are changing and will need to change more over the next few years. Our country has undergone huge cultural changes since our church was founded ninety years ago and, although the Christian Gospel message of God's love and God's redeeming grace remains the same, the forms in which it is made accessible to people will constantly need to evolve.

In June of this year (2019) The Elders held an Awayday, focussing on how our church life and worship might be made more accessible to people living in 21st Century UK. We discussed three areas of church life: worship; publicity and what might broadly be called "technology."

- First then, it was agreed that we should be offering some kind of "alternative worship" (alternative, that is, to what is already on offer). Our Church Meeting in October had a fairly in-depth discussion on what worship really is, what it should aim for and what it hopes to achieve. As a result of this discussion, a new programme of worship is now in the pipeline- watch this space.
- We sighed delightedly over a "mock-up" of a new and far more up to date church website but concluded reluctantly that the necessary funds could not be spared at present. Then, thanks to a generous parting gift from Dave and Cathy Thomas, as they emigrated to Madeira, the new website became possible and will soon be up and running. The Elders also went on a tour of the church premises, noting in particular the entrances to the building and the impression given. A tidy-up and re-vamp were thought highly desirable and this will be an ongoing project through 2020. It was also brought home to us that the nearest the majority of people will get to a Christian

church these days is by meeting or knowing one of its members. So we were also challenged to look at the kind of questions which come up in conversation and how ready we are to answer them. The questions have been appearing in the monthly Newsletter for everyone to try and our Sunday services now frequently offer people to chance to talk informally to each other.

- There can be no denying that social media is what is needed to let everyone know about us- who we are, what we do and what we stand for. So a St John's Facebook page was promptly set up and is slowly attracting attention and contributions. Please use it to publicise your own group's activities.

It is frighteningly easy to have a lot of discussion and no action as a result. Writing this part of the report has made me realise -with gratitude- that a lot of action has resulted from our Elders' Awayday.

AND, as if this were not all exciting enough, a gallant, committed Steering Group spent the first six months of 2019 seeking to appoint a Youth Pastor for our church. It took a lot of work and a certain amount of disappointment before we finally-and gladly- appointed Charlie Powell to the post. Charlie took up his role at the beginning of September and was formally inducted at our Harvest Festival in October. Those of you who were there may remember that it was at this service that I did what I had never done before in 35 years of ministry- lost a page of my script! This meant that I had to read Charlie's promises off his mobile phone screen and "wing" the rest..... (did I mention "alternative" worship?) But this did not prove to be any kind of "omen" with regard to Charlie's ministry. He is settling in well and we are very glad to have him on board, not only for the children and young people, but to bring us all some new ideas and fresh ways of doing things.

So it is with thanks for the past year and hope for the one to come that I conclude my contribution to the annual reports and wish you all God's blessing in the coming year.

Jennifer

POSTSCRIPT (March 2020)

By the time these reports reach you, we shall be in the thick of the Corona Virus Pandemic.

If ever we needed to be "accessible" to 21st Century UK, it is now. Yet

our buildings are closed and all activities suspended for an indefinite period of time..... Even so, the ministry of God's people can still continue. We are learning how to produce services of worship online; our pastoral network is ensuring that everyone remains connected to the church family in some way; church news is being distributed regularly by our Church Secretaries; members are helping each other and the wider community; prayers are being said for those in need; and the new website went live just in time!

We cannot say when "normal" church life will resume but when it does, you will be sure to know about it.

I pray for you all: that you and your loved ones keep safe and well; that you are aware of God's loving and saving grace in your lives from day to day; and that you find your part in God's healing, renewing work in this community and through the world.

God bless and keep you all.

Jennifer

FROM THE ELDERS MEETING

Church in Community Team

Church in the community is both a banner for fellowship within our own congregation and one for how we reach out to our wider local community. Fellowship and outreach comes in many guises and this short report highlights some of the activities that the team have been involved in during 2019.

St John's actively supports the Bromley Borough Foodbank. Andrew Clare co-ordinates our involvement and alongside our giving of food a number of our members have helped out for tasks such as stock taking in the main warehouse.

Churches together in Orpington (CTiO) coordinate the Good Friday walk of witness giving a public face to Easter and its spiritual meaning. This year the congregation donated chocolate mini eggs for distribution to the public during the walk and members participated in both the walk and the service. The team also provided hot cross buns for after the Easter service. CTiO also participated in the Orpington Food Festival and held a Sunday event in September with free food and a variety of music in the Walnuts square; St John's donated some food

and drink to this community event.

Orpington Street Pastors continues its much-needed work in the high street area, Jackie Pasifull and Glynis Dennison continue to be active in this area.

In February the Faith Development team hosted a concert of singer / songwriter Rob Halligan, with refreshment support provided by the church in community team. This was an excellent musical evening.

On a more reflective occasion - Maundy Thursday - a light supper was provided followed by communion which lead into a reflective service in the church.

Once again we held a Harvest Lunch after the Harvest service. This year it was a prepared meal with donations for the food and a total of £264.23 was raised. Proceeds from the lunch were split between the church and the foodbank.

In October we held a quiz night with Roger Wall as quiz master. This was a successful and enjoyable evening and the event raised £252.50 for church funds.

In November refreshments were served at the Time to Remember service which were gratefully received by those that attended. This service provides an opportunity for anyone to spend some time in quiet reflection of their loved ones that have passed.

After another superb Carols by Candlelight service, attendees enjoyed refreshments including mulled wine, mince pies and shortbread. The team also supported the Carols at Tesco's event. There were significant donations of both food and cash by shoppers (for the Foodbank) along with appreciative thanks for the singers.

The ongoing service of preparing refreshments after the service continues, managed very effectively by Margaret Willis. Thanks are due to the many volunteers on the tea and coffee rota.

Although not a Church in Community event the church again held Easter & Christmas parties for families with children up to the age of 11 from the local community.

The Link Visitors (LV's) scheme continues to provide the invaluable

link between St John's and our various church sponsored organizations, and we are grateful for the continued support of all our LV's.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Church in Community team and to our Link Visitors for their hard work and dedication and specifically for helping me through the first few months as I took on responsibility of chairing the team. Most of all though I must thank Dave Thomas on the whole church's behalf for all the incredible work that he undertook during his tenure and we wish him and Cathy well for their new life in Madeira.

Steve Bebbington

Church and World Team

The Church and World team recognised that we have had a number of significant fundraising projects for overseas initiatives over the last 8 years and so have decided to focus on more local issues for a while; increasing awareness through our noticeboard and the newsletter on social justice issues and the impact of changes happening in the world around us, from climate change to political decisions.....Brexit being one of them!

