THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. ETHELFLAEDA, ROMSEY with ST. SWITHUN’S, CRAMPMOOR

The Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Romsey Abbey on Wednesday 24th April 2019 at 7.30p.m.

AGENDA

1) Opening prayers
2) Apologies for Absence

VESTRY MEETING
3) Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 18th April 2018 (draft minutes are below)
4) Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING
5) Minutes of the APCM held on 18th April 2018 (draft minutes are below)
6) Election of five members to the parochial church council for three years.
7) Election of Sidesmen
8) Report from the Electoral Roll Officer
9) Election of the Electoral Roll Officer
10) Parish Reports – PCC Committees (below)
    a) Deanery Synod
    b) Abbey Development Group
    c) Children and Young People
    d) Church Rooms
    e) Church Together in Romsey
    f) Environmental
    g) Fabric
    h) Financial Resources
    i) Health and Safety
    j) Magazine
    k) Pastoral
    l) Social Committee
    m) St. Swithun’s

11) Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2018
12) Election of Independent Examiner
13) Group reports (below)

Abbey groups
a. Assistant Vergers and Servers
b. Bellringers
c. Catering Team
d. Communion Assistants and Sub-Deacons
e. Home Groups
f. Infant Sunday School
g. Mothers’ Union
h. Parish Lunch
i. Romsey Abbey Choirs
j. Romsey Abbey and St Swithun’s Women’s Group
k. Romsey Abbey School
l. Romsey Abbey Youth Groups
m. Sewing and Knitting Group
n. Stewards
o. Toddler Fellowship
Associated organisations
1. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
2. Friends of Romsey Abbey
3. Children’s Society
4. Christian Aid
5. George’s Trust
6. Music in Romsey
7. Triangulate

14) Vicar’s report
15) Question time
16) Closing prayers

AGENDA ITEM 3

Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting for the Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda with St Swithun’s, held in Romsey Abbey on Wednesday 18th April 2018.

In the absence of an incumbent, the meeting was required to appoint a chairman. Mrs Janet Wallace proposed that Mr Nigel Herriott should chair the meeting (seconded by Mr Ian Russell). This was unanimously agreed.

The Revd David Potterton opened the meeting with prayers.

Copies of the Vestry Meeting minutes of 24th April 2017 were circulated with the annual report before the meeting. The Chairman asked the meeting whether he should sign the minutes as a correct record of the meeting. All agreed.

The Chairman explained that it is the custom in our parish for churchwardens to serve for four years. Mr Herriott had served for four years and was standing down. Mrs Janet Wallace had served for two years and was willing to serve for a further term. She was proposed by Mr Nigel Herriott and seconded by Mr Tim Burbidge. Mr Christopher Pritchard was proposed by Mr David Newman and seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner. There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Mrs Wallace and Mr Pritchard elected.

They were formally accepted by the meeting for presentation at the forthcoming Archdeacon’s Visitation.

The Chairman said that this concluded the Vestry Meeting

AGENDA ITEM 5

Draft Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church meeting for the Parish of Romsey held in Romsey Abbey on Wednesday 18th April 2018

1. OPENING PRAYERS
The Revd. David Potterton (Assistant Curate) opened the meeting prayers. In the absence of an incumbent, in accordance with the Church Representations Rules, Mr Nigel Herriott, Senior Church Warden, took the chair.

2. APOLOGIES
There were 84 present and 11 apologies. Lists filed with these minutes.

Items 3 and 4 are recorded in the Annual Vestry Minutes.

5. MINUTES
The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017 were taken as read. The Chairman asked if everyone agreed to him signing them as a true record of the meeting. Agreed unanimously.

6. ELECTIONS
a) Deanery Synod members are elected for three years. All elected Synod members’ term of office ends at the APCM 2020. The Parish had at the time five elected representatives. The number on the Electoral Roll allows there to be seven
representatives. The following nominations were received before the meeting: Mr Anthony Cross, proposed by Mr Michael Phillips and seconded by Mrs Jane Horne; Mrs Patricia Kerridge, proposed by Mrs Natalie Carr and seconded by Dr Jane Hargreaves. There being no other nominations these individuals were elected unanimously. Therefore, the seven Deanery Synod members were Miss Julie Carlton, Mr Anthony Cross, Mrs Jane Horne, Mrs Patricia Kerridge, Mrs Adrienne Mordan, Mrs Elizabeth Wagner and Mrs Janet Wallace. Their remaining term of office is until 2020.

b) Parochial Church Council (PCC) - The PCC may include up to 15 elected members. There were 9 vacancies, including one for one year and two for two years. All other vacancies were for three years. Mr Michael Phillips was not standing for re-election. Mr Chris Pritchard, having been elected Churchwarden at the Annual Vestry Meeting, did not require election to the PCC; Mrs Diane Hargreaves and Mr Tim Burbidge had reached the end of their term of office. Mrs Jane Hammond, Mr Andrew Jenvey and Mr Dan Lally had stood down during the year. Other vacancies had been unfilled.

The following nominations had been received before the meeting: Mr Timothy Burbidge, proposed by Mr Victoria Burbidge and seconded by Mrs Jennifer Herriott; Mr W. John Gould, proposed by Mrs Janet Wallace and seconded by Mrs Glynne Beasley; Mrs Diane Hargreaves, proposed by Miss Julie Carlton and seconded by Mr Brian Drysdall; Mr G. David Johnson, proposed by Mrs Pamela Leech and seconded by Mrs Diane Hargreaves; Dr Mich Lajeunesse, proposed by Mr Nigel Herriott and seconded by Mrs Fiona Jenvey; Mrs Pamela Leech, proposed by Mr David Johnson and seconded by Mrs Diane Hargreaves; Mr Timothy Rogerson, proposed by Mr Geoff Mordan and seconded by Mrs Adrienne Mordan; Mrs Susan Tofts, proposed by Mr David Bibby and seconded by Mrs Janet Wallace. There being no other nominations these individuals were elected unanimously. Therefore PCC members, elected to serve a term of three years (until 2021 unless otherwise stated) were Mr Timothy Burbidge, Mr W. John Gould, Mrs Diane Hargreaves, Mr G. David Johnson, Dr Mich Lajeunesse (two years to 2020), Mrs Pamela Leech (two years to 2020), Mr Timothy Rogerson (one year to 2019), Mrs Susan Tofts. There was one vacancy remaining. The PCC may also co-opt up to three members.

7. SIDESMEN
Mrs Diane Hargreaves gave the report on the Sidemen. There were 52 sidesmen on the rota, and the churchwardens were very grateful for the willing way they do their duties. Mrs Bridget Brook and Mr Jordan Montague had stepped down. Mrs Annie Wattie had returned to the list and Mr Geoff Mordan, Mr Paul Quinnell, Mrs Martha Smiley and Mr Frank Smiley had joined the sidesmen during the year. The Chairman proposed that with these additions the 52 names be accepted en-bloc, which was agreed unanimously.

8. REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER
The Electoral Roll Officer, Mr Ian Cox, reported that the Electoral Roll had been placed in the Abbey & St. Swithun’s to allow people to check their details and had subsequently been updated. He said there were now 543 names on the roll, up 7 from last year (536), of which 425 persons were resident in the parish (419 in 2017). The meeting agreed that he should submit the required certificate to the Diocese. Mr Cox reminded the meeting that next year a new Electoral Roll must be compiled, and everyone will need to complete a new form. He confirmed that all data is managed and controlled to meet the requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which come into effect in May 2018.

