

St John the Baptist Parish Church
Crowthorne

Annual Report 2020 - 2021



CONTENTS

Agenda	4
Minutes of the Previous AMP and APCM	5
Vicar's Report	11
Churchwardens' Report.....	12
Befrienders/Baptismal Support	13
Book Club	13
Choir.....	13
Christian Discipleship	14
Church Cleaners	14
Church Flowers	15
Church Office	15
Churches Together in Crowthorne	16
Churchyard.....	17
Communications.....	17
Covid Steering Group.....	18
Deanery Synod	19
Fabric Committee.....	20
Fairs.....	21
Fair Trade	21
House Group	21
Library	22
Messy Church.....	22
Missions Committee.....	22
Mothers' Union	23
New Communities.....	24
Pastoral Visiting Group.....	24
Pathfinders.....	25
Prayer Groups.....	25
Praying for Streets.....	26
Safeguarding	26
Servers.....	26
Social Committee	27
Stewardship	27
Welcome Team	27
Website.....	28

CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS to be held on Sunday, 25th April 2021 in the Parish Church following the 10 a.m. service.

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of Parishioners 2020
4. Election of Churchwardens

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING of the CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL to be held immediately following the meeting of Parishioners on Sunday, 25th April 2021 in the Parish Church

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Parish
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts
4. Report on changes of numbers on electoral roll.
5. Presentation of Parish Reports
6. Elections
 - (a) Parochial Church Council
7. Appointments
 - a. Hon Secretary
 - b. Hon Treasurer
 - c. Hon Independent Examiner
8. Notices
9. Closing prayers

CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Revd Dr Lisa Cornwell (Chair)
Leigh Welham (Churchwarden)
Les Richardson (Churchwarden)
Mary Harwood (Hon Secretary)

**Meeting of Parishioners held in church after 10.00am service on Sunday
18th October 2020**

Opening prayers The meeting opened with prayer

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Beccy Al Jadir, Sue Robertson, Anna Pearce, Richard Ireson and Julie Sharpe

Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 7th April 2019 were proposed by Julie Richardson and seconded by Les Richardson.

Lisa signed the Minutes as a true record.

Election of Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwarden

Les Richardson was proposed by Jill Pope and seconded by Anne Mohan

Leigh Welham was proposed by John Lindsay and seconded by Sheila Stickland

All were in favour, there were no abstentions

Lisa thanked Les and Leigh our Churchwardens they do a tremendous job behind scenes and she was very grateful to them.

There was a round of applause for Les and Leigh

David Rance has agreed to continue as Deputy Churchwarden. Our grateful thanks go to him.

A round of applause was given to David.

Secretary's Note:

At the PCC meeting on 20th October 2020

David Rance was elected as Deputy Churchwarden for the year

Proposed: Steve Pope

Seconded: Jenny McKeever

All agreed and was so appointed

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in church on Sunday 18th October 2020

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Ken Perrett and seconded by Jenny McKeever and agreed by all. They were signed by Lisa as a true record.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

The Financial Statements for the 2019 year were presented to the meeting by David Rance who opened by saying that the Statements had been prepared by Beccy Al-Jadir assisted by Julie Sharpe neither of whom could be present to give this report.

David referred the meeting to section 6 on page 6 of the Report and Accounts which relates to the Statement of Financial Activities on page 10 and the Balance Sheet on page 11 and the notes on pages 12 to 21.

Overall 2019 was a good year as we made a surplus of £7,639 on unrestricted funds which increases our general reserves to £70,729.

Restricted funds produced a surplus of £6,902 which added to the gain on investments in that fund of £24,497 produced an overall surplus for the year of £31,399. This increases the restricted fund reserves to £160,837.

Within these figures:

Voluntary income rose by £7,364 to £128,335.

Funds generated by activities fell by £2,353 as it proved to be a more difficult trading year generally and in particular at the May Fair.

Mission Giving was up £621.

Parish share reduced.

Maintenance reduced.

Finally, on the Balance Sheet, page 11, the increase in debtors is accounted for by recoverable Gift Aid. See note 13.

David asked if there were any questions on the report and there were none.

Lisa thanked David for presenting the accounts and proposed a vote of thanks to Beccy Al-Jadir our treasurer. We are also grateful to Julie Sharpe for the help she gives to Beccy and Laura Myers for auditing the accounts for us. Lisa said that during the year Philip Foster had agreed to assist Beccy with the treasurer's role.

There was a round of applause for all.

4. Report on Electoral roll

At last year's APCM it was reported that the Church Electoral Roll figure stood at 185

In the 18 months since then, 5 new names have been added and 2 names removed.

Accordingly, the Church Electoral Roll figure now stands at 188.

In accordance with the Church Representation Rules the amended Electoral Roll was displayed for 14 days to allow anyone to appeal against the inclusion or removal of any name. No such appeals have been received.

*Tracy Perrett
Electoral Roll Officer*

Lisa thanked Tracy for her report. There was a round of applause for Tracy.

5. Presentation of Parish Reports

Lisa said as with recent years she wouldn't comment on each report in turn as it would keep us too long. She would take them as read. Please do read the reports if you have not yet done so – a lot of effort has gone into them and it gives a good insight into all that has happened in the life of our church.

Of course, they were written for an April APCM, and cover the usual time frame, not the extension that we have had due to Covid. Apologies if you picked up a copy with p.28 missing – some more were run off or you can get the full version online from the website.

Lisa said a collective huge thank you to everyone who submitted reports and to all the various committees and groups represented for all their hard work over the year.

She just wanted to flag a few areas where there have been changes or more muscle is needed:

On music matters, it is great that we have Richard Seaton back as our organist on a 75% basis and we are fortunate to have Jennifer White covering Richard's monthly Sunday off. We particularly appreciated hearing the organ once more after our enforced fast from it during lockdown.

On a more mundane note, there are still gaps on the church cleaning rota, so if you can join the band of church cleaners please do speak to Jenny McKeever. Cleaning pews and surfaces is now an essential part of our Covid Health & Safety plan.

Leigh Welham has now filled the vacant post of CTC secretary and is playing an active role. Jenny McKeever has stepped down as treasurer after a long period of service.

Jean Butler, Andrew King and David Lynch have now retired from the Churchyard team and we are thankful for their many years of service. We are grateful to the new members who have joined the remaining team and further volunteers would be welcome. Please let Anne Mohan or Lisa know. Thank you as well to all who pitched in with the hedge cutting at the start of this month.

Huge changes have been afoot in terms of our communications. The weekly newsletter has become a hybrid with St John's News and morphed into the Weekly News, emailed to 220 people and hand delivered to another 40.

St John's News, as we knew it, has come to a natural end and we must record our grateful thanks to Richard Ireson for doing such a fantastic and dedicated job of editing this for nearly 22 years.

There was a round of applause for Richard
Thanks also to Sarah Spring, Sarah Dewson and Lenka Butterworth for their stint at editing the noticesheet.

