

THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. ETHELFLAEDA, ROMSEY with ST. SWITHUN'S, CRAMP MOOR

The Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens and the
Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in Romsey Abbey on
Wednesday 18th April 2018 at 7.30p.m.

AGENDA

- 1) Opening prayers
- 2) Apologies for Absence

VESTRY MEETING

- 3) Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 24th April 2017 (*draft minutes are below*)
- 4) Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 5) Minutes of the APCM held on 24th April 2017 (*draft minutes are below*)
- 6) Election of 2 representatives to serve on Deanery Synod for two years and 6 parishioners to serve on 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) Communications
 - g) Discipleship
 - h) Environmental
 - i) Fabric
 - j) Fellowship and Fundraising
 - k) Financial Resources
 - l) Health and Safety
 - m) Outreach
 - n) Pastoral
 - o) St. Swithun's
- 11) Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2017
- 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) Junior Sunday School
 - h) Minister's Meeting
 - i) Mothers' Union
 - j) Romsey Abbey Choirs

- k) Romsey Abbey and St Swithun's Women's Group
- l) Romsey Abbey School
- m) Romsey Abbey Technical Support Team
- n) Romsey Abbey Youth Groups
- o) Sewing and Knitting Group
- p) Stewards
- q) Website

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

- 14) Senior Churchwarden's report
- 15) Question time
- 16) Closing prayers

AGENDA ITEM 3

Draft Minutes of the Annual Vestry Meeting for the Abbey Church of St Mary and St Ethelflaeda, Romsey with St Swithun's Crampmoor, held in Romsey Abbey on Wednesday 24th April 2017.

Chairman: the Revd. Canon Tim Sledge

The Vicar opened the meeting with prayers.

Copies of the Vestry Minutes 20th April 2016 were circulated with the Annual report before the meeting. The Vicar asked the meeting if they agreed to his signing the minutes as a correct record of the meeting. All agreed.

The Vicar thanked the Churchwardens, Mr Nigel Herriott and Mrs Janet Wallace for all the hard work they had undertaken. It is the custom in our parish for churchwardens to serve for four years. Mr Nigel Herriott had served for three and was willing to serve a fourth. He was proposed by Mr Michael Phillips and Seconded by Mrs Penny Simpson. Mrs Wallace had served for one year and was willing to serve for a second. She was proposed by Mr Tim Burbidge, seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner. There being no other nominations the Vicar said that it gave him great pleasure to welcome them to serve for another year.

They were formally accepted by the Vicar for presentation at the forthcoming Archdeacon's Visitation.

The Vicar said 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 Monday 24th April 2017

1. OPENING PRAYERS

The Vicar, the Revd. Canon Tim Sledge took the chair and opened the meeting with a reading from John 15 about the vine bearing true fruit followed by the Lord's Prayer.

2. APOLOGIES

There were 73 present and 10 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 Wednesday 20th April 2016 were taken as read. The Vicar 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 Synod members' term of office ends at the APCM 2017. The number on our Electoral Roll allows us to have 7 members. The following nominations were received before the meeting: Miss Julie Carlton proposed by Mrs Adrienne Mordan; seconded by Mr Chris Green; Mrs Adrienne Mordan proposed by Mrs Christine Brazier, seconded by Mrs J. Diane Hargreaves; Mrs Elizabeth Wagner proposed by Mr Colin Davies, seconded by Mr Ken Gibson; and Mrs Janet Wallace, proposed by Mr Tim Burbidge, seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner. As there were unfilled vacancies Mrs Jane Horne offered to stand again, proposed by Mrs Jane Hargreaves, seconded by Dr Patricia Brown. There being no other nominations these individuals were elected unanimously. Therefore Deanery Synod members are Miss Julie Carlton, Mrs Jane Horne, Mrs Adrienne Mordan, Mrs Elizabeth Wagner and Mrs Janet Wallace. This leaves 2 vacancies. This term of office is for three years until the APCM in 2020.

