



Reports from Committees and Organisations Sutton St. James' Annual Parochial General Meeting 21st April 2013

VICAR'S REPORT

A few ago days I glanced out of my study window and saw the winter sunlight sparkling on the frozen vicarage lawn. A cock-pheasant was strolling along the garden border and I could hear the early chirruping of the garden birds gathering their hopes and aspirations for the long-awaited Spring. Inevitably I found myself asking '...do I need my head examining? What am I doing in leaving such an idyllic parish?'

This will be my final Vicar's Report prior to taking up my new post as Warden at Foxhill (The Chester Diocesan Retreat House and Conference Centre - www.foxhillconferences.co.uk).

I am leaving this parish with a very mixed heart. These last 13 years have been some of the happiest in all my life. My wife, Rachel, and I have been spoiled rotten in the communities of Sutton, Langley, Lyme Green and Gurnett, and I would like to think we have both made a number of very good friends with whom we have shared many happy times. There have also been a number of sad occasions and it will be equally hard to leave such memories behind, too.

My final service in Sutton St James will be a 'normal' service of Evensong on Sunday 30th June at 6.30pm. I understand this will be followed by a small reception in the Scout and Guide Headquarters. And I do hope everyone will come to this farewell gathering. Please do not feel you have to wait for a formal invitation. This is it!

But I would be very naïve if I claimed that I was leaving this parish in a totally cheery and robust heart. Whilst there are a number of positive signs of growth and renewed vigour, I fear the church, at large, is having an ever reducing effect and influence on the lives of people within her care. Whilst I am especially grateful for all the enthusiasm and support I have received from our Associate Vicar, Revd. Vivien Gisby, I do have some anxieties about the future of this church.

Vivien has been tireless in her commitment to this parish, and alongside our two excellent churchwardens, John Evans and Audrey Fernyhough and with endless help from our Reader Jenny Kendal there is much to celebrate and give thanks for. It was remarkable how easily I was able to leave the parish for my secondment to Foxhill and see how readily many people stepped into various roles and took on renewed responsibilities when I was not on hand between September and February. It seemed, in some respects, that the parish thrived in my absence. I am very grateful for all the help and support which was given by so many people. My heartfelt thanks to all.

At the same time I do have some concerns that our church is in danger of simply 'treading water'. Many people in the community have a sympathetic appreciation of the presence of the church in the village, but that presence has little impact or engagement in their daily lives. The true calling of the church is not simply to provide a venue for hatches, matches and despatches, but it should be an institution which touches the hearts and minds all in a way which brings them into a deepening relationship with the living God, and enables them to become aware of His love for them as shown in the very real presence of Jesus Christ in their lives.

I have been jokingly quipping that when I leave the parish I will be replaced by a 'proper vicar'. In some respects I hope and pray that may well be the case. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the parish. I have revelled in the joy of trying to show the church as friendly and approachable. I have tried endlessly to build bridges between the 'church and community'.

But it is now my prayer that whoever follows me will be blessed with a ministry of outreach and evangelism - and that he or she will be instrumental in enabling more and more people to discover a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

Please God, let it be so.

Taffy Davies

ASSOCIATE VICAR'S REPORT

The Vicar's secondment.....

The everyday life of the church, its Sunday and midweek services, Young Church, its pastoral care, its special services at Remembrance Sunday, Christmas etc and its ministry to those who come for baptisms, weddings and funerals continued to happen fairly calmly during the Vicar's secondment, in very large part because of teamwork. Many thanks are due in particular to the Wardens (and especial thanks for their role in organising the Cranmer competition), and Gwen Newman who developed her role as church administrator during this time. Grateful thanks are also due to Tim and Jenny Kendal.

The vision for these six months was very much to do with encouraging people in their faith and ministry and several people have taken on new roles: Janet Bonsall and Rachel Coulson in the Knit and Natter group and Janet and John Evans as chalice assistants. Ruth Christian has also joined the existing team of Praise and Play 'staff' headed up by Helen Reeves. I am pleased to report that Janet Bonsall is doing the

Diocesan Foundations for Ministry course and I would love to see others doing the course in the future.