During Christian Aid week in May we collected £2,189 as a result of house to house collections and donations at St John's. The church family Christmas card added another £117 and continues to be well received. We also continued to support Commitment for Life (C4L) throughout the year which works with Christian Aid to support partner organisations. Through our work to raise the profile of C4L in the newsletter and through the annual service we managed to raise £2,626 in 2019. On top of this, Zoey Wickens, our Commitment for Life advocate ran the London Marathon in 2019 for Christian Aid – raising an additional £3,066. A bumper year for fundraising!

We have continued to run the Traidcraft stall on Sunday mornings and in 2019 made a profit of £590, allowing us to send £500 back to Traidcraft exchange. The tea and coffee we provide after services on a Sunday are all Fairtrade products and we encourage members to browse the stall and see what swaps you could make at home.

Lizzie Howells

Faith Development Team

There has been a mix of events and opportunities offered by the Faith Development team over the year. The team has tried to provide events with different styles and approaches; some regular, some stand-alone – but all with the aim of helping each person at St John's to grow in their faith. We have publicised events organised by Synod and the wider church too with the hope that all members will have found something to interest and engage them during the year.

The Quiet Day in January was much appreciated by those who attended. The chance just to be still and leave aside the 'busyness' of our life just for a few precious hours, to focus on what we believe is such a blessing. We are grateful to Chris Fosten for leading this day.

The Faith Development Team wanted to show how the Arts can inspire and develop our faith. In February we welcomed the Christian singer and songwriter, Rob Halligan to St John's. It was indeed an inspiring evening much enjoyed by all who attended and we are looking forward to a further visit from Rob.

We assisted the Worship Team with the Lent study course, a five week course on the Sunday evenings in Lent. This was based on the film 'Les Miserables' with its powerful messages of faith, love and sacrifice.

Following the success of the Praise and Pastries events over the last two years, we arranged another one on a Sunday evening in May. Again over 50 people gathered in the Link to join in hymns and worship songs chosen by members and to hear why they were special to them. With John Castle and the music group providing the musical lead, the evening was greatly enjoyed by everyone - and there were favourable comments on the selection of pastries.

A number of members from St John's went to the Christian festival, Greenbelt in late August.

Our Autumn Series was called 'Inspired to Follow: Art and the Bible Story', a resource produced by St Martin-in-the-Fields in partnership with the National Gallery. The course used fine art paintings in the National Gallery's collection, along with a short theological reflection and a Biblical text, as a spring board for exploring these two questions: How can I deepen my faith in God? What does it mean to follow Jesus today?

The Prayer corner in the side pews at the right hand side front of the church has been on-going through the year. It has been a chance for anyone who wishes to pray either on their own or with other people in a quiet space after the morning service.

At both Easter and Christmas time, we left small booklets around the church premises about the true meaning of the festivals. The idea was that a casual user of the premises could pick one up and begin to get an idea of what Christians believe.

House Groups both in the day time and in the evening have continued to meet through the year as has the Book group. Different topics and approaches are taken by the groups but each provides a friendly setting in which to explore the Bible and discuss topical issues from a Christian perspective, as well as to share fellowship and prayer within the group. Details are provided regularly in the Newsletter and new members are always welcome.

The Prayer guides and Bible reading Notes are available for those who wish to use them. We have also publicised the Daily Devotions from the URC that are available online. Some people like the way that a devotion pops into their inbox each morning at 6 am!

We have sought to interest people in making use of a valuable resource at St John's – the Library. There is a wide variety of books for all ages. The bookcase is open each Sunday morning and we would like to encourage members and others to borrow the books.

Margaret Barnes

Pastoral Care Team

There are so many members of our church family who work so hard supporting each other in times of need and in times of celebration and this is an opportunity to thank all these 'unsung heroes' as well as to let everyone know of the fantastic work that goes on behind the scenes.

Although Tina remains on the Pastoral Care Team, we are sorry to lose her as one of our Pastoral Elders, having come to the end of her eight year term in this role but we wish her well in her new position as joint Church Secretary. She carried out her role as Pastoral Elder so efficiently and she is already demonstrating the same level of dedica-

tion to her new post. We are also delighted to welcome Angela as a new Pastoral Elder and we are sure that she will bring much insight and experience to the team.

Sadly, some of our Pastoral Visitors 'retired' last year and we would like to thank them for their dedication to this ministry but we currently have 45 Pastoral Visitors who support our members and friends, including some new visitors who have joined the team over the past year. Our thanks go out to them all for the effort and time they put into this role, for supporting those in their care when times are difficult, keeping them informed of church events and notices, for praying for each other and for making our members feel a welcome and valued part of our church family. If you would like to volunteer to become a Pastoral Visitor, please contact either Angela or Liz for more information on what this rewarding role involves.

At St John's we offer different forms of prayer ministry and we are blessed to have members committed to our Prayer Chain, Prayer Tree and Prayer Focus. We were sorry to say goodbye to Cathy Thomas, who looked after our Prayer Chain, when she moved to Madeira towards the end of 2019. She did a sterling job in 'administering' the Prayer Chain and this is an opportunity to thank her for her hard work in this vital ministry. Although we said our goodbyes to Cathy in September, we are delighted to welcome Sue Ritchie to this role and look forward to working with her. The list of those on our Prayer Chain can be found in the Church Directory and anyone can contact one of the members listed to request prayers to be passed on to those on the Chain for faithful prayer.

Our thanks also go to Carol Hepden who updates the Prayer Focus in our Order of Service for us each week so that we can pray for our members who are in particular need of our thoughts and prayers at any given time. Should anyone wish to add someone to this Prayer Focus, please contact either Jennifer, Angela or Liz and we will contact Carol for inclusion.

We are sure that you all admire the beautiful floral arrangements every week and this is all down to some very talented ladies who deserve our heartfelt thanks for brightening up our church each week in such an amazing and imaginative way. As many of you will be aware, having been recipients, these flowers are distributed to many deserving members who are in need of support, comfort and congratulations. This could not be done without the support of our dedicated team of

distributors. If you feel you are able to contribute to this ministry, please let us know as this would ensure that this ministry is spread over more distributors (male and female!) and it can be very rewarding to see someone's face light up as they receive such a beautiful gift from the church, letting them know that we are thinking of them.

Once again, our Christmas plants were distributed to various members and our thanks, once again, go to Jackie Pasifull for ordering the plants, to the children for their cards to accompany the plants and to all who distributed the plants at a busy time of year.

Our Training Morning in the autumn was led by Vanessa Hackney, covering the topic of mental health and how we can support those affected by this illness. It was a fascinating presentation and so many of those attending appreciated this insight into the many forms that mental health issues can present and how we can recognise the signs and give our support.

As Jesus told His disciples, *“Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* Let us continue to do as He instructed here at St John's.

Liz Sutton.and Angela Liddell

Property Team

One of our members (Alan Nicholson) decided to stand down this year. Alan has been with us since 2012. He was a valuable member of the Property Team and his contribution will be missed. Once again we had two very successful DIY and Cleaning days which took place in the summer. Most of the tasks could be described as annual cleaning.