b) **Parochial Church Council**. There were 9 vacancies this year. Mrs Fiona Jenvey and Mrs Margaret How were not standing for re-election. The following nominations had been received before the meeting: Mr David Bibby, proposed by Mr Richard Pratt, seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Wagner; Dr Patricia Brown, proposed by Mrs Elizabeth Pratt, seconded by Mr John Gould; Mrs Jane Hammond, proposed by Mr Robert Gower, seconded by Mrs Jane Gower; Mr Andrew Jenvey, proposed by Mrs Margaret How, seconded by Mr David Newman; Mr Dan Lally, proposed by Mrs Margaret How, seconded by Mrs Wendy Ellis; and Mr Ian Russell, proposed by Mr Michael Wallace, seconded by Mrs Adrienne Mordan. There being no other nominations these were elected unanimously. Therefore PCC members elected are Mr David Bibby, Dr Patricia Brown, Mrs Jane Hammond, Mr Andrew Jenvey, Mr Dan Lally and Mr Ian Russell. All to serve a full term of office for three years (2020). There remained 2 vacancies for PCC.

7. SIDESMEN

Mrs Diane Hargreaves gave the report on the Sidemen. She said she had 48 volunteers. Dr and Mrs Wattie and Mrs and Mrs Phillips were stepping down. She thanked them for many years of service. Two new names were put forward Mr Jordan Montague and Dr Patricia Brown. The Vicar proposed that with these additions the names be accepted en-bloc, which was agreed unanimously.

8. REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

The Electoral Roll Office, 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, along with any notifications received during the year. He said there were now 536 names on the roll, up 12 from last year, of whom 419 were resident in the parish. The meeting agreed that he should submit the required certificate to the Diocese.

9. ELECTION OF ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Mr Ian Cox was willing to continue as Electoral Roll Officer. Proposed by Mrs Mary Dovey, seconded by Mrs Adrienne Mordan. Agreed unanimously.

10. PARISH REPORTS

Reports were received from the following PCC 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) Discipleship (see House Groups below)
- g) Fabric
- h) Fellowship & Fundraising
- i) Financial Resources
- j) Health & Safety
- k) Magazine
- l) Outreach
- m) Pastoral
- n) St. Swithun's

There were no questions or comments on committee reports.

11. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2016

The report and accounts were available before the meeting for review. The Treasurer (Andrew Jenvey) presented the main points using a powerpoint presentation. The accounts had been approved by an independent examiner with a clean examination report. The Treasurer highlighted the fact that the accounts showed the estimated income from Robin Bishop's bequest. The funds would be invested in the Central Finance Board Investment Fund and the PCC would receive the income generated thereby in perpetuity. Overall the accounts show a small surplus over the year of £4k. The Treasurer then invited questions. Mrs Pat Kerridge asked why the PCC had made a loan to the school towards their new extension. The Vicar explained that it made it the only fully accessible school in the area for children with disabilities and the school would start to repay it in May. The Treasurer thanked the whole Treasury team for their work during the year.

12. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Treasurer, Andrew Jenvey, recommended that the PCC continued with Julie Mutton of Smith and Williamson as its Independent Examiner. Proposed by Mr Ian Clark, seconded by Mrs Carole Lamb. Agreed unanimously.

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

Reports were received from the following Abbey Groups and associated organisations and taken as read before the meeting.

Abbey Groups

- a) Bellringers
- b) Communion Assistants and Sub-deacons.
- c) Home Groups
- d) Hospitality – catering, parish lunches, and visitors
- e) Infant Sunday School
- f) Junior Sunday School
- g) Ministers' Meeting
- h) Mothers' Union

- i) Romsey Abbey Choirs
- j) Romsey Abbey & St Swithun's Women's Groups
- k) Romsey Abbey School
- l) Romsey Abbey Technical Support Team
- m) Romsey Abbey Youth Groups
- n) Romsey Abbey Youth Orchestra
- o) Servers
- p) Sewing & Knitting
- q) Stewards
- r) Toddler Fellowship – Romsey Abbey Babies and Toddlers
- s) Web Site

There were no questions on these reports.

Associated Organisations

The Vicar noted that these were not strictly Abbey organisations but there was a significant overlap.

- 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

Mrs Jane Horne pointed out that there was no mention of the money donated by the Gift Stall and handed the Vicar a cheque for £5,000 for the Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund to go in next year's report.