We had decided on a new approach to baptisms before the Vicar left for Foxhill which was to invite baptism families to come to church to experience what belonging to a church might mean before booking the baptism itself. Most people accept the invitation to come and indeed seem pleased to be asked. We have home-produced leaflets to give them on baptism and the Christian faith and we try and give them a good welcome. It has to be said that this policy hasn't as yet produced any new church members although on a more positive note several new people did start coming to services during these 6 months of the secondment.

The Vicar had asked me to give some attention to Praise and Play (formerly the Pram service) during the secondment to try and stem the decline in its attendance and we made some changes in both content, frequency of the sessions and the name itself. This has been very hard work and we have had to seriously trust in the Lord, but there is now a (very) small group of parents who come regularly. We are very pleased to continue to welcome the pre-school who come to the sessions although not every week.

A variety of other things were done during these few months to try to encourage people in their faith including one or two displays on different aspects of prayer at the back of church and a Start course and an Advent course which were run in the autumn term. These both went well, although the Advent course was, sadly, not well attended. Several people from other churches were invited to come and share their faith in the 10.30am service and this was appreciated I think.

The ministry of the church continues to be very much about occasional services for people at significant times in their lives (baptisms, marriages and funerals) and we give thanks to God that we are still regarded as relevant there, but in terms of our relevance to the rest of life (which is after all most of it) we are clearly not seen as so very necessary, and we need to bravely and honestly face that, but hopefully too, because after all we have the best message in the world to proclaim! I would say myself that we need to continually reflect on what we are already doing in the light of whether it continues to be relevant to our overall mission (as we did with Harvest - making a collection of tinned and dried food to go to the Food Bank in Macclesfield instead of collecting fresh produce, and distributing plants grown at Rossendale to some of the older folk of the parish). A comment from one of the people who came to share her testimony with us about how lovely our church is and how she felt she was walking back into the past when she came through the door, 'onto the set of *Pride and Prejudice*' in fact, was a timely and prophetic reminder that church is not about engaging with things as they were, but as they are now. Our traditions are valued and loved and provide continuity and stability in an ever-changing world, but still we need to reflect carefully and prayerfully on how we might reach out with the good news of Christ in new

ways that are both imaginative and appropriate. There is so much that is good about our church, and we give thanks to God for that, but we have to remember that what we have now is not all that God longs to give us and all that we do is not all that God wants us to do.

A future beckons without our much loved Vicar and I would say that future needs to include more focus on building up our corporate prayer life first and foremost. We need to be working to build up our lay ministry base as well, put some further effort into evangelism and be open to new ways of providing 'church' for people. Preliminary discussions have already been held with Langley Methodists about having a joint Messy Church and maybe that could be one thing we could do to reach out to people who wouldn't want to come to traditional church.

Whatever the future though we can face it confidently and with hope because He is risen. He is risen indeed!

Vivien Gisby

WARDEN'S REPORT

If you have ever attended our Thursday morning service of Holy Communion you will have met Mary. Without Mary, the Sacrament in which we are drawn closest to Christ, that of the Communion, wouldn't run quite so smoothly at Sutton. Mary, you see, looks after the Communion linen. She is one of many people whose efforts ensure that St. James' continues to be a much looked after place of spiritual renewal and stunning tranquillity. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all of you who give of your time to the Church in whatever capacity, as members of the P.C.C., its sub-committees and working groups. We would also like to record our appreciation to those who facilitate and enrich our worship – the Sidespersons, the Choir and John our organist.

As Legal Guardians of the moveable furnishings, ornaments and Church plate, we wish to report that these remain in a good state of repair. The Church building and Church Hall receive constant indulgence from their respective committees, as does the Churchyard. Last year's Gift Day appeal was dedicated to addressing the problem of water entering the Church tower, and was met by a tremendous response from the community. Following extensive structural consultations, work on this should shortly be starting. We are also renewing the heating boiler and the floodlighting. We would also like to take this opportunity to make an appeal on behalf of the Churchyard Committee, for more volunteers to help them out on a regular or an occasional basis. If you are interested please contact Graham or one of us.

