



## Reports from Committees and Organisations Sutton St. James' Annual Parochial General Meeting 27th April 2014

### INTERIM MINISTER'S REPORT

We have now been without a Vicar since June 2013 and the Church is in the position of wending its way through a very long vacancy. The services and midweek ministry all carry on more or less as usual, and people still come to church for the occasional services. Grateful thanks are due to everyone who is making sure this all happens, and particularly our Churchwardens.

I'm glad to be able to report that the Church is remaining steady in numbers, which is reassuring as people can drift away during a vacancy. One new person has joined the 10.30 service.

We had put a good deal of effort into building up Praise and Play during the Vicar's secondment (and trying to link it in with our Baptism ministry). We had some small success, but we found that the people who joined went back to work very soon which made building community quite difficult. Anyone coming along as a result of our policy to invite people to church before we booked the baptism would put in just the one appearance in order that the baptism could go ahead. There were, in the end, just two regular mums, so we took the decision, sadly, to close Praise and Play down. Helen Reeves is continuing to go into the preschool to read stories to the children in order to maintain our connection with that group and maybe in the future a new group for parents and young children could be formed. On a much more positive note we have started a Messy Church which is proving to be fairly popular. We have it every two months and the idea is to reach out to those who wouldn't normally come to church and to provide a welcoming and relaxed place to be where a bible story can be shared and where there is the opportunity to do crafts and sing some songs together. The St James version of Messy Church is very sociable indeed, and tea and cakes are served throughout which makes for a very convivial atmosphere. Regular members of the congregation are also welcome and indeed it wouldn't be the same without them, so thank you to all who have supported this new venture. Many thanks are also due to those who are sharing their enthusiasm and considerable talents for making crafts, and in particular Janet Parkinson who is the master mind behind this endeavour.

We are currently in the season of Lent as I write this. Our Lent lunches have been less well attended over the last few years than they used to be and since we no longer have access to the vicarage it was decided to have just one lunch on a Saturday in the Church Hall. Audrey Fernyhough and Trudi Ray organised it and there was a fairly good number of people who came along and enjoyed the soup and a time of fellowship.

We were particularly pleased to welcome a church member from Bosley, another from Wildboardclough and two members from Langley Methodists, as well as our Vicar-in-waiting. We were also pleased that the lunch made over £100 which we will donate to Christian Aid.

I have to say I continue to be a little disappointed that there is but faint interest in coming along to Bible study groups and the Lent course which we ran with the Methodists was unfortunately discontinued due to lack of numbers. However, (and again on a more positive note) all the copies of a little booklet which I wrote (and which included some suggestions for prayer and a series of reflections on the main gospel reading for each day) were taken by church members, so I was encouraged by that and wondered if it might be the way forward to give a bit more in-depth Bible teaching than is possible in the weekly sermons.

There really isn't much more to say. There is quite a different feel to the Church this time round without a vicar, but I think we remain reasonably hopeful as we wait. We are still not doing enough to build up our prayer life as a church, so we have just started having regular prayer meetings specifically to pray for the vacancy. Whether or not you are able to come to these, I would urge you to continue to remember St James in your prayers, the churches with which we will soon be joined and our new Vicar Verena Breed.

*Vivien Gisby*

### WARDENS' REPORT

We are honoured and privileged to have served as your Churchwardens at a time of Vacancy, and throughout the period of the most significant pastoral reorganisation in the history of St James. We would thank all of you for having the grace and trust to have encouraged us in our work. Most of the work is done by others of course. We would like to record our gratitude to the Sidespersons, and to all who give freely of their time and expertise to maintaining and cleaning the Church, Church Hall and Churchyard.

Following a very generous response to last year's Gift Day appeal we were able to replace the Church boiler, which had become ineffective and uneconomical. The new boiler is much more controllable, and enables the required temperatures for Services to be set in advance. Special thanks to Graham Smith who programmed our weekly heating needs.

We have been troubled for years by rainwater coming through the roof above the balcony. The proceeds of the Gift Day appeal in 2012 were assigned towards the cost of resolving this problem - a not inconsiderable sum. Much time and effort were put into drawing up a

detailed schedule of work. Unfortunately the Diocese was unforthcoming in issuing the necessary Faculty to enable the work to be done, and we have had to endure the onslaught of another extremely wet Winter, which has caused further damage to the plaster work above the balcony. Thanks mainly to the perseverance of Tony Greenham, the Chairman of our Premises Committee, the necessary permission has now been given, and work should commence after Easter. There will be some restrictions in place around the Church during the period of the work, and these will be notified.