Ken and the office team have taken on the Weekly News and are doing a brilliant job adapting it to the new circumstances in which we find ourselves.
There was round of applause for Ken and the office team

James Laverick also needs a mention for his endless hours of editing our recorded services during lockdown. He now makes the audio recordings of our worship for Soundcloud. Thank you James.
There was a round of applause for James

Deanery Synod. On behalf of the Area Dean, the Vicar drew attention to the fact that there are currently no lay members on the Deanery Standing Committee and the posts of Lay Chair, Secretary and Treasurer all need to be filled.

Just to update on Praying for Streets, that whilst the delivery of the leaflets is still on hold we are now including the cycle of streets in the weekly news.

Doreen has now retired from her long term of office in charge of the Welcome Teams and a replacement is needed. Volunteers welcome. On welcome teams in general, Lisa was grateful to all welcome team members for adapting to the new regime in church – the role is significantly more demanding at present but they have risen to the challenge admirably.

This has, of course, turned into an unprecedented year. Some of our activities have had to be suspended, while other things have moved online. We continue to try to navigate our way through, by God's grace, to make the best of the new normal. Lisa wanted to offer her heartfelt thanks to everyone who has stepped up to the plate to keep the show on the road in terms of our mission and ministry. Those at the helm have been encouraged by the affirming feedback received as they have endeavoured to adapt and re-adapt, so thank you all.

6. Elections

(a) PCC

Lisa thanked all those who serve on the PCC and those stepping down. There are 12 vacancies on the **PCC for terms of 3 years**. There were 8 names on the list for these vacancies which were taken en-bloc

Name	Proposer	Secunder
Lia Davies	James Laverick	Leigh Welham
Carol Frost	Margaret Barnes	Sheila Stickland
James Laverick	Anna Pearce	Anne Mohan
Jenny McKeever	Penny Rickards	Julia Norton
Anna Pearce	Michael Frost	Philip Foster
Ken Perrett	James Laverick	June Todd
Steve Pope	Jill Pope	Les Richardson
Julie Roberts	Anna Pearce	Sue Rance

All were in favour. There were no objections.

There was a round of applause for these nominations.

(b) Deanery Synod. There are 4 vacancies for terms of 3 years. There were three names on the list for these vacancies which were taken en-bloc.

Name	Proposer	Seconded
Carol Frost	Jill Pope	Les Richardson
Anna Pearce	Carol Frost	Julia Norton
Leigh Welham	Penny Rickards	Julia Norton

All were in favour. There were no objections.

There was a round of applause for these nominations.

7. Appointments

Honorary Secretary, Mary Harwood was proposed by Sheila Stickland and seconded by Maureen Dale. All agreed and was so appointed.

There was a round of applause for Mary

Hon. Treasurer, Beccy Al-Jadir was proposed by Hazel Berry, seconded by Jill Pope All agreed and was so appointed.

There was a round of applause for Beccy and our grateful thanks recorded

Julie Sharpe has agreed to continue the role of *Assistant Treasurer*, proposed Margaret Barnes, seconded Mike Thackray and was so appointed.

There was a round of applause for Julie.

Philip Foster has agreed to be another assistant to Beccy

Proposed: Mike Thackray, Seconded Jim Wearing.

8. Notices

Les Richardson thanked Lisa on behalf of the congregation for the tireless way she works for us and said we were all very grateful to her. Les said it had been an unprecedented year. There was a round of applause for Lisa.

Lisa brought the meeting to a close with prayer:

The meeting ended at 11.25 a.m.

Secretary's Note

At the PCC meeting on 20th October 2020

The *Hon Independent Examiner* Mrs Laura Myers, was proposed by Hazel Berry and seconded by Ken Perrett.

Agreed by all and was so appointed.

Deanery Synod

Lia Davies agreed to be a member of the Deanery Synod

Proposed: Gillian Gyenes

Seconded: Leigh Welham

All were in favour

Vicar's Report

No sooner had the PCC agreed the vision priorities for 2020, we were plunged into lockdown and so had to put them on ice. However, that does not mean we abandoned our broader church vision; it has still been realised in many ways during the last year.

I write as we pass the one year on marker for the start of the first lockdown. When we composed our annual reports this time last year, we did not envisage that we would still be in lockdown this time around. We have of course been in and out of lockdown in the intervening months but even when we have been free to mix it has been with tight regulations and so we have not experienced unfettered church with singing and socialising for an entire year. We have still been Church, but we have had to learn a new way of being Church and what a learning curve we have been on. I have certainly learnt new skills in the process.

For starters, the Communications Group was yanked out of the pending tray and promptly promoted to being the most instrumental church committee, enabling us to continue to worship online and disseminate information to our congregation. I am immensely grateful to Ken Perrett and the church office team for the huge time and effort they have put in. We are truly indebted to James Laverick for his technical knowledge, specialised equipment and time spent in putting our recorded services together. I am grateful to the ministry team and all those who have taken the plunge and contributed to our online worship. It has been great to see familiar faces - preachers, readers and intercessors, on our screens at home. Also, as part of the Comms set up, Julie Roberts has co-ordinated our Covid support group, a great band of helpers, who have delivered newsletters to those not online and responded to other needs, as and when, such as getting groceries.

As we approached the easing of the first lockdown, it readily became apparent that we needed a handpicked steering group to navigate the uncertain waters ahead, since this was going to be no normal return to church. Indeed, any form of worship in person, including private prayer to begin with, was only permitted according to strict guidelines. And so, the Covid Steering Group was formed. Digesting hundreds of pages of government and diocesan missives, that were repeatedly updated, was a headache but it had to be done and applied in order to keep everyone safe as we transitioned back to church. I am hugely grateful to this team, who stepped up and saw us securely through this period and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. (See separate report for further details.) The Welcome Teams had to be trained for a whole new way of operating, more like policing, although hopefully still welcoming. They have done a terrific job. The church cleaners have also had an invaluable role to play with the intensified cleaning regime. Other church groups have also stepped up wonderfully; the Pastoral Visiting Group and the Mothers' Union have been ringing around church members, checking people are ok and helping to stave off feelings of isolation. Additionally, many other church members have taken it upon themselves to look out for their church contacts and neighbours. The Fabric Committee have kept the church building in good order and the Churchyard team have been busy. Our churchwardens have been stalwarts as ever.

We have continued to work towards becoming an eco-church during the last year, encouraging parishioners in this endeavour through weekly news articles and our Lent course. Christian discipleship has continued online and we met on Zoom for our Autumn and Lent courses. Carol Frost has continued her Licensed Lay Ministry training, again online through the learning platform Moodle. All being well, she will be Licensed in the Autumn, hopefully, not online! We even managed a stewardship campaign of sorts to address the financial hole left by Covid and were overwhelmed by the generosity of our congregation. Church members have also been very responsive to our other appeals, including the newly established church hardship fund to assist those affected economically by the pandemic. It has also been a year in which we have mourned the loss of church members, including to Coronavirus. It has indeed been a year in which we have counted our blessings and our losses and we have been given much food for thought and prayer.