We have continued to hold a varied pattern of regular services. The numbers coming together each week to grow in faith has been maintained over the past year. We are also pleased to have welcomed several new families to our worship.

From August to February Taffy was seconded to be Acting Warden at Foxhill, the Diocesan conference and retreat centre. This was a refreshing and challenging role for him. The secondment also presented all of us with some challenges. We were very fortunate to have the help of Vivien, who not only 'stepped up to the pulpit' with great enthusiasm, but also undertook what transpired to be a higher number of funerals and baptisms over the period, as well as sustaining us throughout the busy Christmas period

In October there was a reunion of the former Sutton St James Youth Fellowship, which was followed by a short service in Church. This was attended by many former members from the 1960s and 1970s, who enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce. In November we hosted the Chester Diocesan Cranmer reading contest. This was judged by a distinguished panel including Bishop Peter. Our congratulations went to George Walker and Juliet Gorb, both of our Parish, who were placed first and second respectively. George went on to compete in the national finals in York.

Harvest and Christmas saw us rededicating our efforts to the needs of the wider community when we had a very heartening response from the congregation for donations to the local food bank. Our efforts were very much appreciated. A sub group of the P.C.C. will be reviewing our established pattern of raising funds for other organisations later this year.

We have continued to enjoy positive ecumenical relations with Langley Chapel, and the monthly lunches which are now held there are a consequence of our two Churches coming together to recognise a need in the community. We would like to thank Revd. David Stretton for his ministry over recent years. Over the past year he has facilitated the joint START Introduction to Christianity series, and the Lent course 'Drawing Closer to God.' We wish David and his family every happiness as he leaves Langley later this year to minister in the Lake District.

As you will be aware, Taffy has accepted the Bishop's invitation to become the permanent Warden at Foxhill. He will be leaving Sutton at the end of June. His ministry to Sutton and the wider community over fourteen years, including an extensive period as Rural Dean, has been extraordinary. His gifts are immeasurable. He has touched the lives of all of us and will leave an indelible mark on the Parish and beyond. Our love and prayers are with him and Rachel and all their family, as he enters the next phase of his Ministry

We are working with our Rural Dean Verena, and with Vivien and Jenny to plan ahead and to retain the familiar pattern of services throughout the Interregnum. As we write this, we remain unclear as to what the future pattern of ministry in the Parish will look like. Sutton has had a full-time Incumbant since its foundation, and we have always managed to pay our Parish 'share' to the Diocese. The wider Church however is reviewing its deployment of Clergy, and

many Parishes no longer have the 'benefit of (full time) Clergy'.

Meanwhile Taffy continues to lead our Services, including our midweek Communion. Why not come along one Thursday? Your might even meet Mary!

Audrey Fernyhough and John Evans

PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT

Since the 2012 APCM, the PCC has met 7 times with an average attendance of 13 members. The PCC had an extra meeting at the start of 2013 for a presentation by the Deanery Pastoral Review Committee.

Many thanks for all the help and guidance received during the last year with special thanks to Tim Kendal for his support.

Gwen Newman

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

CHILD PROTECTION

The Committee members are: Jane Sinclair Smith (chair), Mark Jacot (child protection coordinator), Gill Barber, Janet Mott, Rev. Taffy Davies, Liz Cusick, Richard Morris and Janet Bonsall. The Committee now has representatives from the three main church groups that involve children and young people; the young church, bell ringers and choir.

The Committee has met just once during the year to undertake its annual review of the child protection policy and procedures. These were reviewed in March 2013 taking into consideration revised guidance from the Diocese due to the change in the CRB process now known as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). A few amendments were made to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Mark Jacot as the child protection coordinator ensured compliance with the requirements for Criminal Record Bureau checks where relevant, taking into consideration the new DBS requirements.