We are due the Quinquennial inspection of the Church this year. A new architect has been appointed to undertake this, and the PCC looks forward to co-operating with him in identifying and prioritising any further work needed to maintain the integrity of the structure of our Church.

As custodians of all the moveable Church Furnishings, Fabrics and Plate, we wish to report that these remain, on the whole, in good order. For the past two years, members of the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, with the guidance of Alan Dinnis, have been undertaking an exercise to catalogue and detail every structural feature of the Church, and also it's contents. They are due to issue their report soon. This will provide the most comprehensive record of the Church, it's features, and it's contents ever undertaken.

We both have a special affinity with the Churchyard Committee, which we are pleased to report has attracted some additional people to it's working party which meets on Wednesday evenings from May to September from 7-9pm. A major project has been the renovation of the Bier House (adjoining the Church Hall), to make it into a more usable storage area for our equipment. This work was undertaken mainly by Harry Armstrong. Harry's sudden death last September came as a shock to everyone at St James, and in the local community. He will be revered and remembered for his dedication to the Church and Community in so many ways. Our thoughts remain with Lin and family.

Our current Interregnum was of course precipitated by the appointment of Taffy as Warden Spiritual at Foxhill. The continuing vibrancy and diversity of our Worship, and our active ecumenical relations with other Churches owes much to his leadership. To have served as his last Churchwardens in this Parish was indeed a privilege and a pleasure.

PCC members and the Church Trustees have endured several lengthy meetings over the year to consider in detail the proposals from the Deanery Pastoral Review Committee regarding the formation of the new Benefice. The discussions have not always been without contention, and we would like to thank the PCC Chair, Jane Sinclair-Smith for her sensitivity and agility in guiding the deliberations.

We want to maintain absolute transparency about the current situation. In this spirit we offer the following update about developments as we understand them to

date (3rd April 2014). Firstly the PCC/Church Trustees have agreed that Sutton St James become part of a united Benefice with Wincle St Michael, Wildboarclough St Saviour, and Bosley St. Mary. The Priest in Charge designate for the new Benefice is Rev. Verena Breed (currently Priest in Charge of Wincle, Wildboarclough, Bosley and North Rode, and also Rural Dean). An Associate Priest will also be appointed. The current weekly Services at Sutton will be maintained. A working party with two representatives from each Church has been established to consider the practicalities and financial aspects of the proposed Benefice in more detail. Our representatives are Tim Kendal and David Marriot.

No firm date has yet been set for the official formation of the Benefice, or for the Induction Service for Verena as Priest in Charge. In the meantime Sutton St. James will remain in Interregnum, and the Churchwardens will continue to assume responsibility for the Church. The existing Vicarage and adjoining Garden are owned by the Chester Diocese, **not** the Parish. The Diocese is proposing to build a modern family house within the bounds of the existing vicarage garden to accommodate the Priest in Charge. This will be funded by the sale of the existing vicarage, which is no longer considered fit for purpose. The decision regarding planning permission for a new vicarage will be made by the local Council in mid April. Any updates on developments will be announced as they occur.

A brief perusal of the Register of Services suggests that on the whole the numbers attending Worship has been maintained over the year. A new forum for fellowship has been developed through the all age family activity afternoons. We thank Janet and Vivien for this initiative. The Worship Committee has had exploratory discussions about reviewing the current pattern of our Main Services. No substantive changes to our present arrangements will be made however until Verena is in place as Incumbent. Our links with Rossendale remain strong, and it has been a pleasure to welcome the staff, as well as the residents to our Services. Our associations with, and support for the Pre-School and for Hollinhey are integral to our Mission, and a highlight of the year were the 'sell out' Nativity events held in Church.

Our inevitable preoccupation this year with Benefices, Service Rotas, Faculties and Roofs could easily have detracted us from our purposes as a Church, especially our outreach work. Because of your kindness this has not occurred. Harvest time saw us again, in conjunction with Hollinhey, making a substantial donation to the Macclesfield Food Bank. The PCC has also maintained it's practice of charitable giving, and has responded generously to particular requests for specific grants from the 'Findlow' fund. We recently had a successful Lent Lunch which raised funds for Christian Aid.