We have recorded the final "Church at Home" service (we hope) and look forward to worshipping together once more on Easter Sunday. Church at Home has provided a spiritual anchor and a sense of solidarity for many who have been able to access it. We have even had newcomers to St John's through this media. Services have followed our normal pattern of worship, including the special and more creative services such as the Crib service, Epiphany Christingle, and Mothering Sunday being delivered online, which generated some enthusiasm. The viewing figures have been amazing, with more people often tuning in than numbers usually present at church on a Sunday morning. People have perhaps been getting a little

too accustomed to sofa church and we hope that everyone will come back to the hard pews – alas, Covid health and safety does not permit us to replace the pew cushions just yet. Easter will make a fitting return. As we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, we anticipate signs of new life in our church and community.

Rev Dr Lisa Cornwell

Churchwardens' Report

The start of the Churchwarden year normally begins at the Archdeacon's Visitation. This year, the Covid restrictions meant that the Visitation couldn't take place. Instead, the Churchwardens were sworn in at a Wednesday morning Eucharist. A different experience, but equally rewarding to be given the opportunity to serve in the position of Churchwarden.

Who would have thought that we would be writing our Annual Report at the end of such a strange year where our church has been closed for long periods and church services suspended. Our Vicar, our Church Office team, and our Communications Group have all done a great job in keeping the services going on-line. Whilst not everyone may have been able to access the on-line material, I'm sure you will all join us in thanking Lisa and the team for their hard work in putting it together.

A new team, the Covid Steering group, has also met regularly to review Government and Diocesan guidelines for public worship during the pandemic. A big thank you is also due to them, and to our small army of church cleaners who have had extra work to do as a result of the covid restrictions. Also to the Welcome teams who have had to take on more roles, and to the new teams set up for Private Prayer and the Wednesday services.

Last year we mentioned that one of the challenges we faced was communicating with all parishioners while the church has been closed. It's good to report that many people have given permission to have paper communication replaced by email. Whilst we accept that there are those who don't have access to email, and who therefore continue to get paper copies, please do let the Church office or the Churchwardens know if you are able to switch from paper communication to emails.

Work on the tasks identified in the last Quinquennial report has continued. Many thanks to the Fabric Committee for their continued hard work on this.

The major project for the year ending was to update our Audio Visual System. Our thanks to James Laverick, and all involved, for managing this project.

Not wishing to lose sight of it, a future project which we described in previous Annual Reports, relates to the restoration of the original tiled floor in the Nave. The tiled floor, currently hidden by the brown carpet, has been severely damaged by the carpet over the years, and your PCC has agreed that the tiles should be restored. We sincerely hope the church family and wider community will be able to support this endeavour, although it is unlikely to start in the immediate future.

We are pleased to report that a majority of parishioners have now changed their method of giving to the 'Parish Giving Scheme' – but we would very much like those who have not yet switched to the PGS to consider doing so. As a reminder, this is an initiative from the Church of England, already widely adopted in our diocese. In summary, the scheme requires us to move from our traditional methods of giving, the envelope scheme, standing order, or cash, to a new direct debit scheme. The benefits to St John's are considerable, in particular reducing administration and ensuring that Gift Aid is returned to the church much more quickly. If you haven't yet switched to the PGS, please do consider it. There is information and the appropriate form on St John's website, or ask either of the churchwardens for a more detailed explanation.

We continue to work to be an Eco-Church, recycling as much as possible, using Fair Trade products, where possible using environmentally friendly cleaning products and reducing our use of single use plastic by refilling containers when empty. The Fabric Team also ensure that the Church heating is at a level to protect the building but is only heated when necessary.

Finally, we continue to be thankful to the entire congregation for all of their time, talents, and financial support in ensuring that the life of our church continues to go from strength to strength, and that the fabric of our beautiful building is maintained. We look forward to 2021 being a year when we can get back to normal and when we can all meet again for church services and for social events.

*Les Richardson
Leigh Welham
David Rance*

Befrienders/Baptismal Support

Unfortunately as we are all aware, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, we have not had the opportunity to Baptise any children/persons in church for over a year. However, hopefully in the not too distant future, church life may be able to resume to some kind of normality. Meanwhile I still try to keep in contact with some previous Baptism families and offer them a friendly face and chat if they wish.

June Todd

Book Club

In a normal year, the book club meets 3 times a year. At each meeting, we discuss the selected book over a glass of wine and some nibbles.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic we have not been able to meet. I hope that as the virus comes under control and we feel happy to meet as a group again that we can re-convene.

Anne Pelham

Choir

It has been a very quiet year for St John's Choir.

I recorded myself singing hymns for online services during Lockdown 1.

When services resumed in church before and during Lockdown 2, Richard played the organ for in-person services, which was appreciated so much by everyone.

I was looking forward to singing in person for the Christmas morning service. I even purchased a visor for the occasion! However, this service had to be postponed at the last minute in order to ensure everyone's safety.

I recorded some hymns for online services during Lockdown 3, but homeschooling and work commitments made this increasingly difficult. I am very much looking forward to returning to sing in church for the first in-person service since Advent, on Easter morning. My visor is ready and waiting!

We all look forward to a time in the not-too-distant future, when choir rehearsals and our ministry can resume.

Katherine Bond Smith

Christian Discipleship

As the Lent courses last year had to be discontinued because of the pandemic, as was the case also with the Emmaus and Confirmation classes, we were eventually able to hold two study groups on Zoom, one in October and one in Lent this year.

The Autumn study groups were based on Bishop Steven's reflections on Philippians Chapters 1-4. The course was originally entitled 'Emerging from Lockdown' but we soon began to realise that this was not going to be the case. The first session 'Living in Christ and Dying is Gain', gave us the background to Paul writing from jail. A time of uncertainty, difficult and challenging and yet Paul centres the Church on Jesus with thanksgiving and appreciation for what He has given us as Christians. He was trying to guide the Philippians through a difficult time and stressed how important it is to be thankful for what we have, regardless of the circumstances.

The second session continued to focus on 'How to Face Enormous Problems'. This led to a discussion on how we had responded to lockdown as individuals and as a Church, including what had been challenging and what we had learnt from the experience. We needed to be aware (Session Three) of how Paul put his relationship with Jesus at the very centre of his life and how we need to do the same - 'Finding Strength from the Centre.' Finally (Philippians 4) 'Rejoice in the Lord Always'. The session began by Bishop Steven playing Beethoven's, 'Ode to Joy' – the key to the Epistle being an incitation to joy in a world gripped by fear and anxiety and thanksgiving being the key to joy and optimism.

The Lent Study Group for the Council of Churches this year was another relevant and topical theme, 'Mission and Creation Care for Christian Disciples'. Over the five weeks we looked at:

- Renewing our understanding of mission
- The call to care for creation
- The challenge to sustainable lifestyles
- A biblical approach to economics
- The Church's role as an agent of change

Each session was supported by biblical references and we aimed at raising our awareness, both as individuals and as Churches, of the issues surrounding care of our environment and of climate change, as well as looking at ways in which we can become more involved and show leadership in these matters, as the opportunity arises.

We have now kept Lent and will soon celebrate Easter 2021. We are just about to open St. John's again for worship. Our Emmaus courses would be due to begin after Easter for adults and young people, but we have decided to defer them until the Autumn. These are Christian basics courses and open to anyone to come along. They can lead on to Confirmation and/or they provide an excellent opportunity for learning and discussing more about our faith. We hope to resume them as soon as we can. All the Confirmation dates will also have to be rescheduled.