The usage of the halls continues at about the maximum level, thanks to Alison Bruce who does a great job dealing with external lets and bookings. Also thanks to our cleaner Audrey (supported by our caretaker John) who has the difficult job of juggling the times she can get in to do her work around external lets which vary from week to week.

A contractor was identified to upgrade the Morton Hall Floor to a specification determined by a consultant from the Construction Flooring Association. The finish will be Luxury Vinyl Tiles. It had been

planned to do the work this year but there is now a possibility of a Synod Grant coming available in 2020 so the work is booked for April 2020. In the meantime a small maintenance exercise was carried out to avoid any further significant deterioration.

Planning to extend emergency lighting and fire detection into the Church (requested by our insurers) has been completed and a contractor recruited. This work will also be carried out in April 2020. We are hopeful that a Synod grant will be available.

The boilers were replaced in April this year. The work had been planned to take place in the summer months but it was brought forward to take advantage of a significant cost reduction offered by the contractor. As it turned out, the work was done cleanly and efficiently with very little disruption to heating or to provision of hot water. As a consequence of the boiler work, some work on encapsulation of traces of Asbestos had to be carried out in the boiler room. We also commissioned a Legionella Risk assessment – there were no major issues with that.

New handrails were installed at the front of the Church in May this year and we have found a suitable company to install one handrail in the Sanctuary. This work requires bespoke carpentry so it is fairly expensive. We are grateful to one member of the congregation who has made a very generous gift to help with this. The sanctuary handrail will be installed early in 2020.

Suitable suppliers and contractors were identified, to carry out modifications to the Link kitchen to enable a dishwasher to be installed. The work is planned to be carried out early in 2020.

We eventually decided to replace our printer with a newer model capable of producing colour prints. That arrived in December. It has turned out to be very simple to use.

An issue developed with the second inverter on our solar panel system. It was replaced under guarantee. The first one was replaced a couple of years ago (also under guarantee).

Gardening this year has again been carried out by our gardener Anna with grass cutting help from our Caretaker John.

A 10 year structural survey of the Manse was undertaken in May this

year. A number of issues were identified and we are working through them. Additional smoke detectors were provided and re-decoration of external woodwork is planned for April 2020.

The year has given us some interesting challenges and those have been met with enthusiasm by the team made up of Colin Barnes, Frank Liddell, Alan Nicholson, Ian Purton, Rod Stanbridge, Joan Fairley, Jon Henderson and John Wood. Planning for projects to be undertaken in the Church, Morton Hall and the Manse are well advanced. It looks as if we are going to be busy next year as well!

Billy Murdoch, Property Officer

Publicity and Promotions Team

The year has been an interesting one as we continue to promote the church of St Johns to both our members and in the local community. In particular, we have explored new avenues alongside our tried and trusted methods.

The Christmas and Easter cards continue to be produced and we are extremely grateful to those who distribute these to over 1500 homes in the vicinity of the church. This provides a valuable outreach and maintains a vital link with the local community. This year we took a new approach to distribution and we now have a list of volunteers to regularly distribute to particular roads

The website and Newsletter continue to be the main communication with church member and adherents. We are extremely grateful to Brenda Sussex for her sterling work in preparation of the Newsletter and in producing the graphics for the AV system in the church and Link. We continue to make use of electronic copy where possible for the Newsletter and in 2019 the Annual report was also predominantly distributed via email, significantly lowering our printing costs which saw a reduction in our expenditure of nearly £1000. Thank you to all concerned

In addition to our use of Twitter (the tag is “@stjohnsurcorp”) we now have our own Facebook presence. You can find us @stjohnsurcorp. This has met with limited success to date but is a valuable asset in advertising forthcoming events. Our big success story was the Pre-school Waitrose event which reached over 1000 people. Please use this valuable resource and share or “like” the articles so we reach a

wider audience

The PnP team have also been responsible for bringing in a new package for collaborative working for the church called Gsuite. One of the main benefits is that the church now has its own generic email package so people do not have to use private email for church business. Please let me know if you would like one for your organisation. Examples are as follows:

minister@stjohnsurc.org.uk

publicity@stjohnsurc.org.uk

churchsec@stjohnsurc.org.uk

finance@stjohnsurc.org.uk

property@stjohnsurc.org.uk

pastoral@stjohnsurc.org.uk

churchworld@stjohnsurc.org.uk

faithdevelopment@stjohnsurc.org.uk

theplace@stjohnsurc.org.uk

newsletter@stjohnsurc.org.uk

sundayfunclub@stjohnsurc.org.uk

toddlers@stjohnsurc.org.uk

This year we have reduced the displaying of banners on the fence below the church after comments by residents, but we will continue to display the Easter Banner and also publicise particular one off events. At the end of the year we took the decision to have a major upgrade to the website and are extremely grateful for a bequest by Cathy and Dave Thomas to fund this. The design for the new website will start at the beginning of 2020 and we hope to have it up and running by March.

This year we welcomed Christopher Leonard Morgan as a member of the team, and the co-option of Tina Wheeler in her role as church secretary. We also said farewell to Jackie Passiful as she stepped down from the church secretary role, and Cathy Thomas as she left Orpington for the sunshine of Madeira. We are grateful for all the hard work both have done as members of the team Indeed I am grateful for all the help from all my team members, and if you feel you would like to become involved please contact any team member to know more.

Paul Gill

Youth and Children's Team

2019 has been a thrilling and exciting year as we are very blessed to have appointed a wonderful Youth Minister! We are very fortunate to have Charlie Powell join us as and become part of the St John's family, and we are truly looking forward to the weeks, months and years

ahead as he enthuses, engages and challenges us in our ministry and community work. I would like to offer sincere thanks to all those who were involved in the appointment process – God really did answer our prayers and say a huge WELCOME to Charlie!

Throughout 2019, we have seen the wonderful work and dedication of our leaders and volunteers continue throughout all groups, providing children and youth with invaluable lessons and new adventures. The opportunities that have been provided for their social, spiritual, and worldly development have been varied and numerous; this is all done with exceptional leadership and organisation which I know the children are all very grateful for.

As always, our TGIS leaders have continued to provide a superb education to our children and young adults on a Sunday morning and have provided us with some truly wonderful church services! The leaders have again, excelled at providing a varied and interesting range of topics and stories to discuss. The individual groups all provide their own reports so please take the time to read these and see what incredible effect St John's has had on the lives of so many children and young people.

The Easter and Christmas parties were another great success (I can speak from both sides of the fence now and can confirm that Poppy had a fantastic time at Christmas!) We welcomed nearly 60 children to these events, and we were very pleased to see so many new children coming along. This may be due to a new promotion approach using the St John's Facebook page to advertise and encourage – but we will investigate further! We continue to pray that they now come through our doors on a Sunday morning as well! I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all those involved – we could not do this without you!