9. ELECTION OF ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER
Mr Ian Cox was standing down as Electoral Roll Officer. The Chairman, on behalf of the PCC, thanked him for his diligence for many years. Mr Andrew Walkling was willing to stand and was proposed by Mrs Janet Wallace and seconded by Mr Ian Cox. Agreed unanimously.

10. PARISH REPORTS – PCC COMMITTEES
Reports were received from the following committees and taken as read before the meeting:

a) Deanery Synod
b) Abbey Development Group
c) Children & Young People
d) Church Rooms
e) Churches Together in Romsey
f) Communications (including Magazine)
g) Environment
h) Fabric
i) Fellowship and Fundraising
j) Financial Resources
k) Health & Safety
l) Pastoral
m) St. Swithun’s

Miss Sarah Hargreaves noted that the Discipleship Committee had not met during 2017 and asked that it be revived. There were no other questions or comments on committee reports.
11. ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2017

The report and accounts had been available before the meeting for review. The Treasurer presented the accounts which were prepared in accordance with Charity Commission requirements and noted that all funds had to be used for the PCC’s charitable purpose.

Most restricted funds, including Fabric, had increased by a small amount, due to investment gains. The fund for the Children and Families Worker had decreased in 2017 as the salary was met in part from this fund. Robin Bishop had left the Parish a percentage of his residual estate to be invested in the CBF fund with income to be spent for the charitable purposes of the parish. The parish had so far received £1.9m (in instalments) which had been invested. This had provided £49k income in 2017. Income to the general fund from planned giving and collections had increased. Overall during 2017, income was £466k (£397k in 2016) and expenditure was £414k (£393k in 2016). The result for the year was therefore a surplus £52k (£4k in 2016). However most of that surplus was accounted for by income from Robin Bishop’s legacy and a donation of £10k from the Quilters’ Exhibition. The 2017 budget had been agreed before the size of the legacy was known.

Reserves had increased slightly, and the amount owed by debtors had decreased – including the loan to the Abbey School which was now being repaid. Parish share had been paid in full and on time. Looking ahead, the budget for 2018 had been set for a small surplus. Higher expenditure was expected in 2018, due to an increase in parish share, more staff, abbey building works and the refurbishment of the church room toilets. The budget also included increased mission giving.

Mr David Johnson asked if the parish could use funds to employ another stipendiary priest. The Treasurer and Chairman confirmed that the funds could be used for this purpose, but that such an arrangement would be in breach of the Church of England’s agreement on clergy numbers for each Diocese. The Treasurer said that, as he had agreed to take on the role when the previous Treasurer stepped down until the APCM following appointment of new Vicar, a new Treasurer would need to be found for April 2019 onwards. The Chairman thanked Mr Rogerson and the whole Treasury team for their hard work during the year. He also highlighted the work of the Finance and Resources Committee which was successfully bearing down on costs.

12. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

On behalf of the Finance and Resources Committee, Mr Ian Clark proposed the reappointment of Julie Mutton of Smith and Williamson as the Independent Examiner (seconded by Mr Colin Davies). Agreed unanimously.

13. REPORTS SUBMITTED BY GROUPS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PCC AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Abbey Groups

a) Assistant Vergers and Servers
b) Bellringers
c) Catering Team
d) Communion Assistants and Sub-deacons.
e) Home Groups
f) Infant Sunday School
g) Mothers’ Union
h) Parish Lunch
i) Romsey Abbey Choirs
j) Romsey Abbey & St Swithun’s Women’s Group
k) Romsey Abbey School
l) Romsey Abbey Technical Support
m) Romsey Abbey Youth Groups
n) Sewing & Knitting
o) Stewards

There were no questions or comments on these reports.

Associated Organisations

a) Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
b) Friends of Romsey Abbey
c) Children’s Society
d) Christian Aid
e) George’s Trust
f) Music in Romsey
g) Triangulate

There were no questions or comments on these reports.
14. SENIOR CHURCHWARDEN’S REPORT
The Chairman explained that during an interregnum, the incumbent’s legal responsibilities are delegated to the churchwardens and the Area Dean. He thanked the Revd David Potterton, whom Bishop Jonathan had appointed to lead the clergy team during the vacancy and to provide pastoral leadership to the Parish. He also thanked the SSMs and retired clergy for their huge support both in taking services and providing pastoral support.

He mentioned that the Revd David Potterton would be moving to Lyndhurst and that the Revd Jonathan Watkins would be moving to Knutton, Cheshire, and thanked them both. Also within the clergy team the Revd Paul Hollingworth had retired from full time work and was now able to spend more time on pastoral work, supporting the Revd Jill Aussant. The Chairman also thanked the Verger Neil Howe, who would be leaving in the summer, and would go with best wishes for his new role; the two parish administrators, and the Director of Music. In this time of change the fact that the parish continued to run well was a tribute not just to the clergy and churchwardens but to all who contribute. The Chairman said that following interviews on 17 April, a priest had been offered the role of incumbent and had accepted. The identity of the priest could not be disclosed until his current parish had been told.

Further change could be expected due to the proposed Deanery reorganisation. The Deanery and Diocese had recommended that the north of Deanery should lose a stipendiary priest, and that role should be reallocated to Romsey. The proposal was awaiting approval from the Church Commissioners. This had been made possible because Romsey PCC has agreed to fund a house for duty priest for Kings Somborne, which would fall outside the diocesan budget. At a cost of £15k per year, this was considerably lower than the cost of a priest to the parish. If approved, the parish would advertise for a second stipendiary priest by the end of 2018, to lead mission to the town, including the new housing development at Whitenap, and working with Rhiannon to reach families. We also needed to reach out to younger people.

The new Vicar would have a challenging leadership task and would have to make choices about what to pursue. It was encouraging that the PCC was made up of capable people to support and guide this work. Finally, the Chairman said that he had reached the end of his four-year term as Churchwarden and thanked his fellow-wardens, Mrs Liz Wagner and Mrs Janet Wallace for their support over this time. He wished Mr Chris Pritchard well. Mrs Janet Wallace conveyed thanks of all to Mr Herriot for chairing the meeting, and for all he had done in his four years as churchwarden. He had risen to the challenge of the interregnum, as well as line-managing the Children and Families Worker during the interregnum and creating an excellent parish profile for the recruitment process for the new priest. He had also been safeguarding officer, a role which he would continue. Mrs Wallace then presented a gift to Mr Herriot and thanked Mrs Jenny Herriot for her support.

15. QUESTION TIME
Mr David Johnson asked whether the timescale for the arrival of the new priest was known. Mr Herriot said that it was hoped that the family would move in time for the new school year in September.

16. CLOSING PRAYERS
There being no further questions the meeting finished with the Grace at 9.15p.m

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AGENDA ITEM 10

PARISH REPORTS – PCC COMMITTEES

a)  Deanery Synod
As reported last year, the Deanery had spent much of 2017 drawing up a proposal for pastoral reorganisation. In February 2018 this was presented to the Deanery Synod and duly endorsed. This was to:

- create a new benefice from Broughton with Bossington, Houghton, Longstock, Leckford, Mottisfont and Stockbridge with housing at Stockbridge with one full time Stipendary post;
- add a House for Duty Priest in Charge (part time) to the Parish of Somborne with Ashley, with housing in Kings Somborne, grouped with United Benefice of Braishfield; and
- add a full time Stipendiary Clergy post to the Parish of Romsey.