Hopefully, this period of staying at home will have afforded us some time to read more widely and to learn more about various aspects of our faith.

Gillian Gyenes

Church Cleaners

What a year it has been! A year ago we had to suddenly close our church when the coronavirus pandemic invaded our shores and the first lockdown was imposed. This meant that the six-month cleaning rota was suspended. Then, great news, we could open the church again but what a long list of government and diocesan guidelines had to be studied to make sure that there was no danger of any virus lurking on any

surfaces in the building. Here I must express a very big thank you to the reduced band of less vulnerable cleaners who agreed to risk staying on the cleaning rota and had to follow the new guidelines about cleaning all touchable surfaces. The six-monthly rotas were reduced to two-monthly ones as it became more difficult to predict what the future months would bring. Once again, as the growing numbers of Covid sufferers escalated in the run-up to Christmas, it became obvious that the church had to be shut to protect the congregation and the cleaning rota was suspended again.

As I write we are about to re-open for Easter Sunday service and the same reduced band of cleaners are being called upon to follow safety guidelines and wipe down all touchable surfaces before the church or halls can be used again after each service. If anyone else feels able to join this select group your contribution would be very much appreciated.

On behalf of St John's again I say a very sincere thank you to all the cleaners. Your work in keeping the congregation safe is really appreciated.

Jenny McKeever
771379

Church Flowers

Like everyone else the Church Flower Arrangers have not been busy this last year.

As lockdowns coincided with many of our festivals and particularly when the Church was not functioning we were not in a position to enter the church, even when the church has been open for private prayer.

However, we were able to do arrangements on the Altar and East Window for Harvest. Also we did the Advent candle and Altar for Christmas but sadly, because of another lockdown, the congregation wasn't in a position to enjoy the Christmas arrangements. All being well we will be providing an arrangement for the Altar for Easter this year and setting up the Easter Garden.

As a team we have been fortunate enough to enjoy seeing each other on zoom meetings as many of us belong to the Crowthorne and Sandhurst Flower Club. They have been amazing in keeping up regular meetings, demonstrations and opportunities for the members to practice their flower arranging skills and show their arrangements at the zoom meetings. So hopefully when the time comes for us to get back to enhancing our services with lovely flower arrangements we will not have lost our skills!! We all look forward to this and hope it won't be too far in the future.

Carol Cain

Church Office

Covid has had a dramatic impact on the Church Office. Our previous routine of staffing the Office on a Wednesday morning stopped in March 2020. We were sad to lose Sue McIntosh and Caroline Grist from our regular team as we moved on-line.

Carol Frost, Anne Pelham and myself have all had steep learning curves as we took on new software and procedures. We set up our virtual office on Microsoft Teams and can now chat and work together throughout the week from home.

Then we had to learn Mailchimp and become weekly news editors. We now take it in turns to prepare the electronic and paper versions of the Weekly News. We can discuss and review content and work together on-line as necessary.

We did print some copies of the Weekly News in the office initially, but soon Julie Roberts organised our volunteers to print off emailed copies of the news and deliver them to those without mail. One of us still

pops down to the Church Office occasionally to check the post or print and post notices around the Church, but all other tasks are done from home.

Another innovation was our door locking system. For the past twenty years, we have had an automatic mechanism on the main Church door which was controlled by a program running on the Church computer. The Office staff updated this each week, and it was very complicated. During the year this was replaced by a remote system. All Church Office Team members can now update the doors remotely using the internet and so can respond to changes more quickly without needing to go into the office.

We used to have a Church diary for bookings. This is now on-line and available to all with a Church email address. As bookings secretary, Anne Pelham enters external bookings.

Ken Perrett

Churches Together in Crowthorne

The Churches Together in Crowthorne group consists of seven churches who work with each other for the benefit of the residents of Crowthorne. The seven churches are St John the Baptist, Crowthorne Baptist Church, Crowthorne Methodist Church, Holy Ghost RC Church, St. Sebastian's Church, St James in Finchampstead and the Vineyard Church.

Janet Rogers from St Sebastian's is the Chair, Barry Rogers from The Vineyard is Vice Chair, Leigh Welham is the Secretary, and the post of Treasurer is vacant. Jenny McKeever from St John's is filling the role of Treasurer while we look for a new one, if anyone would consider taking on the role, we would be grateful.

St Johns have four lay representatives, Jenny McKeever, Sue Rance, Anna Pearce and Leigh Welham and Reverend Dr Lisa Cornwell. Sue Hester from our congregation is the representative for Good Neighbours.

Funding for the CTC usually comes from the coffee shops which were being held weekly at the Baptist and the Methodist Churches. With the Baptist Church now undergoing building works the Methodist's are hosting all coffee mornings, unfortunately this has not been possible this year. The funds raised cover the costs of the CTC – insurance and membership of Churches Together in Berkshire, printing costs of the Christmas Poster's for the services held over the Advent period, all associated costs of the 'cake bombing' initiative welcoming the new residents into all the new properties being built in the village. The CTC also gives funds towards other events or initiatives which benefit the local residents such as the Summer Activities, HopeZone, Mind the Gap and the CAP course run at Edgbarrow School. Although we have not been able to raise funds in the normal way a lot of our costs still need to be paid.

Despite the situation the world has been in for the past year Churches Together in Crowthorne have been pro-active in supporting the local community. We have been unable to meet up physically but have regularly met thanks to Zoom, despite the hiccup in dates at the beginning of 2021.

We were unable to run the Summer Activities, bring **Christmas** to Late Night Shopping or carol sing outside the Co-op due to COVID restrictions, but

Over the summer we produced a video which we released on social media – The Crowthorne Blessing – which we hoped would show the community that we were thinking of them and were there to support them. The community watched and commented so we re-worked the video and re-released it over Christmas along with another based on **that** scene from 'Love Actually'. If you want to re-watch, they are still on the CTC YouTube channel.

Sadly, HopeZone were not able to carry on in the normal way but were able to run a series of events on-line for the children that were moving from year 6 to year 7 in the summer and beginning senior school.

Good Neighbours have managed to keep going thanks to a band of dedicated drivers taking vulnerable people for hospital appointments and lately vaccination appointments. Next year they will be celebrating 50 years in business.

The Food Bank has been busy over the pandemic and thanks to the local community providing donations of both food and money have kept going. Thank you to those who stepped forward when the usual helpers had to shield or isolate to collect the donations from the drop off points and deliver to those in need.

We have been unable to do anything with the New Communities but look forward to resuming events as restrictions ease.

An exciting new project for the CTC is the Christmas Lights which have been passed from the Traders Association to the CTC along with some funding which has been ringfenced for this. We have also formed a strong alliance with Crowthorne Parish Council going forward will be included when Village events are being planned so the churches will have more input at events such as the Christmas Lights switch on and Late-Night Shopping, so we look forward to making these more **Christ** centred.

As we are now in Lent the Lent courses and Lectures are in full swing, although we cannot meet in person, we are meeting on-line. The CTC Good Friday church service from St. John's will be on-line.