September saw another Sunday Fun Club Camp expertly arranged and organised by Yvonne and Clare Veal, along with some fantastic parents and volunteers. Many thanks to Yvonne and her team for the great opportunities that are offered to our young people every month, I know your numbers are going from strength to strength so thank you very much! Please see Yvonne's report for more details.

The Place has continued to relaunch itself during the year – I know how dedicated the leadership team is to develop the group further and we look forward to seeing the adventures they will have.

Toddlers and Just Babies have had another exciting year – Just Babies numbers, whilst small, are consistent and Toddlers have had another great year of exciting play, crafts, singing and community. This is a fantastic group, but I know they are always looking for help and volunteers – both for helping organise Wednesday mornings and setting up on Tuesday evenings. If you feel this is something you could offer, please speak to either myself or Lizzy Brown. Please do read their own individual reports for more details.

The Uniformed Organisations continue working well most groups have good numbers each week and the leaders and volunteers are becoming a lot more solidified. Whilst our current leadership is excellent, we must still bear in mind that they are always on the lookout for new volunteers so please let us know if you want to be involved – only a few hours of your time a week! Please do look at the individual reports to see what exciting things they have been getting up to.

Since appointing Charlie, the Youth and Children's Work team has been extended to 10 members in the hope of including people from each area of Y&CW throughout St John's – we have already had 3 very productive meetings since September and our vision remains the same; to work together to enhance and encourage our children's faith development.

Before I finish this report, I would like to take a few lines to offer a sincerely heartfelt thanks to all our leaders, helpers and volunteers who all help to make the youth and children's groups here at St John's so wonderful! Their continued enthusiasm and dedication have been undeniably vital, and I know the children (and adults) appreciate how much they do for them. I am utterly grateful to be working with such a fantastic group of people – thank you and long may it continue to grow.

Charlotte Leonard

TGIS

TGIS have had a very good year. Our biggest excitement was welcoming Charlie Powell as our new Youth Pastor. He has proved to be a very valuable addition to our team and he is full of great ideas. We are all very grateful for all the hard work he puts in.

The leadership of the groups has changed a bit over the year. Plugged In is run by Lizzie Howells, Ben Leonard, Simon Clare and Charlie Powell. They have a handful of young people each week. Sparklers is run by Clare Veal and Charlotte Mace with help from a few others. The numbers in this group vary but there are usually about 2 or 3 children.

Neons is mostly led by Maureen Robinson and Debbie Knight with the addition of Linda Saisi and Lesley Clare who also lead some sessions. There are often only one or two children in this group and sometimes there are none. Our youngest group, Fireflies still run each week although they only have one regular member. We hope to welcome a new member very soon. This group is kept organised by Anne Sutton.

Sparklers continue to read the story of the sacrament at the communion services each month which makes them feel included. The nativity play was done differently this year. Charlie leads a very inclusive service which went down well. It's always good to try new things and great when they go well. This service was also our gift service where we collected many wonderful gifts for needy children. This year we donated the gifts to the Bexley Toybank. These gifts then get distributed to children who would otherwise have nothing for Christmas and birthdays. We are always so grateful for all the gifts we receive – there are always so many to pass on.

The children all enjoy their weekly sessions and this is down to the many wonderful leaders we have. Although our numbers are getting smaller we do still have a TGIS group and I would like to thank everyone who helps make TGIS the happy and exciting group that it is. Thank you also to all those who have either stepped down or joined the team this year. To those who have stepped down we hope you know just how much all your hard work has been appreciated over the years. To those who have joined us - welcome on board.

Fiona Drysdale

The Place

The Place have had a fairly good year. We have had some leadership additions. Ben Leonard, Clare Veal and Charlie Powell have joined Lizzie Howells and myself so we are now managing to meet regularly again.

We have, on average, 6 or 7 youngsters each time. When we meet we still start by sharing lunch together and chatting about what we've all been up to. We still meet on a Sunday after the morning service. We meet in the youth friendly room. Sometimes we have movie afternoons, sometimes we play board games, we had a 'biscuit off' where the Maryland Cookie was crowned overall favourite biscuit (despite having been nobody's favourite during the challenge!?!). We've had a couple of Taskmaster sessions which were very well received. Jennifer often comes and says hello which is lovely.

We had a Christmas party in December where we played some festive games and also had a cake decorating competition. Three teams competed to try and have the best decorated offering and it was a very competitive yet fun session.

We look forward to an exciting few months ahead with lots more fun sessions planned.

Fiona Drysdale

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

4th Crofton Rainbow Unit



2019 was another lively, messy, happy year for 4th Crofton Rainbows. Our girls enjoyed many varied activities, games, crafts, songs and some exciting events too. Although we said farewell to Lynne Hollingsworth ('Jay') as she moved on to a different Rainbow Unit, we were delighted to welcome our new leader Bex Boorman ('Ladybird'). We wish Lynne all the very best in her new Rainbows adventure and have already had lots of fun with Bex who has introduced lots of enthusiasm and fantastic ideas to us here at 4th Crofton.

At the end of 2018 Girlguiding commenced a brand new programme across all of the age groups which we have been trying during the year and so far found to be thoroughly enjoyable. Rainbows have lots of varied activities for Unit meetings, longer-term challenges to work towards in order to build certain skills, and can, for the first time, work towards interest badges too. A combination of these give Rainbows the chance to earn Theme awards in six different categories which extend throughout Girlguiding – Know Myself, Express Myself, Be Well, Have Adventures, Take Action and Skills for My Future. Thus

Rainbows can continue to build on the skills and experiences they have gained in these six areas when they move onto Brownies, Guides and beyond. Some of our members in 4th Crofton have worked very hard and have already earned their 'Know Myself' and 'Take Action' theme awards! The girls have earned all kinds of interest badges such as Agility, Animal Lover, Construction, Nature, Helper and Storyteller.



During meetings we sing, chat, get involved in activities or games as a whole group, in their four smaller teams or as individuals. The craft activities often result in fantastic concoctions such as the robots we made in a Recycling activity. The games, however, are much more energetic (and noisy!) affairs!

4th Crofton have been on a few external adventures during 2019 – in January we attended the special Girlguiding screening of 'Mary Poppins Returns' along with Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Explorers across the country doing the same. Then in June we had a very exciting time at the 'Goldtastic' event at Charles Darwin School as the Greater London and Kent districts celebrated 50 years in Girlguiding. Hundreds of girls, leaders and volunteers got together on one of the hottest days of the year to celebrate, take part in activities, games, craft, and songs, enjoying rides, attractions, visits from farm animals and of course trampolines, bouncy castles and slides.



We continued our outdoor adventures at Eagle Heights in October for 'Rainbows Go Wild' where the girls got the chance to meet and learn about birds of prey, endangered animals, reptiles and insects. The weather was not quite as kind on this occasion but it didn't dampen our adventurous spirits and the girls earned their Go Wild badge with lots of gusto!