The proposal was then presented to the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee and approved. Progress has been made during the year to fill these new roles and it is hoped that the new appointments will be concluded in 2019. In April it was announced that the chosen name of the new benefice was the Mid Test Benefice – they have now formed a Benefice Council and their first joint service was held in July. The Deanery Synod met in October for a presentation to the Ven Peter Rouch, Archdeacon of Bournemouth, to give an update on the progress of the Deanery Mission Action Plan.

Christine Brazier
b) Abbey Development group
During the course of the year the work of the Group halted. In the changed circumstances the group had done as much useful work as was possible. I met the PCC and recommended that it should take over responsibility for three streams of work which one would ordinarily expect the PCC to carry out and which would have lasting value even if the projected project were dropped or changed.

The first was the preparation of a business plan (5-year cash flow forecast). This would act as a base against which future projects could be measured and its preparation would help the PCC to identify other items of expenditure and the sources of funds. It was agreed that this should be prepared by the Financial Resources Committee. The second was the preparation of a Conservation Strategy. And the third was Preparatory work (environmental monitoring) for the conservation of the exterior Saxon Rood. The Fabric Committee is to oversee these two activities, and the monitoring is under way led by Diane Hargreaves (the Development of the conservation strategy has been off and on due to health issues with those to undertake it.)

It should be stressed that these activities should be undertaken with our new incumbent whose input will be essential in drawing up these long term plans. Additionally, it is not just the plans that are of value but the process of deriving them which should be comprehensive and involve volunteers as well as post holders. The timing could not be better and a new long term vision should be the output. As this is the province of the PCC the Development Group itself is not presently doing anything.

Keith Bamber

c) Children and Young People
The Children and Young People’s Committee (CYPC) met regularly in 2018. We reviewed the aims and objectives of the group and based them around the booklet “The changing face of family ministry” (www.going4growth.com). The aims of the committee are:

1. To provide a forum for the groups that offer ministry to children, young people and their families at the Abbey;
2. To recognise family in its widest context and the needs of all, regardless of diversity; and
3. To provide a voice for children, young people and families within the Abbey congregation.

With this in mind the CYPC has endeavoured to ensure that its membership reflects the activities of the Abbey congregation in its co-opted membership. CYPC includes the parish Safeguarding Officer and for the first time the Director of Music, given the large number of children in the choirs.

We are an important forum to help with the practical support of our children and families worker. We also ensure that there is inclusive discussion about activities that involve CYP and families within the Abbey. We have been involved in the planning of key events children and families including the Crib service and outreach activities such as Lego Church, and activities that build relationships such as Toddler Group, Singing Storytime and the annual summer Cooking Club, which do not feature explicit worship. In 2019 CYPC will continue its outward facing ministry to the children and families of Romsey.

Mich Lajeunesse

d) Church Rooms
The Church Rooms Committee met 6 times during 2018. The Committee is continuing to encourage usage of the Church Rooms, allowing for the Parish needs. Further fitness classes have been added to the programme. Opportunities have been taken to raise funds. Parish Lunches, baptism parties, teas and providing coffee for events, have continued. The Committee thanks the Parish Lunch Team, the Catering Team, the Sunday Coffee teams for their work, to help with fund raising.

The refurbishment of all the toilets commenced in February 2018. The newly formed store room is in full use. Quotes for replacing the flooring in the reception hall have been received, to be completed in the New Year 2019. Funds from Parish Lunches have been donated towards the flooring. The Verger’s flat was decorated prior to the arrival of the new Verger.

The Church Rooms continues to comply with the standards of: Action For Children H&S Inspection Checklist for Outreach Venues. These are thought to be relevant to any group hiring the Church Rooms. A CCTV system has been installed. Environmental issues have been discussed with the introduction of more environmentally friendly cleaning products where possible, to meet with BS EN Standards. Swift boxes have been attached to the outside of the Church Rooms.

Jo Whitfield

e) Churches Together in Romsey
Churches Together in Romsey is formed of the Ministers and Representatives of the following Romsey Churches: Romsey United Reformed, Elim, Freedom, Romsey Abbey and St Swithun’s, Romsey Baptist, Romsey Methodist, Romsey Quakers, and St Joseph’s Roman Catholic. It enables the following ecumenical and united events, while also providing a means of circulating events organised by the Churches, other groups and their needs.
During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a joint service was held at the Elim Church on 21st January with Bob Miles as speaker. At the AGM Mark Sills became the new Secretary for CTiR. Katie Deadman from the Methodist Church’s National Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network spoke. Some ecumenical Lent Groups took place. An Act of Witness took place in the Corn Market on Good Friday. All joined together in the Say One for Me prayer initiative in the nine days leading up to Pentecost. The CTiR Group organised wrapping Christmas presents, some prayer breakfasts throughout the year and Woodley Fun Day. The Hope Choir toured Residential Homes at Easter and Christmas. As in previous years, we printed and distributed 10,000 Easter Cards and 10,000 Christmas cards to the residents of Romsey, containing details of the Church Services.

Margaret How

f) Environment
The Group raises awareness of environmental issues among the congregation and in the wider community and assists the Abbey in making environmentally-sensitive choices. Though the group has been dormant and not met since April it has made some significant progress. Central to the activities of the PEG has been our application for EcoChurch Status ([https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/](https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/)). The Abbey is now eligible for Silver level and requires documentation to be completed. Steps towards this status have included, but are not limited to, the use of green cleaning products, monitoring and reducing energy usage, fitting double glazed windows in Verger’s flat. Other activities included the Rogation Ramble with Churches Together in Romsey (6 May) and the compline service (July 23rd) that was attended over 50 people who then went out into the dusk to track bats around the Abbey, Memorial Park and Sadler’s Mill. Swift boxes have been installed under the eaves of the parish rooms but no swifts have yet taken up residence. A second annual Environment lecture planned for November did not take place. Following the hiatus, the members of the group have all agreed that they wish the PEG to continue and are taking steps towards this. The members all wish to express their thanks to Charlotte Belcher for her inspirational leadership.

John Gould

g) Fabric
Servicing has been undertaken of heating boilers, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, roof safety rails and equipment, lightning conductors and roof alarms by professional companies. Professional firms have been employed for re-pointing stonework, repairing some lead gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective lightning conductors, treating death watch beetle infestation, reporting on conservation of external Rood, modification of gutters, flashings and roof tiles, window cills, hinge to the north gate, and defective

Volunteers have made cross holders and a red frontal. Volunteers have also repaired the Caroline Noel brass fixings, counter flap to welcome desk, cleaned and painted gates, white lining to step, the west gate light, and proposal for re-presentation of apsidal excavation in North Transept. Replacements included organ humidifier, sludge buckets and “A” boards. New works include emergency lights in the South Transept staircase and new fuse boxes, safety rails to the North Transept triforium. In the South Garth William Hill has been appointed to cut the grass, weekly in summer and fortnightly in winter. Experiments to eliminate ground elder and a working party to control the overgrown beds have taken place. Finally, Michael Drury, Surveyor to the Abbey for the last twenty years, is now partially retired and Julian Vallis has been appointed in his place.