We must also remain responsive to developments in the wider Church. We hope and pray that the first Women Bishops will soon be appointed, once the

General Synod has finally agreed the procedure for this. Our Suffragan, Bishop Robert, is soon to be translated to become Bishop of Exeter, and our best wishes go with him. We look forward to welcoming his eventual replacement to officiate at Sutton (especially if it is a woman!)

The current Interregnum at Sutton St James differs substantially from any previous vacancy in two ways. Firstly, it is longer than any previous one. Secondly, one might argue that most of the time, certainly most Sundays, it doesn't feel like we are vacant at all! This of course is due to the presence of Vivien, who has over the years gone through her own translation from Curate to Associate Vicar, and is now also Stipendary Interim Minister. In addition to leading most Services, Vivien has also conducted many weddings, funerals and baptisms. She has also done extensive pastoral visiting. This is in addition to her roles as Diocesan Warden of Pastoral Workers, and teaching the Foundations for Ministry course. We are also blessed to have the ongoing commitment of Jenny, our Reader. Together they have made our roles much easier, in that we have not had to scramble round to find a different Priest each week. We would however express our gratitude to those Priests who are periodically helping us out at present, particularly David and Gary.

Finally we would like to thank Gwen, our PCC Secretary, for her unstinting devotion, in what has been a busy year. We are also pleased to welcome back Rebecca, who has taken on some of the admin work.

We commend this Report to you, and will be pleased to answer any questions you may have at the Annual Parish Meeting.

*Audrey Fernyhough and John Evans*

## **PCC SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Since the 2013 APCM, the PCC has met 9 times with an average attendance of 13 members. The number of meetings has increased due to discussions relating to the Interregnum period, the establishment of the new joint benefice and other related matters. Since May 2013, following an invitation from the PCC, those Trustees (i.e. Patrons) who are not on the PCC have been present at the meetings in a non-voting capacity. The PCC also attended a meeting with the three other Benefice parishes' PCCs in December 2013 which was called by The Archdeacon of Macclesfield.

Many thanks for all the help and guidance received during the last year with special thanks to Tim Kendal and David Marriott for their 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, 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 met just once during the year on 2nd March to undertake its annual review of the child protection policy and procedures. A few amendments were made to the risk assessment document to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

Mark Jacot as the child protection coordinator ensured compliance with the requirements for checks to be made through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme for those whose ministry means they have regular contact time with children. He has been in discussion with Janet Parkinson about the requirements in relation to the new Family Days and no additional checks are required.

Annual reviews of the three major groups (Choir, Young Church, Bell Ringers) that work with children have been completed and no issues were raised.

No matters have been raised in respect of child protection to the child protection coordinator, the Interim Minister or other members of the Committee during the year and child protection is a standing item on the PCC agenda.

Children and their families continue to safely enjoy all that Sutton St James has to offer.

*Jane Sinclair-Smith*

### **CHURCH HALL**

It has been quite a year for the Church Hall!

In March 2013 we discovered we had a big problem with mice, particularly in the loft where lots of jumble and paper was nibbled. Sudden Strike, the company that keeps the Scout/Guide HQ clear of mice was contacted. They found evidence of mice in most areas and put down bait boxes. We took out a contract with them to check the premises at regular intervals and re-bait as necessary and feel that the problem is now under control.

At the end of the month water was dripping into the storeroom over the back door. A slit was found in the rubberised covering on the flat roof, probably as a result of having had the lead stolen at the end of 2011. A patch was stuck over it and the gable end was re-pointed. There was also water coming through the ceiling into the main hall. The roofer thought it was snow, which had blown up under the slates and

advised leaving it to see if it dried up. It did and stopped, but the ceiling was stained in two patches.

In April the hall was given a deep clean by Team Mean Clean.

Pre-school asked if they could apply for a grant to upgrade the white goods in the kitchen. Unfortunately the application was turned down, but the PCC agreed that we should go ahead and they would stand the cost of refurbishment.

In August Creative Kitchens of Macclesfield created 2 new cupboards, replaced all the cupboard doors and handles, the sinks and worktops, and installed new cooker, fridge and microwave.

In October water was seen to be running out from under the skirting boards near the bottom of the stairs. After two weeks of trying to find where it was coming from the wall above it was broken into and, at a height of about 12 feet, a piece of plastic pipe was found to have been gnawed by the mice and was leaking. A plumber came and repaired it. (Our insurance doesn't cover rodent damage!) Robert Bailey put a wood panel over the damaged wall, which can be removed if necessary.