Annual reviews of the three major groups (Choir, Young Church, Bell Ringers) that work with children have been completed. No significant issues were raised through the reviews, however a number of small changes have been made to improve the review process itself.

No issues or matters have been raised in respect of Child Protection to either the child protection coordinator, the Vicar or other members of the Committee. Child Protection is a standing item on the PCC agenda.

Jane Sinclair-Smith

CHURCHYARD

The Committee become the Churchyard Working Party on Wednesday evenings from May until September keeping the Churchyard looking tidyour list of jobs is extensive.

The new Churchyard and Garden of Remembrance hedges, a mix of hawthorn, holly & hazel mix, now matured, almost hide the wood fences, a sustained effort of replacing hedge sections has proved successful.

One major project in 2012 was to seriously prune our many Rhododendrons, just take a look around you will see many denuded trees & shrubs but we have confidence these will re-grow.

Testing and maintenance of vertical memorials continued last year, with great success. You will be pleased to know that many people have responded to our safety notices, making their family monuments safe and sound again. Our plan is that by the end of this year temporary supports will become history.

We employ the services of a contract gardener, Mr Adrian Stanton, who cuts and strims the Churchyard grass on a regular basis.

The set-aside initiative in the area adjacent to the Church path allowing wild flowers and grasses to become established is now a feature however over the years it is very interesting to watch the fruits of our labours. Anyone can contribute more wild flowers, patience is rewarded with success coming when you least expect it.

The remodelled Garden of Remembrance shrubbery had a makeover during 2012 now much improved. The G of R is accessible by taking a short walk to the far west end of the old Churchyard, down the slope, through a hole in the stone wall.

The Churchyard is home to many beautiful trees, many have TPO's attached. Some are fairly newly planted whilst others are more mature, our annual survey showed some remedial work needed, as you can well imagine there is no end to taking care of trees.

We are look forward to making a Churchyard Working Party "hands on" start on Wednesday 1st of May, when annual and new projects will be kick-started. More information will be posted in the parish magazine and weekly notices sheets.

The working party is always happy to welcome people who are prepared to roll up their sleeves and help out. Occasional help is welcomed too!

Volunteers please contact me on 01260 252594, or just come along any Wednesday evening from 7pm until 9pm.

Graham Smith

MAGAZINE

The Parish News continues to be well read by many people in and around Sutton interested in advertising or reporting on their events and businesses. It also travels far and wide around the Diocese. We welcome positive participation from anyone who feels that they have something to contribute!!

We produce around 700 copies of which 550 go to regular subscribers, the rest being given to other local churches or available for visitors at the back of church.

Many thanks to the team of people who supply ideas, write articles and send in information of events. Thanks to Leigh Proctor for proof reading, Christine Bullock who looks after the distribution, Angela Sawyer who looks after the finances and handles the advertising.

We need your ideas and input to make this a lively and interesting magazine.

Janet Parkinson

MISSION & UNITY

In 2004 this small committee was formed and has become something of a think tank, thinking around the plot, not being afraid of being provocative or adventurous and in so doing often producing ideas that were not infrequently taken forward for consideration by Taffy and our fellow PCC members on other committees.

Our purpose has always been to create opportunities for Christ to come close & touch the lives of young and old in our community and to that end, together with our friends at Langley Church, we have also run a number of events ourselves during this time. I think we all wish we could have been much more effective but these are just some of the events that have taken place beyond the walls of the church building: Safari suppers, a barbeque at the Dunstan, several Mammoth Book Sales, an Arts Festival, a Garden Festival, Ceilidhs, Services in other churches & events raising the profile of the Lubwe Wells Charity, several Christianity enquirer courses and our last venture which the two churches inaugurated and is now a well attended Community project - the Lunch Club. Some of these events also raised considerable amounts for charities and for this we have the community to thank.