J. Diane Hargreaves

h) Financial Resources
Major activities during 2018 included:

- Gift Aid administration kept up to date and compliant;
- Observing that staff payroll outsourcing continues to work well;
- Successful VAT reclamation via Listed Places of Worship Scheme;
- Noting that Parish Giving Scheme membership continues to grow;
- Conducting a Giving in Grace campaign which emphasised the need for regular giving;
- Continuing to invest instalments of Robin Bishop’s legacy of endowment capital;
- Receiving a second annual payment in full against a second annual payment in full against the interest-free loan made to the Governors of Romsey Abbey C of E Primary School;
- Launching the Give as You Live Scheme;
- Reviewing Business Continuity (Disaster Recovery) Plans for Abbey, St Swithun’s, Church Rooms & Parish Office;
- Receiving Mission & Charitable Giving plan from the newly formed Mission & Giving subcommittee and proposing the same to the PCC;
- Continued review, updating and rationalisation of PCC banking accounts and signatories;
- Reviewing and updating PCC’s Financial Procedures and Policies;
- Reviewing and updating the PCC’s Risk Register;
- Reviewing and updating the Succession Plan for all key roles in PCC committees and groups;
• Monitoring income generated by GoodBox c.£3k raised in 2018;
• Ensuring that the PCC was GDPR compliant;
• Overseeing the establishment and operation of the Parish Database.

We have had a very busy year. Thanks to all members of FRC who have contributed to the committee’s work but in particular to Tim Rogerson in his role as PCC Treasurer, for his valuable advice, guidance and for maintaining robust financial accountability. In addition, our grateful thanks to Clare Scott for becoming secretary to FRC.

Liz Wagner

i) Health & Safety
The purpose of the Committee is to keep under review arrangements for health and safety at the Abbey and St Swithun’s, to fulfil our statutory responsibilities towards those working, worshipping or volunteering in, or visiting, Abbey premises or St Swithun’s. We met five times during the year and have continued with the programme of safety inspections each month. We ran an Abbey evacuation exercise following the main Sunday service in July which highlighted useful lessons. The parish policy for personal safety (for those working alone) and the fire risk assessment were updated and signed off by the PCC in November. Anyone with an interest in ensuring we maintain a safe and secure environment would be most welcome to join the Committee.

Julie Carlton

j) Magazine
The Magazine enjoyed another highly successful year, published monthly with a 24 pagination and 520 print-run. Print Production continues with 160gram smooth outer and 100gram inner A3 paper (FSC Certificated) with full colour wrap. Sales of the Magazine remain strong, with approximately 400 copies delivered by a team of 35 Distributors, the balance sold in the Abbey. £4k was transferred to the PCC account, with a £7k bank balance for production services as at year end. Advertising continues to be strong, contributing £2,650 in the year.

Gareth Roberts is retiring from his position as Magazine Treasurer, and we offer Gareth our warmest thanks for many years sterling service. Adrian Taylor, supported by his son Nate, is taking over Accounts Management and Ken Gibson will temporarily take on the Advertising role until a replacement is recruited. The Magazine continues to publish full editorial from across both the Abbey and St Swithun’s congregational activities.

Ken Gibson

k) Pastoral Committee
During 2019 the Pastoral Care Committee met five times. Members are drawn from all areas of lay pastoral work within the parish. Revd Paul Hollingworth will replace Revd Jill Aussant as Chair and leader in the oversight of pastoral care after the forthcoming APCM. The purpose of the group is: to oversee, with the Vicar, pastoral care within the parish; to support existing pastoral care; and to develop the pastoral work of the Abbey community. The committee divides its work into four principal areas:

Pastoral Visiting - The focus has been on future membership of the committee and on plans for more effective pastoral care, to be discussed with Revd Thomas Wharton; compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation; the keeping of confidential records of visits; better information on the Abbey’s pastoral work; attracting more volunteers.

Occasional Offices - The focus has been on best practice for preparation of families for baptism services, in conjunction with the work of Revd Thomas Wharton and the baptism visitors. The question of a system of bereavement care has been considered.

Young people - The focus has been on how we can best follow up on some successful work by Rhiannon in attracting families with young children to the Abbey. The importance of helping to ensure children’s mental health was noted.

Care of the elderly in residential homes, sheltered housing complexes, hospital and at home - The focus has been on improved identification of needs, particularly in residential settings, so that we can more adequately respond.

It has been largely a holding year, because of the interregnum. A review of the Committee’s work has been begun and the possibilities for a future strategy considered.

The Revd Jill Aussant

l) Social Committee
The Abbey Social Committee was formed at the inaugural meeting held on 17th November 2017. The new committee was a joint initiative between those responsible for organising activities for the Friends of Romsey Abbey and what was formerly the Fellowship and Fundraising Sub-Committee of the PCC.
The primary aims are:

- to offer all associated with the Abbey, including The Friends of Romsey Abbey, a brilliant, varied and interesting Events Programme including a range of talks, activities and trips to local places of interest. We were especially keen to offer opportunities that appealed to our families with children; and
- to retain the best of what the Friends and 2F previously offered, whilst introducing fresh ideas and opportunities, particularly by introducing new members into the Team.

We enjoyed a highly successful first year of operation, organising nine Events and raising money for Abbey funds. The events were an Africa Evening Talk, The Hatchet Inn Walk (Sherfield English), Lyburn Cheese Evening, Churches Tour of Test Valley, Flack Manor Brewery Romsey, The Wheatsheaf Walk (Braishfield), Royal Oak Walk (Fritham), Grand Quiz Night at The Star, Desert Island Discs with Thomas Wharton,.

Ken Gibson

m) St. Swithun’s

St Swithun’s had an average congregation of 30 on ordinary Sundays. 42 people attended on Easter day, 46 the St Swithun’s Patronal Festival service, 47 the carol service, and 56 Christmas day. There were 4 funerals and 8 baptisms. In September a short Collation service took place at St Swithun’s before the main Collation and Induction Service for the Revd Thomas Wharton at the Abbey. SPACE met each second Sunday at 6.30 pm. Singing Story Time, run by Rhiannon, met on Monday mornings in school term time. The church was used also for meetings of the PCC and Romsey Good Neighbours.

The quinquennial building inspection and the accompanying electrical system test were carried out. The hedge was reduced in size. At the end of year, the proposed light for the cross on the west end of the church still awaited a faculty from the Diocese even though we applied for it many months previously. Fund raising events included the ever-popular pie and prosecco lunch, a spring sale, a beetle drive, a whist drive, and a monthly sale of books, DVDs and jigsaws. We raised £1,650 including £1,000 for the Parish General Fund.

Harvest festival gifts were sold and the £65.50 raised was given to Romsey Food Bank. A communal Christmas card board raised £65 for the Romsey Family Support Group. Members of the congregation and other supporters cut the grass, maintain the garden and clean the Church. Members of the congregation also arrange flowers, act as communion assistants and sidesmen and read lessons.