In December a storm brought down a section of the decorative bargeboard on the front of the building. No action has yet been taken as other events took over!

In January 2014 Hilditch Bros painted the wood panel and the stained patches on the ceiling. At almost the same time, a large section of the plasterboard ceiling in the storeroom fell down. The wood above it had to be pulled down to make it safe. Several roofing contractors looked at it and quoted for new rubberoid covering, new boarding, some timber that needs replacing, a new plasterboard ceiling and replastering. We have awarded the contract to ACE Roofers and hope they can do the work in the Easter holidays.

An on-going problem is the curtains, particularly the big ones at the gable ends, which are constantly coming un-hooked or locking. They are so high and heavy we have to get them fixed by Curtain Services (Macclesfield) who say the reason they have to come so often is that people try to drag the curtains open/shut without using the pull cords.

We are sometimes asked why repairs take so long. One reason is that we need at least 2 quotes for every job and it isn't always easy to find contractors who are able, or willing or have the time to do it. It was particularly difficult to get a second quote for the flat roof job. When we need to claim on our insurance that takes time as well, whilst they check the quotes and a loss assessor comes to see the problem.

*Christine Smith*

## **CHURCHYARD**

From May until September the Committee takes on a

more practical role as the 'Churchyard Working Party', gathering every Wednesday evening to carry out many projects to maintain and tidy the grounds.

The hedges round the new Garden of Remembrance, a mix of hawthorn, holly & hazel, are quite mature now with one section needing additional planting.

A major project, carried over from 2012, was to prune our many rhododendrons. Just take a look around, you will see many denuded trees & shrubs but we have confidence these will re-grow.

Checking and maintaining our many vertical memorials continued last year. However, response to our safety notices asking families to take responsibility for safety has noticeably slowed. Our plan to consign temporary supports to history didn't actually happen, and unfortunately yet more work is required.

We employ the services of a contract gardener who cuts and strims the churchyard grass on a regular basis.

The set-aside initiative in the area adjacent to the church path, which allows wild flowers and grasses to establish themselves, remains a feature. 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. (*Please consult us before planting*)

The churchyard is home to many beautiful trees, some of which have Tree Preservation Orders attached. We took the advice of our local tree surgeon and sadly had to fell two of the Glebe field trees this year. Two more were dead-branched and a further tree suffered from the recent storms, blowing down and breaking branches off neighbouring trees.

On Wednesday 9th April we had a big clear-up of Christmas wreaths which had not already been removed from graves, which was a huge task for the small regular team, and thanks to everyone who helped.

On Wednesday 7th of May, the Churchyard Working Party will make a "hands on" start with routine and new projects kick-started.

The working party is always happy to welcome people who are prepared to roll up their sleeves and help out on a regular or occasional basis. Volunteers can contact me on 01260 252594, or just come along on a Wednesday evening anytime between 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 our proof readers, Christine Bullock who looks after the distribution, Angela Sawyer who looks after the finances and handles the advertising.

There may be some changes during the year as we anticipate the creation of the new Benefice.

*Janet Parkinson*

## **PREMISES**

Last years report covered two main ongoing items - the Church boiler and the Church Tower.

During the year the Church boiler has been replaced with a new oil fired boiler of increased capacity and efficiency at a cost of £4,775 plus vat. Consent was given by the Archdeacon under the "minor works" provisions, which avoided the need to seek a Faculty. Independent of this a new control unit has been installed.

The Church Tower continues to exercise us, but hopefully an end is in sight. During the year the tenders were received and, following approval by the PCC a Faculty application was submitted by us to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) in September for approval to the work based upon a cost of £11,080 plus vat. For reasons I have difficulty in reconciling, it has taken until now to eventually receive the DAC's approval on March 11th.

The Petition for a Faculty has now been submitted to the Diocesan Chancellor which should be issued by the Registrar at the end of the public consultation period assuming no objections. The Public Notices have been put up and the plans, specification etc. are on deposit for inspection. This Public Notice period ended on April 10th. In anticipation that no delays will be encountered a provisional start date for the work has been agreed with the contractors of April 28th.

The scheme for which approval is sought would, it is hoped, deal with the disposal of rainfall being driven against the Tower's south east corner where the problems have appeared, together with overhaul of the remaining lead work and defective pointing to the stonework. I should stress that it would not alleviate any dampness entering through saturation of the stonework for which no solution can really be offered. This has not been a problem until the extreme rainfall encountered in both the last two winters.