Now it's goodbye from me as I am stepping down as chair and goodbye from the committee for the present. I would like to thank all the members of this committee for their friendship & for nearly ten years of service. I would also like to thank Taffy for encouraging all we did and for himself being a really vital member of our small group. During Taffy's absence these last months and during the coming interregnum we are ceasing to meet since it was felt that the energies of the church community is being stretched quite enough without any

input from us! For the future – well it is surely best to leave that in our Lord's hands.

Jenny Kendal

PREMISES

Apart from continuing routine maintenance there are two ongoing items on which to report.

Last year we reported the problem of dampness entering the Tower and west wall above the balcony. Since then there has been a heartwarming response through the gift day appeal, although the Architect's progress has not been as quick as we had hoped. However the delay enabled us to monitor the problem more closely as a result of which we were able to suggest an alternative to the Architect's originally recommended solution, which we believe to be better and far less disruptive. A detailed external survey of the Tower has been undertaken which also showed up areas of attention required to pointing, and a structural engineer has advised regarding the interior roof structure. A specification has now been prepared by the Architect and is out to Tender. If approved by the PCC, the scheme will need Diocesan approval through a Faculty before proceeding.

We continue to explore ways of improving the Church heating. A new initiative is being trialled by Graham in maintaining minimum and maximum levels of heat. Whilst investigating this with heating specialists, we were advised that the oil fired boiler needed urgent replacement. However, temporary repairs were undertaken which has given some respite enabling us to seek further advice and quotations and the PCC has approved its replacement. We are presently clarifying details of the quotes before seeking appropriate Diocesan approval. We had earlier obtained quotations for bringing gas supplies in to both the Church and Hall which the PCC decided not to pursue.

I would like to thank Vivien for her ready support and interest during Taffy's secondment to Foxhill.

Tony Greenham

OTHER GROUPS

BELL RINGERS

One of our regular visiting organists often takes the trouble to comment on how they enjoy hearing the bells as they walk up the path and how good the ringing is. We were very pleased when it was reported that one couple on a canal boat heard the bells and followed the sound so they could attend the service. We are glad when our efforts are appreciated since this is our primary function: to ring for Divine Service.

I feel we can be proud of the standard of our striking (the regularity of the bells with no clashing) and the variety of methods (the different patterns).

We liaised with the Jubilee organising committee and attempted a full peal on the Saturday morning of that weekend; others members of the band also rang a Quarter Peal for the Joint Service on the Sunday. We also attempted a quarter peal to mark the Olympic Games in this country. If requested, the ringers do their very best to ring the bells for other services; this year we again rang for the Hollinhey Junior Carol service and for a thanksgiving service. Many of the band enjoy ringing for Evensong and we ring on average two Sundays every month.

We completed six quarter peals over the last year, most in recognition of an event, including births and memory of a loved one. We have rung for all weddings that have requested the bells. We have been able to welcome visiting bands from other churches.

We held our AGM later than usual to allow for Taffy's return to the parish to chair the meeting, as we had not wanted to overload Vivien any more than was necessary.

While we have a very loyal band, we sometimes struggle to ring all the bells. There have been a few Wednesday practices called off due to lack of availability of ringers. It is therefore vital that new learners come forward if the tradition and standard of ringing are not to be lost. We would also love to hear from ex-ringers. Be it as a new learner or as a returning ringer, we would be happy to accept any level of commitment that you can offer; please do get in touch.

I would like to thank all the ringers for their commitment, time and friendship. Special mention must go to Peter in his role as Treasurer and electronic calendar keeper and to Tim who oversees the bells and keeps them functioning. However, ringing can only be done as a group. It really is a joint effort; many are happy to offer their time and talents, and as long as we have people willing to do this, the bells will continue to ring out over our communities reminding them of God's presence here.

Sarah Jacot Tower Captain

CHOIR

It is good to be able to report that Sutton St. James' Choir is fit and well, with support and enthusiasm undiminished. While things have not always gone to plan the members remain extremely loyal and a very happy group of people.

We were very sad to lose Vera Rochester last year but emigrating to New Zealand to be closer to her family was a good enough excuse. She continues to keep in touch and often remarks on how much she misses the Choir and Church fellowship.