Richard Pratt

GROUP REPORTS - ABBEY GROUPS

a. Assistant Vergers and Servers

The Abbey's team of Servers and Assistant Vergers have continued to support the Abbey's services throughout the past year. As the new Verger coming in to the Abbey at a very busy time, just before the St Ethelflaeda Festival and the whole run-up to Christmas, I was extremely pleasantly surprised to find such a dedicated and enthusiastic team of servers and assistant vergers which makes the Abbey services run smoothly for the congregations which attend. Their help and commitment make all the difference! My thanks especially go to Brian Normington, who leads the Assistant Vergers and their rota for help with setting up the Sunday services especially, and also to Sarah Riley who manages the Servers' rota with a dedication and continuity that is greatly appreciated. The other volunteers who help with daily services, baptisms, and the opening and closing of the Abbey are also greatly valued. I would like to thank Phyllis Day and Steven Wood for their daily support and care of the morning Eucharists, along with Jordan who looks after baptisms on Sunday afternoons and is also joining the servers' rota, and our new assistant vergers, Gillian and Alan Busher and Nick Pomeroy. Having such a reliable and dedicated team of volunteers is a blessing and we are always on the lookout for new recruits to the team, in any capacity! I look forward to the upcoming year in the Abbey, and again would like to express my gratitude for all the hard work from the Assistant Vergers and Servers!

Robyn Cleveland

b. Bell ringers

The bell ringers are responsible for ensuring the Abbey’s fine ring of eight bells is rung for services, weddings and other occasions and that the bells are rung and maintained to a high standard. In 2018 we rang for services on every Sunday morning and all but one Sunday evening and 27 weddings. We rang for the wedding of Harry Wales and Megan Markle and for the centenary of the end of the First World War on November 11th with open ringing at 12.30pm for the national Ringing Remembers Campaign. In May we won the Guild 6-bell striking competition held at Lockerley. Four peals were rung during the year all of which included at least one local ringer. In October a new method St Ethelflaeda Delight Major was rung for the first time as part of the St Ethelflaeda Festival. We rang handbells at the Abbey Christmas Fair and rang in the New Year on 31 December.

Richard Pratt
There were numerous guided tower tours during the year and visiting bands from Wareham and Sherbourne. Other events included a 10-bell practice at St Michael’s Southampton and a Surprise Major practice at the Clock House bells in Awbridge.

I was interviewed on Radio Solent after a lack of bells the previous New Year’s Eve caused negative comments in the media. Sadly, we learned of the death of Ivor Trueman a former Romsey ringer and Tower Captain for many years. On a happier note, we welcomed our new Vicar Thomas Wharton in September with a quarter peal. In June there was a learners’ outing to six towers between Bishopstoke and New Alresford and in October our main outing took us to Godalming and the surrounding area.

To integrate learners into the main Wednesday practices without unbalancing the variety of ringing enjoyed by the more experienced ringers, it was decided to bring the start forward half an hour, with the first hour dedicated to elementary ringing and the second hour to more advanced ringing. An article in the Romsey Advertiser informed residents and described our high-tec training facilities and our growing band of enthusiastic ringers. The extended practices have worked very well. I have really enjoyed my year as Tower Captain at this very special building with its fabulous bells. We have an unusually large number of ringers with a wide range of experience. There is a tremendous team spirit and I am comforted by the fact that everyone keeps turning up.

Alistair Brown

c. Catering team

The Abbey Catering team has about 30 volunteers who help by cooking, baking and serving at a very wide variety of Abbey and private events, small and large. During 2018 the team has been very much in demand and events have included monthly Parish Tea (last Sunday of each month), Christian Aid Lent Lunch, Lego Church (3rd Saturday of each month), Harvest Lunch, funeral wakes, baptism & birthday parties, farewells for Jonathan Watkins and David Potterton, welcome to Thomas as our new Vicar, a reception for Romsey Chamber of Commerce and several “thank-you” events for Abbey volunteers. In May the Team catered for the visiting choir from Germany providing breakfast and an evening meal for three days.

Since January 2018 the Abbey catering team has served refreshments at 95 events to approximately 6,600 guests and visitors. Proceeds from the catering events, after expenses, are added to the Abbey funds and during 2018 this total was around £2,500 including £890 donations from Parish Teas. Our thanks go to all the catering volunteers for their hard work and dedication in keeping the Benedictine tradition of hospitality alive in the Abbey today. The team looks forward to giving a warm welcome to new volunteers in 2019 both helpers and bakers.

Liz Wagner

d. Communion Assistants and Sub-deacons

In September 2018 we reached a significant “Birthday” for the administration of communion in the Parish. In 1988 we started with 12 assistants operating in the Abbey and at St. Swithun’s. Today 41 assistants are administering in both churches as well as several Nursing Homes, Care Homes, private houses and Romsey Hospital.

In 1988, the then Vicar, Neil Crawford-Jones, realised that administration of communion in the Abbey was taking far too long - as long as an anthem and two hymns. This was due to the significant increase in Romsey’s population and that only 4 people were administering at the altar. After consultation and with the approval of the PCC, also with the agreement of the bishop, it was decided to introduce ‘communion assistants’ at the Sunday Sung Eucharist services. Originally 12 people were invited to assist and of the original 12, four are still helping. Over the 30 years since the procedure was first introduced, the number of tasks has grown considerably, so the number of assistants has also increased. We now have 41 people licensed to assist including 6 sub-deacons helping during the services.

A rota is compiled every 3 months for the Abbey services and I am very grateful to those who assist as occasionally a late change is required; ‘late’ has at times meant whilst the service is in progress. Those assisting at St. Swithun’s work to their own rota, and visits to the Hospital, Nursing and Care Homes, and private houses are arranged through the Parish Office.

Brian Drysdall

e. Home groups

Barn House Home Group

We have continued to meet twice a month on Thursday evenings throughout the year with short breaks for Easter, Summer and Christmas. This year we have appreciated visits from David Potterton and Brian Taphouse and have shared home communions. We have enjoyed studying St Mark’s Gospel with the help of James Hoover; we are now working with Kristie Berglund as part of the Life Builder Series, considering the effect of the Resurrection as we live as an Easter people. We have enjoyed social times together and shall be sharing in the Lent Course as we journey towards Easter. New members are always welcome.

Barbie and Jean Evans
Harrage Home Group

Most of our home group members are relatively new Romsey residents, and we welcome others. We usually meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings of most months in The Harrage. During 2018 we had two series, one on ‘Barnabas’ and the other on ‘Women of the New Testament’. As a change, most of us joined with others from local parishes who met at Poppies Cafe in Timsbury for Wednesday evening sessions during Lent (‘God’s Springtime’) and November (‘Growing as Disciples’). We also enjoyed visits from a couple of missionaries back in England from Africa, enjoyed a social lunch and also heard about David Potterton’s amazing experiences earlier in his ministry. Through the year members of the group were very thankful for the practical and prayer support we were able to share.

Ian and Katy Clark

Woodley House Group

In the first part of 2018 we concluded St John’s Gospel (Tom Wright study). We then started studying Isaiah and in Lent we went to different Ecumenical groups. Revd Nik Gower came along to our house group one day. It was lovely to have him with us. We continued with Isaiah till July and started the Beatitudes in September. This was with the help of a Bible Study Book by John Stott ‘Developing Christian Character.’ I think we all found this most interesting and learnt a lot. We didn’t go to Poppies for the Pre-Advent Course this year, we just continued with the Beatitudes. We concluded the year with a great Christmas Party. We welcomed one new member and we continue to meet fortnightly. We do coffee as a house group four times a year. Our numbers still vary a lot, from 6 to 11 so anyone is welcome to join us at 7.30 pm on Thursday evenings at Bransley Close. Please contact us on Romsey 516185.