The Church's Quinquennial inspection is now overdue, although instructions were given some time ago. The Architect has indicated his intention to undertake this in conjunction with the supervision of the tower work, so

this inspection is now imminent.

To the Church Hall there have been some problems to the flat roof area. Some work of re-pointing and repair to the parapet has alleviated this but a more serious leak has been traced to damage to the roof covering and quotations for the replacement of this section are around £1,500 plus vat. Instructions have been given for the work which it is hoped will be met by Insurance.

We are grateful to the PCC for their understanding whilst trying to progress these items and also to Vivien for her continuing support and interest during the Interregnum.

*Tony Greenham*

## **OTHER GROUPS**

### **BELL RINGERS**

Our primary function is to ring for Divine Service; we also try to foster the art of bell ringing in this Church, to ensure this tradition is sustainable here in order to take the Church's message out into the community.

We ring every Sunday morning on which there is a service in St James. We ring for Evensong when we have sufficient numbers. We sometimes attempt quarter peals prior to Evensong. We rang for all weddings for which bells were requested and have welcomed a few visiting bands. We held an Open evening for the Scouts when all the assembled company tried ringing backstrokes under supervision. We held our AGM in March.

Socially, we had a 'Ding and Dine' at Mobberley, joined by the wider ringing family contingent. We challenged the choir to summer games and a shared picnic/sausage sizzle. We met for Christmas drinks and nibbles chez Moss! We always plan a meal out in Holy Week.

We aimed to mark Taffy's departure with a peal; in the end we scored a good quarter. We presented him with an engraved tankard and an appropriate range of beer. In the summer we entered the District Striking Competition. We were delighted that one of the Scouts expressed a desire to learn to ring; 2 more learners arrived as a direct result. Sarah has led the basic teaching starting at 8 pm on a Wednesday. They are then integrated in to the normal practice and are supported by the rest of the band. One Wednesday we cancelled the practice here to join other ringers at a local District event. More recently the Prestbury ringers have been joining us once a month as building work continues in their own church.

Peter Newman works hard in his role as Treasurer and electronic-calendar keeper. Tim Hughes ensures all our 'hardware' (in the bell chamber) and 'software' (the ropes) are in sound working order. Others work quietly behind the scenes, stepping in to help.

I would like to thank all the ringers for their commitment. The commitments can sometimes be considerable so we are always looking for new recruits, returning ringers or people simply interested in finding out more. One of our recent recruits recently summed it up, "I enjoy bell-ringing because as well as learning a good skill the atmosphere is very friendly and is a good opportunity for being social. You are doing something *in* the community and you feel like you are doing something *for* the community as well."

*Sarah Jacot, Tower Captain*

## **CHOIR**

We have had several significant birthdays among members of the Choir this year! - least said, soonest mended. Having said that, they continue to remain loyal. The atmosphere in the vestry is as robust as ever, though we still miss Taffy's towering presence.

We were sorry to lose one of our young choristers who moved out of the area before Christmas. Numbers otherwise are stable although we remain keen for anyone with a voice to come and join us. The Friends of Sutton St James' Choir who sing with us from time to time to support us for the 'big occasion' are worth their weight in gold. We sincerely thank them while appreciating they cannot commit to weekly practises.

One of our biggest challenges during 2013 was to rethink carol singing which has been going on in the area for over a century.

Whatever we decided we knew wouldn't please everyone - we all get stuck with what has gone before but in the meantime, we are all getting older and sadly less able to do what we used to do. It was necessary to put our forces and capabilities first. Suffice it to say, our visit to the town centre for two sessions of carols, exceeded our wildest expectations, not least because of all the interest shown by passers by. It will definitely be repeated. Singing in certain 'spots' in the area will be nipped and tucked! A packed church for the Carol Service was a real bonus.

Sadly, we didn't sing at as many weddings during 2013 and it looks the same for 2014 so the Choir income has dropped. We haven't spent any money on new music to conserve our resources. During the Interregnum we are continuing to lead the services with the support of our organist John - but also with the help of Martin Potter who plays from time to time and is much appreciated.

We are looking forward to another visit to Foxhill to visit Taffy and sing Evensong in the chapel, probably in June. Anyone wishing to take up a place on the coach and come with us will be very welcome.

*Sandra Moss*

## **HANDBELLS**

A fairly quiet time for us during the year, but we have

continued to meet and have fun practicing. We have replaced a set of handles on the biggest 2-bells as on going maintenance, and we are gradually replacing the whole set as needed.