Leigh Welham

Churchyard

Nature was allowed to flourish in the churchyard last year as we were unable to get out and cut the grass during the first lockdown. The result was a magnificent display of wild flowers and tall grasses that were enjoyed by many people through the Spring and early Summer and of course this was good for the environment and local ecology too. We intend to build concern for the environment into the management of the churchyard going forward so you will again see areas where the grass and flowers are allowed to grow unchecked.

To badly misquote: 'The Lord taketh away and the Lord giveth also'. David Lynch and Andrew King retired from the team this year and after helping with the bulk of the grass cutting Jean Butler also hung up her boots in August. All three gave many devoted years of service to help keep the churchyard well maintained; their contributions will be greatly missed. Rookies Mike Frost and Linda Armstrong passed their apprenticeship in a week or two and the juniors, myself and Anna Pearce, soon became experienced hands. Continuity was provided by Phil Foster and Jill Pope. Mary Harwood and Anne Ireland kindly volunteered to look after the rose beds and we also got help from Richard Forbes, Dave Pope and Mike Thackray at various times last year. A big thank you to everyone

Churchyard Team

Communications

It has been a challenging year for the Communications Group. Lockdown started in March, and the Group needed to learn quickly and respond. Our first major task was to move from the regular monthly St John News to an on-line Weekly. WE had the first edition within a week of lockdown, and this has become the norm now. Our email circulation list grew to 220 people, with an additional 30 or so people getting copies delivered by hand every week by our volunteers.

Then we started production of recorded worship. With James Laverick, our digital guru, and contributions from preachers, choristers, readers and intercessors, we now have a production routine. The Communications Group meets weekly to coordinate the contributions and ensure the service is publicised. Our weekly viewers have grown steadily and even attracted letters of support from distant places.

Our Sunday Morning Zoom chat has maintained a steady audience of around twenty people and has been fun.

Julie Roberts has organised our Covid Support Group and responded to the needs of the congregation. Lia Davies has joined us as our social media expert and that has been very helpful in spreading the message.

The changes necessitated lots of different notices at Church – Total closure, open for prayer, open for worship, etc. The Church Office team stepped in with the printing and posting of notices.

Another major step was our move into on-line donations with Kindlink. During the year our congregation has raised a total of over £15,500, with Gift Aid adding a further £1,400. This has exceeded all our expectations.

Another innovation was the introduction of Microsoft Teams and the transfer of Church files to on-line secure storage. The Communications Team organised many individual training sessions on Zoom to migrate people to Teams, and we now have good core of people able to work with Teams. The PCC is now meeting on Teams and reaping the benefits of shared working.

Ken Perrett

Covid Steering Group

The Covid Steering Group was formed at the beginning of last June in order to manage a safe return to church, firstly for individual prayer and then for the reinstatement of public worship in August. A vast amount of Government and Diocesan guidance/legislation had to be followed, which was constantly being updated no sooner had we implemented the previous measures. An extensive risk assessment document was drawn up and revised as time progressed. We had a mammoth task on our hands, even for the first phase - every detail had to be thought through from a health and safety point of view. Social distancing had to be maintained and the Test and Trace system implemented. Pews were roped off, pew cushions became out of bounds, hand sanitiser was acquired in vast quantities, a circular route around church was mapped out, surfaces were wiped down after use, and so on.

The following members were co-opted to the group on the basis of their respective church roles: The Vicar, Les Richardson & Leigh Welham (Churchwardens), Mike Thackray (Chair of Fabric/ Welcome Team Leader), Anne Mohan, (Health and Safety officer/ Deputy Verger), Jenny McKeever (Church Cleaning rota), Julia Norton (LLM). Mike Thackray was instrumental in setting things up in the initial phases then handed over his reins to Ken Perrett (Verger/ Welcome Team Leader/ Church Office Manager). As a Welcome Team Leader, David Chater-Lea has also attended meetings when his team have been on duty. On a couple of occasions, where major decisions concerning church closure/ reopening have needed to be taken, the group has been joined by the Communications Group and Ministry Team. During the third lockdown, when churches have been permitted to remain open but, like many other churches in our situation, we deemed this to be unsafe given the rapid spread of the virus, the decision to suspend public worship needed to be referred to the PCC and the area bishop was informed.

When it came to the reinstatement of services, we had to think through carefully not only how people would be shepherded coming into the building but the nature of the worship itself. A whole new set of instructions for the Welcome Teams had to be devised and we ran a special training session for team members beforehand. The Vicar annotated her order of service with various adaptations and the notices at the start of the service detailing operations were quite fulsome, although what to expect had been previously communicated in the weekly news. From henceforth, communion could only be taken in one kind with no words of distribution, corporate singing was banned, as was any physical contact for the Peace or otherwise. However, the first service back still felt spiritually uplifting and poignant for those gathered. The Easter Candle was lit and we were thrilled to hear the sound of the organ again. As “ground hog day” approaches and we prepare to return to church once more, we will be following the same protocols as in December. Nothing has changed as yet and we await further directives from the National Church/ Diocese (who are waiting on the Government) for a church specific “road map”.

Revd Dr Lisa Cornwell

Deanery Synod

St John's is part of the Sonning Deanery which includes our neighbouring churches from Finchampstead, Wokingham and Sandhurst. The current Area Dean is Rev. Richard Lamey of St Paul's Church, Wokingham and the Lay Chair is vacant at the moment. Usually, the Area Dean and Lay Chair take turns to chair the four Deanery Synods held quarterly. Bridget Crossley has retired after many years of service as Deanery Secretary, this post has recently been filled by Rev. Catherine Vaughan of Owlsmoor. The post of Deanery Treasurer has also been vacant for most of the year, but this post will be filled by Lynne Payne from Woosehill in the summer. The Deanery Synod representatives from St John's are Carol Frost, Leigh Welham, who were re-elected as representatives and Anna Pearce, and Lia Davies who were elected at the last APCM. Anna has also become a member of the Synod Standing Committee.

The March 2020 Synod did not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic that was sweeping the world. At the time we had barely heard of Zoom, no one realised that a year on we would still be meeting remotely via the internet rather than in churches around the Deanery.

The Deanery Synod Plan which was put in place in 2019 covers four areas – Discipleship, New Communities, Training and Relationships. The objectives concentrate on working together and supporting each other within the Deanery to as great a degree as possible. This runs until May and in June there will be a final report and a new one plan will be put in place.

The first meeting of the year was held in July, via Zoom, and was to be a time of listening to God and listening to each other. To look at what we have experienced and discovered in the last weeks, and how we were seeing the Church and its role differently, and what God is calling us to become through the experience of this pandemic. What does a post-coronavirus Deanery look like? What does a post-coronavirus Church look like? There was a talk from the Archdeacon after which we were put into smaller groups where we discussed the points raised by the talk and the ways our churches were rising to the challenges and how the different churches were finding ways to reach their congregations and communities.

At the September Synod we once again concentrated on the way our Churches were coping with the demands of the Coronavirus. Some of the churches had reopened at the relaxation of the lockdown albeit with restrictions in place but some remained closed. Again, we were put into Breakout Rooms where we discussed: -

- (a) What have you learned about your community for good or ill? and
- (b) Who has been lost to view by the Church, and how can this be addressed?

We then came back together and reported on good practices that the various churches had put in place. The Synod was still looking for recruits to the Standing Committee.