Margaret How

f. Infant Sunday School

We have had an exciting year; following the liturgy so that we are sharing the worship of our Abbey Family but also occasionally breaking away to give us a chance to look at things a little more closely, to dip into the Old Testament or to find out more about a charity or international event. We continue to make, bake, act out and tell stories as well as use the outdoor space and our beautiful building to vary our learning. This year at harvest we looked at sheep and wool and spent the month of September learning about the bible stories related to shepherds and sheep; we even challenged the diners at harvest supper with our sheep breed anagrams!

The children never cease to amaze us; their questions and comments challenge us to a deeper thinking or simply make us see again like a child. They delight in sharing their learning at the end of the service and we are grateful for the support and interest that the congregation shows. We regularly have 6 to 10 children attending, all with families in the service, who also attend Way In and special children and families events. The children have enjoyed getting to know Thomas and thank you to the whole clergy team for their support and encouragement.

Louise Newman, Anne Williams and Fleur Newman

g. Mothers’ Union

Sum up a year in the life of the Abbey’s Mothers’ Union group – briefly! Well, I’ll try. As we have done for generations, we continue to pray and work for all that builds up family life and faith in Christ. We have in 2018 found many and various ways to fulfil our calling. From the funeral of our long-valued member Margaret Wignall, who had served the branch in so many ways, to the joy of offering 2 local families under pressure a holiday away from it all; from the hilarity of Joyce Meader’s talk of knitting to the quieter shared reminiscences of our grandparents. We had 2 services in the Abbey, where we welcomed in September Thomas Wharton, whose feet had scarcely touched the ground in his new parish; Jill Aussant led our Lent Service. We shared a further service with a group of MU members from Portsmouth Diocese, visiting on the hottest day of the year – never was tea so gratefully drunk.

Members support Toddler Group and Singing Songtime in St.Swithun’s – and, of course, our Abbey Children & Families worker, Rhiannon, who is also a member. Two speakers offered their different perspectives on our Romsey community – the enthusiastic Mayor of Romsey, Dorothy Baverstock, and Stephen Ings, local historian, on the life in Victorian times of the residents of Middlebridge Street & Newton Lane – bleak. Our Strawberry tea and our Christmas party gave us the chance to relax and enjoy good company together with our guests.

Averil Bamber

h. Parish Lunch

This year we had 617 people who paid £4 to join us for lunch, apart from December, when we had our Christmas meal for which we charged £5 per head as it included a glass of wine. Those involved in the preparation do not pay for their lunches, as they donate their time and talents for the benefit of our clients plus items from their larders. Every month we have a raffle, most of the prizes being donated by our clients. We pay £10 per month for the Church Rooms utilities we use, and this year we were able to donate £2,000 towards the upgrading of the toilets and hall floor there too.
There has been much said recently about Social Prescribing, encouraging those who are in receipt of medication for conditions which are a result of insufficient social interaction. Many of those who come to our lunches live on their own, and to enjoy a meal they can afford in a sociable environment is good for their health both physical and mental. Without our willing team of volunteers who shop, cook and clear up afterwards we would not be able to do this, and we are very grateful to them all.

Liz Holloway

i. Romsey Abbey Choirs

This proved to be a rewarding and challenging year for the choirs. At the end of January, the choirs combined with the Romsey Sinfonietta for a concert of works by Mendelssohn and Schubert. Instrumentalists returned in Holy Week to accompany the choirs in Holy Week, for a performance of the Pergolesi Stabat Mater during a Palm Sunday evening meditation, and of the Bernstein Chichester Psalms during the Maundy Thursday Solemn Eucharist. On a more intimate scale, Choral Evensong continued during Ordinary Time on Thursdays at 5.45pm.

Two tours and two CD recordings took place during the year. In June, the boys and invited members of the back row set down a disc of English anthems to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the choir. Entitled Victorianal it is available priced £10 from the Gift Stall. In July the senior girls joined distinguished organist and former Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral, Colin Walsh, in Rouen to record a CD of plainsong and the Litanies à la Vierge Noire by Francis Poulenc – a memorable experience, by all accounts. This will be released sometime in 2019. In August, the boys and men undertook a successful visit to Cornwall, organised by Charlotte Belcher, singing four Evensongs at Truro Cathedral, plus an informal recital at Buckfast Abbey. They also enjoyed visits to the Eden Project and a steam railway and, on their last night, a walk by moonlight to see beavers in a specially-designed habitat on the farm where they stayed.

The Abbey Consort settled down into a more regular pattern of one service per month and sang at the Easter Ceremonies and joined the other choirs on Easter morning. During September George Richford was, unfortunately, indisposed for health reasons. Adrian Taylor and others stepped in during his absence. George tendered his resignation a couple of weeks after his return to work in October. The Vicar and Churchwardens decided to seek an Interim Director of Music after George’s departure, pending the appointment of his successor in 2019. The choirs took part in an exciting schedule of services during Advent, leading up to two Festivals of Nine Lessons and Carols – both attracted capacity congregations – and a Midnight Mass featuring a rarely-heard setting by Baroque composer Chiara Cozzolani, accompanied by strings and brass. George and Charlotte’s contribution to music and worship over ten terms at the Abbey was marked by a presentation on Christmas morning.

Dominic Brenton

j. Romsey Abbey and St Swithun’s Women’s Group

We are a group of women, of all ages and faith backgrounds, who enjoy learning, living, and each other’s company. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month in the Church Rooms, and usually have between 30 and 40 members in attendance. Special thanks to all the hard work put in by the members of our committee, and also to all our members who prepare and clear the meeting room, make coffee and help in so many other ways. We bracket the year with food! In January, we enjoyed a very elegant annual dinner at La Parisienne. Just before our Summer break we had our Ploughman’s Dinner with musical entertainment and met after the Summer with drinks and nibbles at the AGM. Finally, we celebrated pre-Christmas with a fish & chip supper, charades and carols.

We enjoyed eleven very varied talks through the year. “Armistice” when we remembered the wars of the last century with a personal talk of a family torn apart by fighting and very differently, Valentine’s Day, with a selection of music. We learnt some Makaton sign language in recognition of Romsey being the first town worldwide to be awarded status as a Makaton Friendly Town. A presentation on Hearing Dogs, complete with doggie visitors; a talk about Romsey Young Carers; and one about the Enham Trust charity which supports disabled people to live more independent lives.

A fascinating and funny talk of behind-the-scenes at several Eurovision Song Contests by a journalist covering the shows; a visit to the remote and abandoned island of Saint Kilda with insights to the lives of the community; and a visit from the Southampton Street Theatre, who present historical novelettes while walking the streets – even the streets of Romsey. Great fun reminiscing our childhood games at another meeting and a fascinating talk with lots of tips by local Tania Selwood on naturopathy, a whole-body approach to health.

Active meetings included a craft evening at Choice Plants, a tour of Hursley House, a skittles party at Wellow, and a quiz night, along with our regular wrapping party, where gifts for the Open the Box stall at the Abbey Christmas Fair are wrapped. A good year was had by all. Many thanks for your support.