We were asked to give 2-groups of scouts at 3rd Macclesfield instruction in the art of handbell ringing earlier in the year, which seemed to go down very well. Also we gave support for an emerging group of ringers at Rainow with some of our tunes and our experience. It was the turn of the bells to be scrutinised last year as part of the NADFAS inspection at our Church.

We received donations of £938.42 for our ringing in the lead up to Christmas, which was collected for the East Cheshire Hospice. This was augmented by a generous donation to make it up to £1000, which was gratefully acknowledged by the team and the ECH. My special thanks go to our team of dedicated ringers for going the extra mile at this busy time.

*Howard Reeves*

## **HOBNOB**

We have continue to meet on alternate Thursday afternoons throughout the past year and enjoyed some interesting talks, slide shows and home grown entertainment. We had three days out, including a visit to Foxhill for afternoon tea with Taffy.

Our numbers have been somewhat depleted recently, but we look forward to another year of happy Hobnobbing.

We thank all who support us so regularly and extend a warm welcome to anyone wishing to join us.

*Greta Bailey*

## **KNIT AND NATTER**

A group of us continue to knit and natter every other Monday at The Church House from 2.15pm.

We continue producing blankets from knitted squares – some of which have gone to Syria, to The Salvation Army and other local charities. We have also knitted baby's hats which a local doctor has taken to Africa for vulnerable newborn babies.

Come along and join us even if you only want to chat – if we become too big we may have to form two Knit and Natters.

*Janet Parkinson and Janet Bonsall*

## **MACCLESFIELD DEANERY SYNOD REVIEW 2013-2014**

The last 12 months 4 meetings had average attendances of 46, with 15 of the deaneries 19 parishes represented at each meeting. Statistics can however conceal facts, so beware these numbers! Our May 1st meeting at Pott Shrigley attracted 97 attendees, reflecting keen interest in both the Deanery

Pastoral Review Committees report and the Deanery Eucharist with Bishop Robert Atwell as the celebrant, see below. General levels of attendance have remained steady at around 28. Though this is quite modest, there has been good lay attendance and most of our parishes have been represented at every meeting. We continue to visit different parishes so that all are hosting us at least once in 5 years. In this way we learn something about other churches in the Deanery through their opening worship style and their words of welcome. One steadfast aspect of this progression is the unfailingly warm welcome given to us by the volunteers who provide and serve tea/coffee and refreshments before every meeting. Thank-you to you all from your Deanery "Visitors".

Again we have heard speakers from clergy and secular roles cover many different subjects and Synod business over the 12 months is summarised below.

#### May 1st, St. Christophers, Pott Shrigley

Every parish in the deanery had nominated someone to present their Parishes response to the Deanery Pastoral Committees report that had been circulated and discussed at PCC meetings in the previous month. In his summary Bp Robert emphasized how important it was that all had listened to others views. The Rural Dean thanked all for the time, thought and attention they had given to the evenings proceedings. Like all Deanery Synod meetings a full copy of the notes has been circulated to all members for dissemination in their parishes. 97 attended from 19 parishes.

#### Sep 11th, Holy Trinity Church Centre, Rainow

Ruth Mock, Diocesan Family Life Officer was our main speaker. In her role Ruth's aims include equipping and preparing parishes as they respond to the specific issues faced by struggling families in today's society. In her address courses and resources were highlighted to help achieve this aim with slides and video clips accessible on the Diocesan web site. This meeting marked the retirement of Lawrence Robinson after excellent, faithful service as our Deanery Lay Chairman since 1995. His successor, Richard Raymond, was welcomed to the role. Members were asked to support the treasurer's proposal for a Deanery Levy at the rate of 0.2% of the 2014 Parish Share. This was agreed unanimously and should fund Deanery expenses to the end of 2016. 24 attended from 13 parishes with 11 apologies.

#### Nov 20th, Prestbury CofE school

Our Parish Development officer Rev Ian Rumsey gave a clear, graphic presentation about Growth Action Planning (GAP) over the last 5 years and after a lively Q&A session we heard from Rev John Knowles – Warden of Readers and Rev Vivien Gisby – Warden of Pastoral Workers, about the opportunities for lay people in these two increasingly important areas of ministry to enable GAP objectives to be achieved. 30 attended from 13 parishes with 9 apologies.