The Rainbows ended 2019 on a real high when they put on a Talent Show (with a difference) for their families and friends in order to raise money for their chosen charity, WWF, as part of our Take Action theme. In preparation for this event we learnt about recycling, the environment and wildlife in our world and how we can help to protect it. The girls performed one Talent each (ranging from playing the keyboard and violin, gymnastics and yoga, magic tricks and a new language) and then taught their Talent to one of their fellow Rainbows in front of the audience. They were all spectacular and proved they

were just as good at teaching, listening and learning as they were at performing!



In 2020 we have lots more activities, games, badges and events planned both as a Unit and with our wider Girlguiding family. We are looking forward to helping lead the worship for the Mothering Sunday Church Parade in March and much more besides. If you know of any girls up the age of 5 who might be interested in joining us please do get in touch with me at 4thcroftonbumblebee@gmail.com (although we do have a waiting list, so to avoid disappointment please contact us early!) Additionally, if you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering in any capacity with the Rainbows please let us know too, we are always grateful for any contributions.

Lizzy Brown ('Bumblebee')

4th Crofton Brownies

Wow what a Year 4th Brownies have had.

We started the year Spring Term, looking at the new programme which officially came out in September 2019. One activity which the girls thoroughly enjoyed was where they need to make a snake but they had to write things that they liked at Brownies, what they wanted to do, this was a successful evening for everyone.

In the Spring Term we also celebrated Valentine's evening, Promise Ceremony, World Thinking Day and Easter. In the Summer Term we were busy too, we welcomed two more Brownies from Rainbows. The girls achieved their first "Skills Builder" badge - First Aid - which was a good achievement for the girls.

We delivered Christian Aid envelopes in the local area. We also celebrated Lynne, the Rainbow leader's 30th and had a joint evening with the Rainbows, this was enjoyed by everyone.

We had a very successful Church Parade in June. We went to a Girl Guiding trip in June to Charles Darwin School for Goldtastic, the County's 50th birthday celebration. The day was brilliant and fun for all of us, and the weather was lovely and hot too, too hot for some of us! Including myself.

In Autumn Term we welcomed seven new Brownies which is a great number. We have now had two terms of the new programme and I think the girls are enjoying it and achieving some of the Interest Badges.

We had a successful Brownie Holiday with 12 girls for the weekend in October, we focused on the Camp Skills Builders. The theme was the Lion King so the girls enjoyed lots of different activities and they helped with the cooking. This was great food - well done girls! We also focused on ourselves and how we are different and what makes us special and unique, so we focused on Anti-bullying week where the girls did some acting out, and we went to the pottery place Fired Up in Petts Wood to design a mug or pen pot unique to ourselves this was a good night by all.

Sadly we lost Rose as she was successful going to university but has completed her Adult leadership so hopefully she will volunteer at a Brownie unit where her university is.

We also had to say Goodbye to Alix at the end of the year due to change work commitments. wish both Rose and Alix good luck for the future and Thank you for their support and help.

Rachel High

4th Crofton Guides

In the summer we had great fun and had various meetings outside of the hall, these included an evening at Airjump trampoline park which was great fun and then we went bowling again good noisy fun. We had a campfire evening and songs at the Cudham Campfire sight where some of our Guides made their promise and then at the end of the summer term we played a wide game at high elms which completely wore us all out.

Two of the Guides, Paige Dance and Macey Griffith were awarded The Jack Petchey award and this allowed us to fund two of these outings and also buy Guide blankets for all the guides at the time. We started off the Autumn term with an engineering evening hosted by one of the young leaders before she left for Uni. We then completed a skills builder

We then had a first aid evening having fun with an old first aid kit
The next two Fridays were taken up with a talent evening practice
night and then the really thing the following week.

We then had a pumpkin fun night filled with lots of games and prizes
and we also attended the Cudham campfire and sparklers evening
We assisted the minister with the remembrance Service which was
very poignant and thought provoking. Making us all think about the
important roles women played in the war effort.

We completed the #Iwill Uma and skills builder

The Guides had great fun doing Christmas cooking and cake decorating,
then spent the following week making Christmas crafts. All had
great fun even if it was a bit messy.

The last week of the term we couldn't not end it without having our
traditional Christmas party which was great fun and full of games and
prizes as requested by the the girls. We also sadly said goodbye to
Liz who has helped lead the guides and Rainbows for many years.

This term we started off with a games evening and then we have continued
to complete a skills builder as part of the new Guide Programme.
We have had an evening thinking about the Guide promise
and making promise trees in preparation for 8 Guides who will be
making their promise at our indoor campfire evening.

Elaine Couchman

8th Orpington Beaver Colony

2019 was a strong year for the Beaver unit. We successfully managed
to increase our intake of boys from 9 to 16, whilst still being able to
deliver a fun and enthusiastic atmosphere for the Beavers. Myself,
George, and Katrina had decided to work more towards the badges
this year, trying to push both ourselves and the boys to develop new
skills. The main life skill we wanted to work towards was teamwork,
having the Beavers work as teams to collectively reach a goal. The
most appreciated game we had regarding this was a homemade Escape
Room, where the boys had to solve puzzles to find 'the hidden
treasure'.

Not only were we trying to push badges, but we were also successful in getting a few mystery guests to join our meetings, such as an eye doctor, an undercover policeman, and Jon Henderson who showed and explained the stars to the Beaver troupe. The ability to bring in these guests allows the Beavers to not only enjoy a night off from their usual Beaver leaders (which I'm sure they must enjoy!), but they also got to hear first hand accounts of situations as well as getting to have their questions answered by professionals.

Looking to the future and 2020, we are planning on continuing this enthusiastic approach to the termly schedules, and trying to allow the boys to have some input regarding what they would like to do. This has been done by having a #YouShape evening where they made their opinions known regarding what the leaders are doing and how we can improve, as well as on the type and style of games and activities that we plan for the evenings.

Ben Gill

8th Orpington Rudyard Cub Pack

8th Orpington Cubs has had another successful year in Scouting. The pack has been at a strong number of 20 this year and we look to add those last four places so we can say we have four complete sixes! Maybe even look to a fifth six. Our activities have continued to great enjoyment. We held our annual bowling evening with the beavers and have enjoyed wide games with the scouts. During the summer we managed to have a short summer camp of 4 days at Broadstone Warren. With the planning only starting some 4 weeks before we still managed to run a successful camp of some 20+ scouts and Cubs. Activities included high ropes, potholes, rafting and many other great scouting activities. For some of our kids this was the first time they had gone camping and even been away from home. So all in all I think it was a great success and look forward to our next camp this year.

We also look forward to having many more activities planned going into 2020 and beyond and seeing the pack grow from strength to strength.