Carole Allen-Morley
k. **Romsey Abbey Primary School**
As both a school and governing body we have made strong progress against our planned improvements and developments this year. Monitoring visits from Hampshire County Council have all indicated that we are on a strong trajectory to be rated “good” at our next Ofsted inspection (due Spring or Summer 2019). We welcomed three new teachers to our team in September, all of whom settled in quickly and are enjoying being part of the team.

Highlights during the year have been our annual residential visits both to Romsey Abbey with Year 5 and our trip to France with Year 6. All trips and visits continue to play an important part in our curriculum ensuring equality for all children in their starting points for a new topic or project. We continue to work closely with both Hampshire County Council and the diocese both for the training of staff and for regular updates. We have also begun to work in partnership with the Halterworth Teaching School and the Romsey Partnership of Schools. We have this year had the opportunity to support a student and be involved in several peer reviews with other schools.

**Julie-Anne Palfrey**

l. **Romsey Abbey Youth Groups**
Romsey Abbey Youth Group exists to provide a safe place for young people of high school age to socialise, relax and explore and deepen their faith in God. We meet on Tuesday evenings during term time between 6:45pm and 9pm in the Church Hall. During this time we play games, do activities such as cooking and explore an aspect of faith. We recently had a ten-week break from this format to complete the Youth Alpha course, which also served as confirmation preparation for two of the young people. When the weather is warmer we often head to the park. Currently around 12 young people are members of the group.

Events during the year have included Soul Survivor, a weekend away, Youth sleep out, Cathedral Beacon service at Pentecost, Christmas party, Ice-skating and Art Therapy. The highlights of the year were the trip to Soul Survivor and the Youth Weekend Away, both of which operate at a Deanery level. The relaxed and contemporary feel to these events connect well with the young people and serve to deepen their faith. During this last year Charlotte stepped down as a leader and Suzie has joined our team. Two of the young people over the age of 18 are now assisting as young leaders. We are thinking of ways we can continue to engage the young people after they have left high school.

**The Revd Nik Gower**

m. **Sewing and Knitting**
This year we were busy knitting and sewing blankets and garments for the Trussell Trust and Samara’s Aid. The Mission to Seamen was very grateful for our supply of hats, gloves and scarves and Mary Savage thanked us for our contributions to the boxes for Operation Christmas Child. We knitted and crocheted blankets for Southampton General and Princess Anne Hospitals. The maternity wards have 300 babies in their care at any one time and 36 cots in their neonatal intensive care unit. They give each child a blanket. So imagine how many blankets they go through each year! The larger blankets are useful for elderly patients. We also passed on a donation of soft toys which help to distract patients while they are on drips. We also helped Jane Horne collect wool for her visit to South Rwenzori. From our tea money we gave donations to The Mission to Seafarers and the South Rwenzori Link. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our members and donors who knit and crochet for our group.

**Maureen Batten and Anne Hewett**

n. **Stewards**
The rota of stewards was maintained during 2018, and stewards were present in the Abbey every day of the year. Their primary role is to welcome all visitors to the Abbey, whatever the reason for their visit. Stewards also answer questions where they can, and point visitors to further information. They cover 23 two hour sessions a week, generally working in teams of two, the majority volunteering every fortnight, and training is provided. In 2018 we had 74 permanent stewards, and 24 who stand in for absences.

Stewards welcomed nearly 43,090 visitors to the Abbey during 2018, representing a yearly increase in numbers. The stewards’ role has continued to be highlighted in very positive Trip Advisor comments. Sadly there were losses to the team in 2018, through death and resignations, the latter mostly due to declining health. Nearly all stewards are retired and the majority have volunteered for many years. Seven new stewards were recruited and this effort will need to continue in 2019. Two guided tours of the Abbey were well attended by stewards, giving them information and insight into specific areas of interest, which they can then share with our visitors. Two briefing meetings for stewards were held in the Church Rooms in April and September, to answer questions from the stewards and advise them regarding current Abbey procedures, and in December a joint informal coffee morning was held with the Gift Stall and Bookstall helpers.

**Sheila Latimer**
 Toddler Fellowship
We are currently running two toddler groups with different characters and mainly different attendees. One meets at the Church Rooms on Wednesday mornings and the other on Monday mornings at St Swithun’s. The Monday group, Singing Storytime, tends to attract between 6 and 10 families a week – a perfect number for a venue the size of St Swithun’s. The group is supported by Margaret How and Win Whittaker, who are both enormously popular with adults and children. At Singing Storytime, we tend to know families better and build deeper relationships. We are in competition with a number of franchised groups offering similar activity but what is distinctive is that we consciously try to encourage friendships between parents. The charge for this group is £1 per family.

The Wednesday group is a standard church toddler group experience. We have a range of toys and play areas available, an arty/crafty table and play tunnels, which I set up. We get around 15-20 families a week and like the Monday groups I aim to ensure everyone has someone to talk to. Over the time I’ve been responsible for the group, there have been a few people who’ve wanted to be part of a team for toddler group, but no-one is currently ready to step in. Over 2018 we had a number of treats for toddler group. To encourage attendance after a drop during the refurbishment of the toilets, I hired a company to come in and set up a ball pit, bouncy toys and large soft buildable blocks. In the summer we had our last meeting at Mottisfont for a reduced rate and before Christmas I was able to hire a party professional to come in and lead a party. Parents contributed party food and everyone had fun. There is suggested donation of £1 donation per family to attend. In Romsey we have a consumer market for parent and child activities and I am keen that we provide a quality experience. The current start time of 9.30 is under review as most do not arrive till 10am.

Rhiannon Wilmott

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

1. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
The Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund (the Appeal Fund) is a registered charity number 266393. It has existed since 1973 and its main object has always been to provide funds for the restoration and repair of the fabric of Romsey Abbey and its contents. Income in the last year to August 2018 comprises income from visitors to the Abbey, donations and legacies. Funds held also generate some interest income. Income in the last accounting year to August 2018 was £25,396. The Appeal Fund’s expenditure consists entirely of grants made to the Romsey Parochial Church Council to facilitate expenditure on the preservation, restoration and repair of Romsey Abbey and its contents in accordance with its charitable objects. During the year to August 2018 total grants of £42,635 were made. These grants were for the costs for repairs to and installing safety lines on the roof.

The Abbey Appeal Funds amounted to £630,766 at August 2018, down from £648,000 at August 2017. These funds are held solely for the benefit of the Abbey when required. If you would like to ensure that The Appeal Fund can continue to provide this financial assistance in the future and wish to consider a gift perhaps through using Gift Aid or a provision in your will please contact me as Treasurer. I will be happy to assist. My address is Campsie Glen, Sandy Lane, Romsey, SO51 0PD tel: 01794 367116 or email to redwards.proudreed@btconnect.com

Rachel Edwards

2. Friends of Romsey Abbey
The Friends give funds to the Abbey for projects that enhance the visitor experience and enable us to develop the work and outreach of the Abbey. We have 400 members. Last year we had some excellent events including a popular annual canal trip in April and a visit to the Hampton Court. We visited The Weald and Downland Museum, The Vyne and Sandham Memorial Chapel, ending in December with our theatre visit to Sonning Mill, near Reading, for the production of Guys and Dolls. A highly professional cast, excellent lunch and a full luxury coach. Our Social activities were greatly enjoyed too and we have been invited to join in with the Abbey Social Committee Events. Our Annual Dinner was held in October at the White Horse, Romsey with musical entertainment. Coffee mornings are held every other month in Romsey Town Hall, which are popular and well attended. We run the bottle stall at the Christmas Fair.