Otherwise our numbers are stable with the added good fortune of another group of people I shall officially call

'Friends of Sutton St. James' Choir'. These good folk are regular service attenders but cannot come every week or to every practice but we are delighted to see them when they can. The social pressures on young and old alike are very different in our modern world and we are making adjustments accordingly to keep our Choir leading the services. Several of these friends took part at both Christmas and Easter. It is also a joy to have Vivien singing with us when she can. Anyone wishing to be included at any time is sure of a warm welcome - no auditions, just enthusiasm and a commitment to one or two practices before the day.

Our young choristers, Amy and Isabella, continue to make progress and an ever greater contribution to what we do. We would be delighted to welcome other young people to join them.

2012 was another good year for weddings and we also made a couple of visits to Chester. In addition, another highlight was a visit to see Taffy at Foxhill where we sang Evensong. As if that wasn't enough, we also had another special Evensong in St James' on Easter Sunday evening when we sang John Campbell-Kelly's new setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. We were only aware relatively recently that John was composing them. Everyone put their heart and soul into the practices and we hope to sing them again for St James' Day in July. How proud we felt to have a resident organist who also composes.

No report would be complete without saying some thank you's - first, to those members of the Choir who turn up so loyally week by week, rain or shine. Also to our friend Martin Potter, who gives our resident organist, John, a break from playing the organ from time to time. Without any of them our services would be considerably less tuneful.

Lastly, a huge thank you to Taffy for his staunch support for us over the many years he has been our Vicar. His generous encouragement has been much appreciated and we will miss him.

Sandra Moss

HANDBELLS

As usual, we are out and about mostly leading up to Christmas, but we were pleased to be part of the Queens Diamond Jubilee celebrations, where we batted down at Hollinhey for our ringing slot with patriotic tunes!

We also had fun at the start of the Barnaby Festival in June with the somewhat chaotic Bellissimo item arranged and conducted by Nick Smith. We were also earmarked to take part in a performance of Noyes Flude in March, but we were short of some bells and it was cancelled anyway!

We received donations of £823.09 in the lead up to Christmas, which was our all time record – but we turned out a lot for it! As usual it was donated to the

East Cheshire Hospice. Our thanks again to all who accommodated us both in and outside the parish and gave so generously. My special thanks go to the happy team of dedicated ringers, and we are always willing to turn out when needed.

Howard Reeves

HOBNOB

We continue to meet together on alternate Thursday afternoons.

During the past year, we have had a varied programme including talks, slide shows, musical entertainments and day trips. We again welcomed Hollinhey choir who brought smiles to all our faces with their delightful singing. We celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June and had a display of Olympic flags in July.

We are always happy to welcome newcomers to our group and wish to thank all who support us so regularly.

Greta Bailey

KNIT AND NATTER

After only about a year, this is a well established group with between 10 and 12 regulars who appreciate the opportunity to sit and chat, have tea and biscuits and often knit – but this is not essential.

We started with the task of knitting and co-ordinating the distribution of over 800 baby jumpers that came from far and wide to Africa and elsewhere.

More recently we have sent hats for premature babies to the local hospital, cardigans and blankets to foster homes in Lancashire and blankets made from knitted squares to Salvation Army and other charities. If you only want to knit 8" squares we have one member who likes making up the blankets

Come along and join us – if we become too big we may have to form two Knit and Natters.

Janet Parkinson and Janet Bonsall

MACCLESFIELD DEANERY SYNOD REVIEW 2012-2013

Attendances at the years 4 meetings averaged 26 members representing an average of 13 of the deaneries 19 parishes. Synod attendance has remained steady now for 4 years though the attendance of 47 at the February 28th Synod was increased by 20 visitors. This was a welcome response to the invitation to an this open meeting. Parishes around the deanery host Synod on average once every 4 years and this cycle of visits to each parish continues. Synod are very grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality given at all places we visit in the Deanery.

Rev Canon Taffy Davies stepped down at the end of

June 2012 after 7 years as Rural Dean and was succeeded by Rev Verena Breed who was installed on 19th September at Wildboardclough.