Christian Leonard

8th Orpington Scouts

2019 has been another good year for all the members of the 8th. A resurgence in leader support has meant that we can continue to run a full and varied programme, ensuring the boys have as much fun as possible whilst continuing to get the most out of Scouting. Indeed, with the extra leader support we have seen the size of the troop nearly double in size over the last 18 months and hope that this trend will continue over the coming year.

If you know any boys between 10 and 14 who would be interested in getting muddy and having fun, please get in touch with us at 8thorpingtonscouts@gmail.com as we would welcome the opportunity to expand the troop numbers even further.

During the Spring term our programme included such varied activities as wide games (taking advantage of the continued long evenings), a giant marble run and training as a knight. This culminated in a memorable evening entitled 'A Royal Tournament' featuring such exciting activities as fencing and balloon jousting. I'm happy to report that no eyes were injured during the making of this entertainment!

The Summer term saw a return to camping (something that has, sadly, been less prominent in our programme for the last couple of years), with both a weekend camp in May and a hugely successful, if slightly shorter, Summer Camp. For many there was a return of old favourites such as raft building (and capsizing), high and low rope courses, grass sledding and climbing. There was even the joy of a new activity – axe throwing – which was a novelty even to most of the leaders as well. Our deepest apologies to all parents who now feel the need for 24 hour security monitoring the doors of their sheds!

As well as camping there were many memorable evenings, from Tower Building (you'd be amazed at how many cans of coke can be held up by spaghetti and strawberry laces!) to logic puzzles (ever tried writing instructions for sandwich making for a robot? the results are far messier than you might expect!) and from GPS art to a 'Drymen Challenge'. Joining with the Explorers for an evening of orienteering and puzzle solving only resulted in the loss of 2 Scouts and 2 Explorers – but one was the daughter of the Explorer leader so that was alright. Finally, the end of term saw the re-introduction of the "Summer Barbi" where we were delighted to welcome Jennifer to join us.

The Winter term, with the nights drawing in, led us once again outside for an entertaining wide game with the cubs, as well as the building of

matchstick fuelled rockets that, miraculously, failed to set off the fire alarm or burn down the hall. Definitely one of our better evenings. There was also the making of bows and arrows (I'm informed at least one Scout still hangs his at the end of his bed) and the carving of soap figures as part of a knife training exercise. Two evenings were also devoted to cooking a two-course meal for the other half of the troop and, since there were no reported cases of food poisoning, badges were even awarded for this.

The year ended with a trip to Quasar which is always popular with the boys (I won't mention the leaders!) and the best intentions to make 2020 even better than 2019.

Tim Brown

Drymen Explorer Scout Unit

2019 was a year of transition for the unit as we saw a number of our members reach 18 and begin their journey through University education. Before that, however, we aimed to make sure they enjoyed their final months with us as much as possible.

A varied programme is key to keeping the group engaged - but we do know that food is always high on the list! As such, the spring term saw us make burgers for Burns Night - celebrating the existence of the McDonald(s) clan! and Pancake Week is always a winner. As the evenings began to lighten later in Spring, we had a few off site evenings with the unit split into two teams and setting each other some challenges. These challenges ranged from creating a quiz to stump the opposition, all the way through to a fiendishly complex scavenger hunt around the local area. Each team competed robustly but after a few weeks hard competition, honours were pretty much even - which saw prizes shared amongst the group!

Summer term was as quiet as it ever was - given that we had a lot of exams amongst the group, so we enjoyed the good weather in a series of local parks and green spaces. We ended the term with a barbecue for the whole group, and celebrated with five members as they headed off to Universities around the country - some special stationery as a gift means that we hope they will continue to think fondly of their time with Drymen!

The early part of the winter term saw the group support Jennifer with Church Parade, and in our downtime from that - we went 'Monster Hunting' - the creative spirit was flowing in the group, as we asked them to imagine the something scary. One group proved that the assorted mops of St Johns, some foil and a carefully located yellow bucket could provoke a true mix of mirth and fear! The other group stretched the brief and created a scary in-room experience the equal of anything at the UK's best theme parks...the creativity and inspiration of the whole group was terrific to watch, and a testament to the bond they have as a group and the enjoyment they take in Thursday evenings.

Naturally, food was once again a central part of the programme with The Great Halloween Bake Off seeing a mix of spooky pastry swirls and monster hotdogs with googly eyes... I don't think they would pass the Paul Hollywood test, but the unit enjoyed them! The Popcorn Olympics is another regular favourite and this time the group invented their own games which was great fun. We ended the year - on the night of the general election no less - with a shared meal on the High Street. Pizza, conversation and ice cream all flowed as the group reflected on another great year. Even though we had a few changes in membership, the unit remains strong with consistent numbers of creative, committed young people joining us on a Thursday evening. We are, however, experiencing some challenges with the adult leaders with one leaving us shortly, so at least one, potentially two new adult leaders would be gratefully received, if anyone has a spare 90mins on a Thursday night to share with these fantastic young people.

Jonathan Patterson

Just Babies

Since last year, although our numbers at Just Babies has not increased significantly we are still welcoming on average 2-5 babies with their Mums & Dads each week. We have always had such positive feedback from our parents that we feel it is worthwhile continuing our group.

We celebrated all our usual special dates during the year which are always enjoyed by those who attended.

As always, many thanks to our regular and committed team of helpers namely Jenny Sheehan, Lynne Gill, Linda Saisi, Trish Leonard-

Morgan, Cathy Hussey, Christabel Drakes, our honorary member Lesley Clare & Annette Mace for their continued support.

The Just Babies Team

Toddler Group



We have enjoyed another year of smiling faces, messy hands, chatter, laughter and songs at St John's Toddlers Group in 2019. Although we have said a fond farewell to the wonderful Gill Campbell, our numbers are



looking more promising month by month and we continue to welcome members, some familiar and some new.



We have paints and craft activities, often themed to the time of year or special events, and Jennifer joins us every term for a Story from God's Special Book.

We love to celebrate Easter and Christmas with our parties, as well as the annual Teddy Bear's Picnic, which are always well attended. We always finish with singing time in the church, with lots of joyous, noisy participation from everyone – especially when the musical instruments are brought out!

Our stalwart teams of Wednesday helpers and Tuesday evening setter-uppers are the backbone of Toddlers and we are incredibly grateful



for their continued support; at a time where volunteering can be difficult for people due to time and work commitments, we recognise just how valuable their contribution is so **enormous thanks** go out to all our help-



ers.

We would be very appreciative of any new additions to our Toddlers' teams **on an occasional basis** on either Wednesdays (9:30-11:15am) or Tuesday evenings (approx. 6:45-7:15pm) – there is no need to sign up for a long-term commitment, just helping at the odd session once or twice a term would be a great help. Please get in touch if you feel able to assist in any way; all contributions will be gratefully received.