The Projects Group delivers our funding to Abbey Projects. We have funded a state of the art device in various local Care Homes to enable people regular access to the live streaming of Abbey services and audio-visual equipment to enhance communication between our Organist and Choir during services and rehearsals. We have also met the cost of replacement microphones for the existing P.A. system and funded the printing of 30,000 additional English Visitor Leaflets and 2000 Italian leaflets and 50,000 copies of the Abbey brochure. We also helped to part fund the Abbey’s Children and Families Worker and we sponsor the Ethelflaeda Festival.

Jill Hall
3. **The Children's Society**
The Children's Society Support Group is the local fund-raising group of the national charity associated with the Church of England. The Society's mission is to fight for change, supporting vulnerable & disadvantaged children in the UK. Romsey Support Group holds local events, organises an annual street and co-ordinates the Abbey Christingle service. The group also distributes the gifts from the Epiphany gift service, which this year were gratefully received by Romsey Family Support Group, Romsey Young Carers and Youth in Romsey. This year, we raised around £4,000. A large part of the income comes from generous parish home and business box-holders. Other fundraising events included a bingo evening with fish supper and the annual street collection.

2018 saw a change to how we will work in the future. At the AGM in May, I stepped down as Chairman after 10 years in the role. In the absence of a volunteer to be chairman and with the knowledge that many on the committee have done long service (combined service 302 years!), we decided to become less formal and change from a “committee” to a “support group”. So, no AGM and no officers required. 2019 is expected to be a quieter year to give everyone a break. We thank the congregation and our wonderful box-holders for their generous support. We are always on the lookout for new members to join the group so if you are interested or if you’d like to host a coffee morning or tea afternoon, please do contact me on 01794 390913

_Angela Howes_

4. **Christian Aid**
Romsey's Christian Aid (CA) Committee meets three times a year. Representatives from Romsey’s Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed and Anglican churches form the committee which raises funds via various events and appeals. 2018 fund raising activities included Lent Lunch, Christian Aid Week Door to Door Collection), Street Collection in October and entry into the Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival in December. In addition, during Christian Aid week, the Abbey held a bucket collection and a cake sale (£100 match funded by Ordnance Survey). The totals raised by Abbey Fundraising in 2018 was £3,212 compared with £3,150 in 2017.

Overall the Romsey CA Committee raised £9,525 (£10,397 in 2017) with the bulk of this coming from CA Week (£7,428.77 in 2018 and £6,642.45 in 2017). The Romsey CA Committee has raised £313,332 since its foundation in 1972 with an average of £10,605 per year since 2000. CA Appeal envelopes and posters can be found displayed in the Abbey all year round and activities are reported in Open Door. The Local Committee has space for another representative from the Abbey or St Swithun’s and I am ever hopeful that in 2019 a volunteer will be found. Thanks go to all those who contribute, support and work hard on the specific campaigns to help Christian Aid’s vision of ending poverty & Injustice worldwide.

_Liz Wagner_

5. **George’s Trust**
George’s Trust is very fortunate to be in the position of having wonderful support and due to this has had yet again, an amazing year. In December 2017, George’s Trust launched a new appeal to raise £50,000 to fund a specialised machine to help with Immunotherapy Cancer Research at Southampton University. At our Christmas Concert in Romsey Abbey in December 2018, we were able to award the first instalment of £20,000. This was an amazing amount to have been able to raise in such a short space of time and was totally due to a lot of hard work and some amazing support throughout 2018. As well as this, a grant for music was awarded to Romsey Abbey Choir. This follows £104,000 already given to the Teenage Cancer Ward in Southampton General Hospital as well as numerous other grants awarded for music, sport, team-building, camps and the Tall Ships Race to name but a few.

June 2019 sees the 10th Anniversary of the launch of George’s Trust and as the fundraising strives towards the £200,000 mark we are proud to celebrate all the Trust has achieved in that time. Although the launch came at a desperately sad time for George’s family and friends, we feel that George would be proud of all it has achieved and that is something to be marked. It would be lovely to see all our supporters at St Mary’s Stadium on June 7th for a Gala Dinner Dance. The setting for this event was chosen as the Southampton Football team and the stadium was very close to George’s heart, football being one of the loves of his short life. Details can be found on the George’s Trust website, facebook and Twitter. George’s Trust continues to have close links with Romsey Abbey and we are grateful for all the support we receive due to this bond.

_Jane O’Brien_

6. **Music in Romsey**
Music in Romsey had another extremely busy year with a record twenty-two concerts by both familiar and new groups. A wide range of music was performed with five concerts involving young performers, including the Winchester Symphony Orchestra’s Young Soloist of the Year competition. The high standard of musicianship was breath-taking and it was easy to forget that the soloist ages ranged from 15-19. In July we said a big thank you to Edna and Mike Rowland for their years of wonderful service to Music in Romsey. Edna was secretary and concert organiser for over 20 years, coordinating around 330 evening concerts and 42 lunchtime recitals. We are sad to see her go but know that she will remain connected to Music in Romsey.
In November we were delighted to present a Peace and Reconciliation concert with the Hampshire County Youth Orchestra and a choir from Giessen, Germany. The concert, hosted by Hampshire County Council, was a commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1. The young people in this concert were wonderful ambassadors for peace & reconciliation. Through the concert series, we have raised over £16,000 for Abbey funds. We were delighted to welcome Chris Green as the new Concert Manager and Thomas Wharton as Chairman. Music in Romsey relies on the generous support of many volunteers who put in a huge amount of work before, during and after each event and we are enormously grateful for their hard work and dedication. Please get in touch if you would like to join us to help in any way.

Tim Rogerson

7. Triangulate
When we formed Triangulate 10 years ago the founding Trustees agreed that our purpose should be to promote changes in understanding, attitudes and behaviours towards mental illness and positive mental health practices in the workplace. We revisit this purpose on a regular basis to check that we are still fulfilling this purpose and generally agree this is the case. Whilst it is now a much-spoken about topic, the sadness is that so many people continue to suffer and that the stigma surrounding the illness does still exist. The impact on family and work communities can be considerable. A particular concern is in the rise in the number of young people who are unwell and the limited availability of support for them. Our young people in the Abbey wanted to do something about this and arranged a Sleep-out in the South Garth, supported by Triangulate, raising an amazing £1,300 to be shared between four charities which work with young people.

We again entered a team in the Romsey Relay Marathon and enjoyed the community spirit of this event, raising both funds and awareness of Triangulate and the Abbey. We are grateful to have again received support from the PCC, and together with the sponsorship from the marathon we spend the majority of funds we receive on purchasing information booklets to distribute from our stand inside the South Door. These are taken very regularly both by local people and visitors to the Abbey.

Bridget Brook

This document has been compiled and edited by the PCC Secretary and the Treasurer. The PCC is grateful to all those who have submitted a report. The reports give only a flavour of the varied life of the Parish of Romsey.