The meeting in November Rev. Richard Lamey posed the questions: -

- (a) What is the most exciting thing learnt about your church and community in 2020? and
- (b) What are you most looking forward to for Advent and Christmas?

The responses were as varied as (a) pleased heating had been upgraded in their church, the online content proliferation and how this included children specific content – videos, bible stories, book readings, enactments, and alternative style services, pre-covid everyone was too busy doing 'normal' church to think outside the box so covid offered an opportunity to discover the 'new'. (b) Different styles of services and carols being sung outside and the possibility of a vaccine.

And finally, back to the last meeting in March which where we were joined by Bishop Olivia who talked about the past year and what we have learnt and whether we will revert back to 'normal' or move forward and practice what we have learnt. We must look after each other and ensure we are **ALL** healthy in body and mind after the tolls of the past year. Bishop Olivia also asked that we all focus on becoming an Eco-Church moving forward. We were then asked three questions: -

- (a) Did we feel supported, valued, affirmed in the roles we held within the Church?
- (b) Are we working together well as people of God?
- (c) What should we focus on post-Covid?

Most did feel supported and valued which was good and felt that Churches had worked well together, different denominations and different parishes working together. It was also felt very strongly that we should keep content online to some degree as there are members of the Church that would feel nervous

about coming back, some that physically cannot, also there are some out there that participate online that would never enter a church building. Families may find that Sunday mornings were not convenient but valued the content at other times of the day or week. We should use our new-found technology for Mission. We also learnt at the end of this meeting that the posts on the Standing Committee for Deanery Synod had been filled.

The next meeting will take place on 22nd June and will be the AGM.

Leigh Welham

Fabric Committee

Work done through year Apr 2020 – Apr 2021

- **Basement Drainage**
 - Following the re-pointing work done by Mike and Chris in the summer holidays we think we may have finally stopped the flooding?! To be monitored but Laszlo's work to have the drain runs surveyed and flushed has freed up tree root ingress and recently we had a downpour that equated to 18 mm of rain in one go and no flooding resulted.
- **Heating System Issues Resolved**
 - Hall system needed up grading with some maintenance work needed in the Office. Boiler No.2 in Church had a wiring loop problem that required work. Remedial work agreed, actioned, and carried out successfully.
- Annual boiler servicing completed. Rota for setting the heating controls for Church, Vestry and Hall delivered diligently throughout the year when required.
- **Annual Fire Extinguisher Maintenance**
 - Carried out successfully as in previous years.
- **Rotas arranged to Safeguard the Church**
 - From the end of April and during the different times when the Church Building had to be closed over the last year, the Fabric Team created a rota to keep an eye on the building, to ensure water, heating and electrical related services were monitored. Huge thanks to everyone that helped keep this going as and when it was required over the last year.
- **Preparation and organisation for Safe Worship when open**
 - Following the creation of the Covid-19 Worship Steering Group
 - Pew cushions carefully stored in Lady Chapel
 - Kneeelers removed and stored in the Choir Vestry
 - 2m circulation zones formed using masking tape on the floor in required areas
 - Alternate pews labelled 'Not in Use' where appropriate
- **Churchyard**
 - Churchyard team did an amazing job in keeping on top of the mowing and general churchyard upkeep.
 - Removal of the dangerous sections of the large old beech tree by the back gate
 - Continual monitoring of dawn-to-dusk and outside spotlights.
- **Lychgate maintenance**
 - Faculty approved and partnership being created with Wellington College to try and get the work done.

Many thanks to the Fabric Committee team:

Anne Mohan, Lewis Simmonds, Les Richardson, David Chater-Lea, Laszlo Gyenes and Chris Watson. Steve Pope and Mike Frost have now recently joined the team

- Lewis stepped down and has moved to Somerset. Committee thanked him for his incredible service and diligence on so many projects over many, many years.

Mike Thackray

Fairs

May Fair

Sadly, following the Covid-19 pandemic both the 2020 and 2021 May Fairs had to be cancelled. Les has also very understandably decided to step down from his involvement with this committee and we have thanked him for his incredible energy and support to deliver the event over the past few years.

Work is afoot amongst the PCC congregation and committee members to think of alternative ways to replace the valuable income that this event generates for the parish.

Mike Thackray

on behalf of the May Fair Committee

Mini Advent Fair

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions on the nation because of the Coronavirus the Mini Advent Fair did not take place in December 2020. However, we look forward to Advent 2021. With the rollout of the vaccine well under way and the likelihood of top up vaccines for the winter season I am in full planning mode for the next one. Please start saving up your donations for the event and thinking caps on for new ideas to make the one in 2021 spectacular to recoup the lost revenue.

Leigh Welham

Church Warden

Fair Trade

We have been unable to have our stall selling fair trade goods this year as the church was closed for long periods due to the pandemic. We did sell all the goods that we had in stock.

I would like to thank all of you who have bought fair trade goods from the stall in the past and have continued to support Traidcraft during this year by buying goods online. Their website address is www.traidcraftshop.co.uk.

Anne Pelham

House Group

St John's House Group was suspended in March 2020 due to the covid lockdown. Since then, our regular meeting place, Oak Lodge Residents Lounge, has been closed. Due to a majority of House Group participants being without internet access, we took the decision to suspend our meetings rather than take them on-line which would have excluded many of the participants.

It has been very encouraging to see that some of the participants have continued to meet up for walks and to support each other, during the lockdown.

Moving forward, we anticipate a situation where we will be unable to use Oak lodge Residents Lounge for meetings, and our small flat would struggle to accommodate a handful of participants, never mind the 12+ who usually attend the meetings.

We have enjoyed hosting St John's House Group for the last six years, but we feel that it is time for new leaders, a new location, and a new feel to the Group.

Thank you to everyone who has attended House Group since we started the current House Group in 2015, and we hope you have enjoyed it as much as we have enjoyed hosting and leading it.

Julie & Les Richardson

Library

Our library which is located in the entrance hall behind the white board is full with books on a wide variety of subjects. There are books on prayer, Bible study, church architecture, the Saints, pastoral care to ecology, and novels. Then, there are books for specific times of the year, such as Advent and Lent or for specific age groups. The books cover all levels for those new to church and those who would like to delve deeper into faith.

Due to the pandemic and with the Church closed most of the year people have not been able to access the library.

Many thanks to all those who have donated books to the library through the year. Once we can open the Church fully without restrictions then the library will again be available to all.

Anne Pelham

Messy Church

Sadly, Messy Church has not been able to happen as usual this year but we did make a Christingle and Crib Service video as well as sending out some simple Messy Church material to accompany the Mothering Sunday video. We do hope we might be able to resume our activities by the Autumn, so 'watch this space.'

Gillian Gyenes

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee is responsible for co-ordinating our support for the seven Christian missions to which St John's contributes on a regular basis. These missions and their representatives for the past year have been, Church Mission Society (CMS) – Claire Taylor, The Leprosy Mission - Wendy Allerton; The Corrymeela Community – Diana Gray; Church Army - Gini Cope; Bible Society - Julie Richardson; Embrace the Middle East - Ken Perrett and Hopezone – Jenny Mckeever.