In the meantime we will be continuing to publicise Toddlers – leaflets,

posters and online marketing have all been employed so far to spread the news about the group – and we look forward to what 2020 brings. For those of us who have attended and benefitted from the group, we know how valuable these activities are for families so we will do our utmost to ensure St John's Toddlers continues to be a welcoming, inclusive place for families in our community.

Lizzy Brown, Toddlers Leader

Pre-School

Our wonderful Preschool continues to create an environment where 2 – 5 year olds have fun and laughter and plenty of opportunity for self-expression and exercise.

The beginning of last year was a real struggle. There were many meetings to discuss the way forward, as financially we could not continue as we were. Staff were asked to cut their hours, which they did and it was decided the Preschool would try extending its hours. We started opening at 8.15 am from May and then from September we extended through to 2.15 pm. The uptake has not been huge, but the longer hours are attracting more and more parents. We also offer the flexibility to parents of just being able to use the service as a one off. It has certainly been a successful leap of faith. The Treasurer is happier and the children that do stay benefit from a smaller group enabling more concentrated learning. However, the negative side was we lost 3 members of good staff through resignations, 2 of whom were long standing and it was very sad to have to say goodbye to them all.

Margaret and Jackie attended an Early Years open day in Bromley in September. The aim of the event was to give under 5 providers the opportunity to sell their services to potential parents. However, despite Bromley's best efforts there was only one other Preschool present and a couple of day nurseries and the footfall of parents the whole morning could be counted on one hand!

The children made some beautiful "makes" to recognise the various celebrations that happen throughout the year. For example, Chinese New Year, Patron Saint Days, Mother's Day and of course Father's Day and Diwali. At Easter we made Easter bonnets and the children paraded them around the church, accompanied by Lesley Clare on the piano, to show off their bonnets to their parents and carers. Some fruit and vegetables were made to decorate the church for Harvest

along with some scarecrows.

The children were sponsored to walk to Poverest Park and raised money for Barnardos. Once at Poverest Park we had our Sports morning and yet again we were lucky with the weather.

The Nativity was once again enhanced this year by "live" piano music thanks to the wonderful talents of Lesley Clare, who came in many times in advance to help the children practice their songs. We are also very pleased to welcome Lesley as our new Link visitor.

Thank you to Jennifer and Charlie for leading our assemblies during the year when we were often joined by the children from Sunnyfields Nursery.

We would particularly like to thank Lizzy Brown, who stood down as our Parent rep in July. Her support and commitment to the Preschool was outstanding and she is still supporting us in many ways. We welcomed Kelly as our new parent rep ably assisted by Bee and Diana. They got the new academic year off to a good start by raising an amazing £149.70 at the Christmas coffee morning.

Our sincere thanks also go to Margaret, Chair of the Management Committee, who is always there for us, faithfully supporting us by attending all our events and being at the end of the 'phone to help resolve any issues we may have however big or small. At the beginning of last year, the issues were very big, but she stood by us, and between us we found a way through.

Our thanks go to everyone who has supported us over the past year (and of course before!).

The quiz evening was enjoyed by all who attended and our thanks also go to Ben Gill as an excellent quiz master. Please put 6th June in your diary as we will be holding another quiz evening this year.

Our other fundraising events in 2019 were the "pringle your pennies for preschool", which raised £77 and our two "bag2school" collections raised £388.

I know I am not alone in feeling very happy that the future looks bright! Who knows, we may have a third generation attending our Preschool!

Jackie Bebbington

Sunday Fun Club

It seems amazing that Sunday Fun Club has been running for five years now! Carol Hepden and I undertook to run Fun Club for a year and then see how things stood. Elders agreed that the church would support us financially. We got started on a massive advertising campaign sending leaflets to uniformed organisations, Perry Hall School and houses in roads round the church. In February 2015 we welcomed our first young people.

We still meet once a month usually on a Sunday after church parade from 12.00 until 2.15 in the Morton Hall. One important aspect of our time together is sitting down round a table for lunch when the children learn to give thanks for their food and how to serve one another and remain at the table until everybody has finished eating.

This year we have had two parties one at Christmas attended by Santa Claus and the other a birthday party in February.

We visited Orpington Fire Station in November and officers from Blue watch taught us basic fire safety before showing us round the fire station. They even let us have a go at holding the smaller fire hose trying to aim it at a big empty rubbish bin which was great fun.

In January we had a children's first aid instructor join us. She arrived accompanied by many resuscitation dummies and by the end of the session all the children gained a basic first aid certificate. You should now feel very safe whilst in church with so much first aid knowledge abounding among our young people.

We made harvest decorations for the church based on a theme of creation in October and then had a special Saturday meeting to make harvest loaves.

We went for our annual camp to Otford Manor by arrangement with Oakhall Christian holidays. We had a great time in spite of the rain playing outdoor games, having a bonfire, swimming in the open-air pool, walking, and enjoying fellowship together. As well as the simple fun of sleeping in tents and enjoying the natural world.

This year we held our first Sleepover in the church hall however I must say that not much sleep was involved! The children arrived on the Saturday at 4.30 pm and cooked their own evening meal followed by undertaking some Taskmaster challenges and hot chocolate and a bedtime story. We all retired to our respective rooms, however most of the young people were far too excited to sleep until it was nearly morning which meant that the adults didn't get much sleep either! We were however all sound asleep when Margaret Collins and Clare Veal arrived at 8.0 am to prepare our breakfast – neither of them brought a key and it was some time before the doorbell woke me up! They cooked us a lovely breakfast which was much appreciated. Then the children packed their belongings and either went home or went to church looking very bleary eyed!

Sunday Fun Club is for any children aged between 6 to 11 years regardless if they attend church or not. Our numbers have gone up recently and we now have 29 children but we still have space for further children. If you have a child who would like to join us please speak to Yvonne Veal or Sonya Dey. We are extremely grateful to all our fantastic volunteers for their enthusiasm loyalty and energy. This year Carol Hepden decided it was time to step down as my assistant and I wish to record our gratitude to her for everything she has done during these five years. We now warmly welcome Sonya Dey as my assistant and hope she enjoys all the fun.

Yvonne Veal

Friendship Club

We have enjoyed another fun filled and interesting year with several new members joining the club and a good number of visitors coming to take part in our meetings. Mair once again found an amazing variety of people to come and share their interests and talents with us. This year we 'travelled' long distance to Sri Lanka and Japan, both fascinating destinations brought alive by the wonderful photographs and articles brought by our speakers. Nearer to home we 'visited' Guernsey, Batemans and Crystal Palace, learning some of the history of these interesting places.

Our musical afternoons were much enjoyed by us all as we were entertained by Barber Shop singers, a Capella choir, piano recitals, singers, including a visit to the concert given by the Orpington Ladies choir, and our Christmas treat of a concert given by the reception

class from Perry Hall school.