Synod members and visitors have heard speakers from clergy and secular roles on a wide range of topics and Synod business has covered several key issues over the 12 months as summarised below.

May 3rd Synod at St.James' Sutton focused on the preliminary report from the Pastoral Review committee and members heard the wide range of views expressed from all parishes that were represented. Tribute was recorded to Rev Canon Taffy Davies term as Rural Dean and his friendly accessible style of leadership. Notice was given of parishes plans for celebrating Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee. 28 attended from 14 parishes and 6 apologies

September 11th visited All Saints Macclesfield, and were addressed by Gail Robinson, Diocesan Chaplain for the Deaf and Disabled. All present benefited from learning how they might improve accessibility and involvement for those with living disabilities in their congregations. Rev. Verena Breed lead her first Synod as Rural Dean and thanked Rev Dave Mock for pioneering a new worship form opening Synod which shares something of the host church communities worship pattern with all the Deanery. Results of the triennial elections to Diocesan Synod were announced with names of clergy and lay members who will represent the Deanery from November 2012. 28 attended from 13 parishes and 6 apologies

November 15th at St. Johns', Macclesfield Synod members heard Stephen Regan, Diocesan Director of Communications, share his professional experience in improving our communication skills. An extensive list of examples from his experience with the media was well received by the rather low turnout at this Synod. An item raised by Prestbury suggesting the celebration of a Deanery Choral Evensong was adopted and may lead to a "Deanery Choir" with a service in spring 2013. 19 attended from 13 parishes and 14 apologies

February 28th Synod visited St. Johns', Macclesfield at successive meetings and heard Rev Canon Trevor Dennis, well known writer and teacher, as he "Brought the Bible to Life" with powerful, engaging stories that demonstrated the power of biblical story telling in encouraging faith amongst all ages. Prof Tony Berry reported on the General Synod sessions debates about Women in the Episcopacy. Interest was high in this very difficult matter and further progress to resolve differences is keenly awaited. 47 attended from 13 parishes and 9 apologies. This included 20 visitors.

The full text for all the Deanery meetings and presentations is available from your parishes Deanery representatives.

The Deanery Choral Evensong, initiated from Prestbury's suggestion at Nov Synod, was held at St.Peters' Prestbury on Sat 23rd March 2013.

The next Deanery Synod will be on Wed May 1st at St. Christophers', Pott Shrigley, when the meeting will start with a Deanery Eucharist celebrated by Bishop Robert Atwell.

David Marriott

PRAISE AND PLAY

Please see Associate Vicar's report.

Vivien Gisby

1ST SUTTON SCOUT AND GUIDE GROUP INCORPORATING MAORI EXPLORER SCOUT UNIT

2012 has once again been an extremely busy year for the Scout and Guide Group.

Our Scout and Guide sections are full to capacity and thriving with waiting lists in the Rainbow and Beaver sections. The young people enjoy a full, balanced programme of indoor and outdoor activities running week in and week out throughout the year, catering for boys and girls from the age of five up to young people of eighteen.

2012 saw the Group present our "Gang Time" show. All the section meetings were taken over by rehearsals from Christmas to February half term. The curtains opened to two packed houses and some memorable performances.

Every member of the Group who wants to perform in the show has the opportunity and we had huge numbers involved from all seven sections, so I would like to say a huge thank you to all the adults, both leaders and parents, who were involved in making the show a great success and a very significant fund raiser.

Once again we had good numbers of teams taking part in the 'Macc Hike' a two day hike for teams of two in unknown terrain, all equipment and food has to be carried! The Maori Explorer, Scout and Guide teams did very well. This is followed by the County wide Cheshire Hike, again held over two days. To finish this is in its self a great achievement and our teams all did exceptionally well with a Maori Explorer team bringing back a County trophy.

Maori Explorers continued with Duke of Edinburgh Award training and expeditions during the year and are progressing well.