In 2020, St. John's donated £1960.86 to each of the seven missions a total of £13,726 which represents 12½ % of the planned giving by church members. Donations were made by bank transfer to avoid the handling of cheques.

Historically in addition to those seven Missions we have supported a local hospice, currently Alexander Devine Hospice for Children in Maidenhead and Carol Frost keeps us informed about the work of their work.

While it does not receive a direct donation from the Church, Tracy Perrett represented the Children's Society on the Missions committee. Tracy has now stepped down from that role and we thank her for all her hard work over the years particularly selling Christmas cards and looking after the collecting boxes. We were unable because of COVID restrictions to sell Christmas cards and with people handling less cash, particularly small change it was decided not to continue with collecting boxes at present. Tracy collected in 25 existing boxes and banked £460.64 for the benefit of the Society.

The Children' Society is now under the banner of the Missions Committee. We shall continue to support the Society financially through occasional fund raising and the Christingle Service. We shall also continue to inform the congregation about the society through Sunday morning speakers and articles in the Weekly News.

We could not have our usual Giving Tree, but Carol Frost suggested a virtual tree and Ken Perrett provided the technical skill. It was shown on the screen in Church before the Sunday morning on Services in December. Ken set up Kindlink for donations and the amazing total of £ £1,082.50 was raised for the Children's Society. The Society also benefited from the envelopes at the Christingle service in the Epiphany Service, this amounted to £78.50.

We had planned a date for our Annual Lent Lunch but sadly this could not go ahead due to the lock down. We hope that it may be possible to have a tea party later in the year, charity to be decided later.

We have continued to have regular preachers at the Sunday morning service and on Sunday 20th September Heather Clements from Bible Society was able to visit and speak in Church.

Our speaker on Christ the King Sunday was Su McClellan from Embrace the Middle East. Su recorded her talk to be shown as part of our Church at Home service and she joined the after the service to answer questions. Ken set up Kindlink and the total donated for Embrace the Middle East was £743.50.

Andrew Mitchell joined us on the Church at Home service on Sunday 14 February. He gave an interesting talk, up-dating us about Crowthorne Hopezone and he joined the after church Zoom session to answer questions.

The members of the committee contribute articles to the Weekly News to coincide with the visits of the mission's preachers and giving more information about their mission. Further information about the missions we support can be found on the Parish Website.

The committee has continued to do what they can through this difficult time, and I would like to thank them for what they have achieved in the past year to support their own and the other projects mentioned in this report.

Hazel Berry

Mothers' Union

We have not held any meetings in the hall since last March but that does not mean we have been inactive. We have made it our aim to keep in touch with our 67 members and other members of the congregation by phoning on a regular basis. In addition, when it was permissible under lockdown rules and the weather was good, we invited small groups for tea in our gardens and will be doing so again. Every member has received a letter with an article contributed by our would- be speakers, prayers and reflections each month over the last year.

Joan Colyer has continued to make greetings cards for sale and the proceeds have gone to the Mothers' Union holiday scheme, Away From It All that provides holidays for those in need of a break. Jasmin has

made emergency toilet bags for The John Radcliffe Hospital which we have filled with the items you have given us. We have filled 20 bags so far. Thank you so much for the items you, the congregation, have given us, we hope to fill more bags in the future.

I was asked to make a very short video recording of what the Mothers' Union means and what we do in Crowthorne. This was then included in a half hour presentation sent to the C of E school for Year 3. I hope they enjoyed it! We also sent cards suitable for Mothering Sunday to Bullingdon for prisoners to send and will do the same at Christmas. Simnel cakes and posies were sadly not possible for Mothering Sunday in church but Hazel took Intercessions so we felt part of the service. We are also taking part, on an individual basis, in the annual Wave of Prayer.

We intend to start meeting again as soon as it is viable and look forward to a return to normal life. We will continue to keep in touch with members unable to come our meetings.

Penny Rickards
Branch Leader, Crowthorne

New Communities

The New Communities Group have only held one meeting over the last year although we have swapped information via email. In normal times we meet six times a year, three times to discuss what we can do to help our new neighbours and integrate them into our communities and churches and three times a year to pray for the above. We are looking forward being able to get out into the communities once again as the restrictions ease. If you would like to join us, please contact me and I can give you details of our next meeting.

Since writing the above Tonia Elliot and Richard Lamey have decided to close the New Communities Initiative and start a new one in the near future.

Leigh Welham
Church Warden

Pastoral Visiting Group

As the body of Christ, we are urged to care for one another and it is the role of the Pastoral Visiting Group to assist the Vicar in this ministry. The Pastoral Visiting Group tries to look out for any in the congregation who may need visiting or other pastoral care. In the last year, this activity has been undertaken remotely, phoning and emailing church members to see how they have been coping during the pandemic.

The current members of the Pastoral Visiting Group are: Lisa Cornwell (Vicar); Gillian Gyenes (LLM and Children and Young People/ Safeguarding); Julia Norton (LLM); Carol Cain (10am); Julie Cavell (Choir and 10am); Ann Cottrell (MU & 10am); Carol Frost (MU); Julie Richardson (Housegroup & 10am) and June Todd (MU & 10am). This year we bid farewell to Jean Butler, who has been a wonderful asset to our group. We are very grateful to her for her many years of service.

We have continued to meet for supervision on Zoom. It is helpful if you have any pastoral concerns for others or yourself, if you can let us know. We send pastoral cards on special occasions, happy or sad, but of course, we have to know about these in order to do so.

Revd Dr Lisa Cornwell

Pathfinders

During 2020/2021 although at times we have been able to gather and worship in church (lockdowns permitting), our children's and youth groups have not been able to meet due to lack of space and the essential need to social distance. We did try to set up some Pathfinder zoom sessions, but this was not successful, which is understandable given the amount of screen time our young ones were spending when home schooling, tutoring etc. We look forward to being able to meet once more in person, hopefully in the not too distant future.

However, last year we sadly said goodbye to one of our leaders, David Ramsbottom, when he retired and moved to Oxfordshire. We wish David and all his family well, but this now means that there are only 2 leaders, David Rance and myself, and as we both have other commitments, it means we are not always able to lead the group. New leaders are much needed; would you be able to help lead the group? Perhaps some older Pathfinders would like to lead or co-lead. Please talk to either myself or David to find out more, we look forward to hearing from you.

Carol Frost (carol.frost@crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk)

Leaders

Carol Frost

David Rance

Prayer Groups

Mothers Union Prayer Group

We have not held any Prayer Meetings this year due to the pandemic but intend to resume these sessions as soon as we are permitted to do so. In the meantime everyone can join in the Wave of Prayer from 20 to 22 April. During this annual event we join the prayer circle that unites members round the world in an unending Wave of Prayer. Our link dioceses who we join in prayer are Southwark in England, Kisangani in democratic Republic of Congo, Victoria in Nigeria, Warri also in Nigeria and Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea.

Everyone is invited to join us when we start again.

Penny Rickards

Prayers for Healing and the Sick

Throughout this year, we have continued to meet virtually every Friday at 5.30 to pray for all those for whom prayer has been requested. We know that these prayers are much appreciated. If you have anyone for whom you would like prayers to be said please email: prayers@crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk or post a request through the office door at Church. Thankyou.