Our speakers covered a wide range of topics amongst them , the history of greeting cards, life aboard a submarine from a retired submariner, the history of Welsh Love spoons, how the Crown Prosecution service works and beekeeping. Our beekeeper returned for a second visit when he demonstrated how hand cream and lip balm was made from the beeswax and allowed us to have a go too! Great fun and some to take home!

The highlight of our year was 'The Exhibition of Fashion' which was held in May. Thanks to the many people who loaned us outfits, dresses, coats and accessories, that they had worn over the years we had a wonderful display . One section was devoted to weddings dresses and it was a great joy to see such beautiful gowns some dating back 50 years. Afternoon tea was served in the link and many of our visitors enjoyed catching up with friends while having their tea.

The summer garden party was once again held in Johnstone and Maggie's beautiful garden, the sun shone, afternoon tea and strawberries were served and enjoyed as the members and guests were entertained by pupils from Perry Hall school who sang, recited and played their instruments.

Once again Jennifer helped us to celebrate Easter, Harvest and Christmas by leading us in worship. We were joined by Betty and Nick Matthews and Margaret Collins and her choir whose singing enhanced our celebrations. These services were followed by an afternoon tea which was much enjoyed.

We wish to record our thanks to Maggie Brown , who after many years of being a valuable part of the Friendship Club team has retired. Fortunately she continues to attend the meetings so we still have access to her advice when we need it.

As always we are very grateful to the people who support us , our drivers who regularly 'taxi' members to the meetings, Keith and Diana for their loyal support , Jean, Carol and Liz who are always on 'standby' for help when needed . Sincere thanks to John for all his help with furniture and equipment which is much appreciated.

We have much to offer at the Friendship Club and would welcome anybody who like to join us for afternoons of companionship and fun. Details of our meetings can be found in the Newsletter.

Mair, Tina and Sue

Men of Leisure

We had high levels of fellowship with friendly and often noisy games. We play Snooker, using two of our three tables; mostly with 4 players in teams of two. We have not played bowls for some time, as members opt to play snooker. We no longer play competitions.

Our membership is down to 10 and attempts to attract new members have proved unsuccessful. If our numbers continue to drop, this outreach activity will be in danger of closing. If you know anyone who might be interested, they can contact John Thompson (Secretary) on 020 8462 2296. We meet on alternate Wednesdays for two hours from 10.00 a.m. - dates are in the Morton Hall on our notice board, in pew sheets, in the Newsletter and in the Office.

Our annual subscription is £ 20, with a £ 1 per meeting for coffee or tea and biscuits. We tend to have our Annual General Meeting in February or March. Our Chairman, is Malcolm Payne (Methodist Church in Sevenoaks Road); as part of the Church our Treasurer is Johnstone Brown (the Secretary collects and banks funds).

During the year we have been joined at our coffee break by the following, Billy Murdoch, John Wood and Jennifer, when their duties permit.

We tend to have an annual pre-Christmas Lunch in November, with Jennifer as our guest and may arrange a meal this Spring. Some members joined the Fellowship Club for a Carol Service and afternoon tea in December.

Our last trip was in 2017. Trips may be arranged this year.

John Thompson

Sunday Lunch Bunch

Sunday Lunch Bunch was set up so that people from the church could

enjoy additional fellowship by going out to lunch together after the service every other month. Originally, we went to a variety of different local pubs for Sunday lunch however more recently we decided to go to Café Medi in Orpington High Street. This was decided because it was near to the church so if people had duties which included locking up, they could still get there in time and transport was less of a difficult issue. We had several very good meals at this restaurant and enjoyed excellent service.

As usual we went to the Lullingstone visitors centre for our Christmas meal but this year we were few in number. Unfortunately, the visitors centre lacked the festive atmosphere which we had experienced on previous occasions although the food was fortunately still excellent. The numbers going out for lunch had fallen during the year and after much discussion it was decided to put Sunday Lunch Bunch on hold for the time being so there hasn't been any further meals organised since Christmas.

Yvonne Veal

Music Group

In 2019 the Music Group continued to participate in the monthly Parade services, plus one other service per month - and to provide a repertoire of worship songs as our main contribution.

Sadly, we have often been reduced to only three singers and three or four instrumentalists at our rehearsals and this year a number of members have been affected, directly or indirectly, by ill-health. In March, at our AGM, we decided to alternate our main rehearsals between a Saturday morning once a month, or a mid-week evening rehearsal (now on Wednesday evenings) once a month.

With the cooperation of our Minister, Jennifer, and, occasionally, visiting preachers (such as Martin Leonard) we have been able to prepare a repertoire of songs ahead of individual services, or for future use. Sadly, we had to say farewell to Stella Gall and Jun Yan, who had both contributed much to the Group and Lesley Clare is now our secretary, replacing Shirley Sinclair (though I am delighted Shirley remains one of our strongest singers).

We welcomed Mary Wilson with her vocal experience, and she is now our librarian but, in the Autumn, we lost two other singers Val Humby and Carol Fenwick, because of other commitments.

St. John's

Working in the Community

MON – FRI

9.15a.m. Pre-School Group (ages 3 – 5) Jackie Bebbington 830453

WEDNESDAY

9.30am Toddlers Group (alternate weeks) Lizzy Brown toddlers@stjohnsurc.org.uk

10:00am Men of Leisure (alternate weeks) John Thompson 020 8462 2296

1.30pm Just Babies Charlotte Leonard 07949 160003

6.00pm Beaver Colony Ben Gill 8thorpingtonbeavers@gmail.com

7.00p.m Cubs Christian Leonard 07772 887017

THURSDAY

2.00pm Friendship Club Sue Ritchie 829553

5.00pm Rainbow Unit Bex Boorman 07510 985740

6.00pm Brownie Guides Rachel High 821249

8.00pm Scouts Tim Brown 8thorpingtonscouts@gmail.com

7.30pm Women Explorers Scouts Jonathan Patterson 834492

FRIDAY

7.00pm Guides Elaine Couchman 812449

SUNDAY

10.30am T G I S (0 – 18 years) Fiona Drysdale 07976 575633

Charlotte Leonard 07949 160003

Fireflies (Creche) Anne Johnson 606506

Neons (3 – 7 years) Malween Robinson 834575

Sparklers (8 – 12 years) Yvonne Veal 01474 852922

Plugged In (12 years and over) Lizzie Howells 07852 335977

MONTHLY

Sunday 12:00 Sunday Fun Club (after Parade Services) Yvonne Veal sundayfunclub@stjohnsurc.org.uk

Sunday 12.30pm The Place (11 - 18 years) Benedict Leonard theplace@stjohnsurc.org.uk

3rd Monday 8.00pm Book Group Frank Liddell 827480

Various Tues Home / Study Groups Margaret Barnes 850076

Church Meetings and Elders Meeting (as announced) Tina Wheeler 829584

Jon Henderson 835681



St John's holds the Child Friendly Church Award and provides a safe and welcoming environment for children of all ages, with opportunities for young people to make their voices heard in a loving and supportive community