#### Feb 26th, St. Peters, Windmill St. Macclesfield

Two speakers, providing a contrast between Urban and

Rural situations, showed how similar many of the difficulties faced by the different populations are. John Weir CEO of Cheshire Neighborhood Credit Union gave helpful insight on CNCU's work and how Church members can help, whilst Rev Sue Hawkins a member of the Agricultural Chaplaincy team told us how much help the farming community need and how this is being provided through a team of 14 mainly volunteer staff. 19 attended (plus 12 visitors) from 15 parishes with 10 apologies.

The full text for all Deanery meetings and presentations is available from your parishes Deanery representatives. All meetings are Open meetings and visitors are very welcome.

A Deanery Choral Evensong, was held at St.Pauls' Macclesfield on Sat 22nd March 2013 at 5:00pm.

The next Deanery Synod will be on Wed May 14th at St. Mary the Virgin, Bosley starting with a Deanery Eucharist at 7:00pm with Synod meeting in Bosley school at 8:00pm.

*David Marriott*

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

2013-14 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 out door activities running week in and week out throughout the year. We cater for boys and girls from the age of five up to young people of eighteen.

Outdoor activities are still a high priority for the group and we had good representation in both the Macc Hike and Cheshire Hike, which are overnight hikes involving navigational skills, congratulations to all who took part.

All our older sections once again held weekend camps and indoor residential week ends at Gradbach, Meerbrook and Barnswood.

Maori Explorers have had great success with the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme with both Bronze and Silver awards been presented, expeditions were planned and carried out during the year and more are scheduled for this coming Spring and Summer.

Group camp was again held in September at Barnswood Scout Camp and I have to say it is always looked forward to with great excitement from both adults and children of the Group. The theme was "Once upon a Barnswood ..." using traditional tales as the inspiration for our activities. There were Frog Princes, castles and treasure to find among many other activities. The camp is truly one of the year's highlights

and was once again a great weekend enjoyed by all.

February half term saw the Group present "Gang Time 2014". All the section meetings were devoted to rehearsals from Christmas until the curtains opened in February to two packed houses. The audiences enjoyed colourful and memorable performances.

Every member of the Group who wants to perform in the show has the opportunity and we had 152 young people from all seven sections taking part. 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.

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, our Fund Raising Committee who plan and run events to raise the funds so vital to keep both hut and Group going. There is an army of parent helpers who support us week-by-week and of course, the section leaders, who take on the responsibility of planning and delivering quality weekly meetings, camps and so much more. I cannot praise them, or thank them enough for all they do.

As always with our Scout and Guide group we have welcomed new volunteers to swell our Leader teams and thanked those who have stood down after many years. We are a happy and committed team that works well together and we are always looking to recruit people willing to help in any small way, from parent helper to fund raiser or section leader. If you would like to join us, 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**

The Young Church continues to hold "Family Circle" each Sunday, except for the first Sunday in the month when we stay in church for the Family Worship service.

We meet each week in church at 10 30am, joining the service until after the gradual hymn, to which the children can play along on the percussion instruments. Families then gather in the Church Hall for our time together.

We have about 18 children and their families on our register and always welcome new members and visitors.

Each week we have a story time and prayers, then respond to the story with art & craft activities, games and singing, sometimes we bake biscuits or cakes! We

come back together for a snack time, birthdays and news time. The children always have some news to share with us and their friends. This pattern continues to suit the needs of our members of all ages.

We currently have 6 leaders who work in the Young Church. Many, many thanks for their time, commitment and hard work. We must say a huge thank you to Janet Lightwood who has been a valuable member of our team for a long time but in the last six months, has decided to stand down from her young church commitments.

The Young Church celebrates the regular festivals in the church year, Rogation Tide, Pentecost, St. James Day, Harvest festival and Christmas.

Last Christmas we held the Christingle service to which there was a fantastic response from the Scout & Guide Group. Some of our Young Church families took part in the service, and a number of other people helped with the technology so all the words and hymns could be on the screen. I must thank them all very much. Thanks to John & Sandra too who are always very supportive with all we do at Young Church. Christingle was a lovely way to begin thinking about Christmas and through the collection we were able to give a very good donation to the Children's Society.

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 and 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.

This Easter we have led a special family activity morning and on Easter Day we celebrated with activities and Easter eggs in Young Church.

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.

A very big thank you for everything YOU DO and we look forward to another year of fun & fellowship together.

*Gill Barber*