Gillian Gyenes

Praying for Streets

In a normal year we leaflet a particular street, or a few streets and these streets are then mentioned during our prayers of intercession the following Sunday. It takes just over a year to cover all the streets, although with a lot of new building in the area, it is now taking a little longer. This is part of our outreach to the community.

Obviously, in the middle of March last year we had to stop delivering these leaflets due to coronavirus. As I write this report, it is now one year on and we are still not able to deliver the leaflets.

We have however, continued to remember and pray for the streets and roads in our parish, in turn, during our intercessory prayer whether we have been in Church or 'online'.

Mary Harwood and

Anne Pelham

Safeguarding

Over the last few years or so, Oxford Diocese, in line with the National Church, has taken a new look at many aspects of Safeguarding, as the Church has very much needed to update its practice here. Most importantly, we should all now be more aware of each other's safety within our Church community, irrespective of age or our role within the Church. It is no longer solely the responsibility of one or two named individuals or even of a committee.

To this end and at the request of the Diocese, we have compiled a very comprehensive audit, listing all those whose role requires/invites them to attend or complete online, the relevant Safeguarding course, provided by the Diocese. I should like to thank the very encouraging number of people who have taken part in these courses and who have had their DBS checks renewed, thanks to Anne Mohan. It was also heartening to realise, in carrying out this exercise, what a great number of people volunteer in so many different ways, contributing overall to the smooth running of our Church.

The Standing Committee has reviewed the 'Promoting a Safer Church Action Plan' which acts as a checklist for all aspects of Safeguarding and completed 'The Articles of Enquiry' for the Diocese, which focused on Safeguarding this year.

Training courses have been held online including one on Domestic Abuse, which has been a particular concern during lockdown. We have had regular communications from the Diocese regarding Safeguarding at this time of crisis, relating e.g. to volunteers offering help to those who are vulnerable.

Should you want further guidance over any matter, please do contact myself or Lisa, if that would be helpful. We have a model Safeguarding Policy which has been approved by the PCC and there is a contact list of Who's Who (regarding Safeguarding) on the Church website.

Gillian Gyenes

Servers

A huge thank you to every member of the Serving team for their continuing contribution to our worship during this most difficult of years.

The covid lockdown saw Church Services end last March, and upon re-opening in the summer, restrictions meant that we were allowed to have a Crucifer only, rather than a full serving team.

We look forward to the covid restrictions ending and being able to have a full team of Crucifer and Acolytes at our Services. That said, we continue to be a small team, and have lost several team members as a result of conflicting duties. We are therefore, now more than ever, looking for new Servers and Acolytes.

It is no exaggeration to say that, without new servers coming forward, we will struggle to have a full team of Crucifer and Acolytes at every service. Please do consider joining the team if you are able to do so

Anyone who would like to serve at our 8 o'clock Sunday service, or the sung Eucharist at 10 o'clock, or indeed at our occasional weekday evening celebrations, would be very welcome. As always, full instruction will be provided to anyone who is interested in joining the team.

Les Richardson

Social Committee

The Social Committee members have not changed over the last twelve months. They are Nigel Cavell, Lia Davies, Richard Ireson, Jenny McKeever, Jill Pope, Les Richardson, Sue Sumner and Leigh Welham.

Unfortunately we have not been able to arrange any social events over the last year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, as I write this the sun is shining, the daffodils are blooming and hope is in the air that this time the lockdown will be raised and we will be allowed to meet with our church family again. We hope and pray that, all being well, we will be able to celebrate the Patronal Festival of St John the Baptist on Sunday, 27th June, in the vicarage garden. Our celebration may or may not be in the same form as our traditional barbecue but we look forward to welcoming and being able to chat with everyone again at a social event.

Jenny McKeever

Stewardship

This year our Stewardship Campaign took the form of an appeal in the Parish News and the facility to make an additional one off donation.

Due to Covid restrictions normal revenue streams have literally dried up. The biggest loss is that for the second year in succession we shall not be able to hold our main fund raising activity, the May Fair.

The Committee would like to thank everyone for their continued contributions during these difficult times and the many additional one off payments those who are able have made. We are still seeking additional funds to make up the short fall in the budget. If we can afford to give more then we should do so, not because we have to, or are compelled to but because we want to - "For God loves a cheerful giver"

Steve Pope

Welcome Team

The role of the Welcome Teams has been significantly impacted by COVID restrictions and 'lockdowns' over the reporting period. Thanks to all Welcome Team members for their efforts in planning, preparation and understanding the various new requirements of 'COVID-safe' services, for the allocation and stewardship of socially distanced seating within church, and for ensuring the near seamless guidance of parishioners to minimise the disruption to worship.

From 16th August our Welcome Teams guided the congregation through 'COVID-safe' services including; ensuring the use of masks, hand sanitisers, track & trace with use of the NHS App. Thank you to everyone for your contribution, both within the Welcome Teams and parishioners for your willing COVID-compliance.

Services were suspended again during November due to the Government Lockdown. After our return, despite our best efforts 'COVID-safe' services stopped in just before Christmas and we once again reverted to online services. We were very pleased to resume 'COVID-safe' services for Easter 2021, with services starting Sunday 4th April.

Our Welcome Team members over the reporting period have been:

8 a.m. Andrew King, Sally King, Alan Jackson, Wendy Jackson, Tom Burrell, Mary Clark, Barry Brewster, Richard Ireson, Ian Loblely and Louise Loblely.

10 a.m. and extra services as required: David Chater-Lea, Doreen Norfield, Sheila Stickland, Ann Cottrell, David Rance, Sue Sumner, James Laverick, Grant Robertson, Susan Robertson, Tom Lewis, Brian Turner, Kathy Beard, Daphne Bass, June Todd, Chris Watson, Ken Perrett, Shirley Mather, Leigh Welham, Jenny McKeever, John Lindsay, Philip Foster, Mike Thackray, Carol Cain, Jill Pope, Julie Sharpe, Keith Wilkinson, Liz Martin, Katey Williamson and Nigel Cavell.

Also, Andrew and Sally King plus Alan and Wendy Jackson have been assisting with Wednesday services.

Finally, 2021 marks another considerable transition for Welcome Teams as after 22 years of service Doreen Norfield has decided to step down as Welcome Team co-ordinator. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Doreen for all her support and co-ordination efforts over many years (guiding teams from Sidesmen to Sidespeople to Welcome Teams) ensuring teams were on duty and able to offer a friendly warm welcome to St John's. Doreen, a hard act to follow, but thank you!

David Rance

Website

The Church website has experienced a massive change during the past year. All our activities at Church stopped and so we had to modify the website to reflect this. The importance of publicising worship and other Communications grew and so we have used the website to provide information on services, including Youtube links and Orders of Service to download, plus prayer and study material for use at home and links to our donation pages.

We publish recent copies of the Weekly News and also the Vicar's Column.

The Website has become rather more integrated with the Weekly News and the other activities of the Communications Group. It continues to change weekly and to reflect changes in our Church worship and life.

It will be good to be able to reintroduce news of Church activities when they restart.

Ken Perrett – website editor