Brownies and Cubs held excellent adventure camps in the spring and Guides were out in force at Gradbach. The Scout troop joined forces with 1st Congleton and attended a National Jamboree in Denmark where they met up with the District Explorers. All were hosted by Danish Scout troops and joined in multi-national activities and had experiences they will always

remember.

Group camp was held in September at Barnwood Scout Camp and we dived into a maritime sea theme. We saw Pirates, Mermaids, Shipbuilding and all things to do with fish. The camp is truly one of the year's highlights and was once again a great weekend enjoyed by all.

In Sutton we offer a high quality well balanced range of activities both in our weekly meetings and when we are out and about. We have once again made excellent use of our wonderful HQ and are very pleased that it is being used by the local community on a regular basis. The Scout and Guide Group would not exist without a large team of adults. These include, the Executive Committee overseeing the group, the army of parent helpers who support us week-by-week and of course, the section leaders, who plan and deliver quality weekly meetings, camps and so much more. I cannot praise them, or thank them enough for all they do to keep the group going,

I am pleased to report that we now have a new enthusiastic fund raising committee who are planning events for 2013-2014. Once again a huge thanks to those who have stepped down in 2012 after so many years.

I would also this year like to mention our young leaders who are fourteen to seventeen year old Explorers who give up their time to help with the younger sections and are a growing number of enthusiastic teenagers whose help is invaluable to the leaders.

We are a strong team that we feel is working very well, however we are currently desperately in need of more adult helpers. Any help is warmly welcomed, if you have a particular skill to offer or fancy leading, fundraising or supporting a section on the odd occasion, I can guarantee you would have a lot of fun! Please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the group.

Phil Cusick GSL

YOUNG CHURCH

Sutton St. James Young Church continues to meet each Sunday morning during the 10 30am service. We gather in church at 10 30am joining the congregation until after the gradual hymn, to which the children play along on their instruments. We then go to the church hall for our time together.

Last September we embarked on a new venture. We launched "Family Circle". The time we spend in the hall each Sunday morning is now recognised as a time for families to be together. We all share the theme of the day or season through story telling, prayer & singing. We respond to the story with an activity, usually art/craft, baking, planting etc. Grown ups & children working together. We have a snack or "feast time" & news. Family Circle meets each week in the

church hall except for the first Sunday when we all stay in church for the Family Worship Service.

We have about 25 children & their families on our register and look forward to welcoming new members & visitors.

We have 7 leaders who regularly work in Young Church. A huge thanks for all their hard work & commitment. We are very grateful for all the help Angela Weaver continues to give us when needed. I would also like to thank our teenagers, who have been a great help over the last 12 months. Especially Matthew who has been a great, unfailing support to our weekly meetings. Matthew went off to University last September and we want to wish him well in all he does in the future.

The Young Church celebrates the regular festivals in the church year, Rogation Tide, Pentecost, St. James Day, Harvest festival. This year we again enjoyed re-telling the Christmas Story in church. A huge thank you to all the Mums and Dads and children who took part.

At Easter time we had a very busy "Good Friday Family Activity morning". We led the way through the Easter week story using all the corners of church to set up special activity stations. Everyone found it a very special time to experience Easter together. All the children had their feet washed by Hayley!

On Easter Day we made the Easter Garden at Family Circle & presented it at the end of the morning service.

We held two jumble sales during the last year. From the money raised we are able to keep our Young Church completely self financing. We buy new books and resources for our meetings and events, finance special events and give each of our children a gift of a book once a year. We sponsor 2 children through World Vision. The jumble sales are a wonderful time of fellowship. Now we have a contact with Andrew Davies and the Wythenshawe Trust nothing is wasted. He takes everything that is left and is able to recycle it to the needy in or around Manchester or he takes it to hospitals and orphanages around the world, helping sick and poor children and families.

All these things could not happen without the children and their families who are part of our Young Church or without the tremendous help of many, many people in our congregation and community.

Thank you for everything YOU do and we hope you join us again for the another year of activities, having fun and fellowship together.

Gill Barber