14. VICAR'S REPORT

The Vicar read the following statement:

"The past 12 months have seen some significant growth in the life of the parish which is encouraging. Nationally, there are forever stories of the decline in congregations and of the influence of the Christian faith and of the relevance of the church in our national life. But here by hard work and God's good grace, we are responding to growth in many different ways. To highlight some, but not all...

Choir and Music – significant growth and development here – Songs of Praise has raised our profile, Scholarships with local schools, CD recording etc but above all lifted and contributed to the life of the worship of the church. It's not just about the word on the street. It is about the Word of God on the lips and hearts of our own. My thanks to George, Adrian and all our growing band of musicians.

Children and Families Worker. Rhiannon Wilmott has begun and is already developing her work in varied and creative ways. There is talk of Lego church, fresh expressions, church on Woodley estate as well as Rhiannon's work in school here and around the town. This is a really important development of our life outside of these walls as well as inside it. Shows that when you invest, that there are rewards. These two areas are made possible thanks to your generosity and our strong – albeit always vulnerable - financial base.

Whist we are thinking outside - Word on the street – **Say one for me and the Archbishop's Initiative of "Thy Kingdom Come"** last year when we went out on the streets and simply asked people what they would like us to pray for ? The response – only two people of 600 or so said no (one of those was a member of the congregation!!) It was a reminder that people still pray – that they are willing to talk about it – that we are trusted to share the good news. That prayer is answered. That we need to be seen as people who pray! More of this coming Pentecost time.

Hospitality – Stewards, food, the ministry of welcome. Trip adviser has amazing comments about the hospitality of people here – the welcome on Sundays, at coffee, more catering, more wine, Sunday afternoon teas which have taken off and Parish Lunches and countless other events where food has been

served by our amazing caterers and someliers. I am always quoting Bishop Jack Nichols who was formerly Bishop of Sheffield "What the church needs is more prayer and more parties" - these two things have demonstrated that in spades.

I want now to mention **St Swithun's** and to thank them for their hard work over a year where they have had something of a makeover. Painted walls which should cover and contain the perennial damp. A nice sanded floor and new carpet. Just a new font and the place will be even more transformed! And in a year when three real stalwarts of St Swithun's have died – Eileen Page, Barbara Knight, and Doris Bunting.

Administration – paper work – something which I am absolutely useless at so am so grateful to have had two people who are so good at it. Firstly Debbie Parkes, whose last day it is as Parish Administrator tomorrow. Debbie has been with us for the past 6½ years – the longest she has been in any job. During that time, the role and job has grown hugely – she produces service sheets of incredible quality, for so many different services, she has been the voice of comfort, care, compassion and competence with wedding, funeral and baptism requests. She has been a huge personal support, put up with my last minute tendencies and ideas. The role has now developed so much that on Friday we will interview for 2 people working 4 days a week each – again investing in people to bear fruit. To cover all the work that exists and to also support the financial team, and improve our marketing, publicity and work on social media – facetweetagrambook. But huge thanks to Debbie for all that she has done behind the scenes. She will be sorely missed and we wish her well as she has been poached by Cheaters, the funeral directors, so she will not be far away.

I want to say a thank you and pay tribute to Adrienne Mordan. Adrienne steps down at this meeting after 19 years as **PCC secretary**. That's 228 Standing Committee meetings, just under 200 PCC meetings, countless deanery Synod meetings where she has been so faithful, and the minutes for those and compiling the annual report, and if you put all those together, then the contents would be about the length of War and Peace! That's hours and hours and hours of listening to all sorts of us droning on about things. But Adrienne has been truly amazing and remarkable. Because she cares, she wants to get it right. She has been such a great servant to all we do here at APCMs – editing reports which should be 200 words and come through as 2000, but Adrienne has continued to do all this. We salute and thank you Adrienne tonight for your amazing service and work and care. .. and we have a small something to thank you..

Finally – changing shape of **ministry team**: Over the next few months, our Ministry Team in the parish will be growing and developing. As you know, Bryan Taphouse is on sick leave as he has chemotherapy. Today is dose number 5 and it's hitting him hard now. Please continue to pray for him. Jonathan Watkins is with us until June of 2018, and supporting the ministry of the parish - especially at St Swithun's. Paul Hollingworth is now with us as a deacon, and is exploring his vocation to priestly ministry within the church. Paul is still working full time, but after retirement at the end of the year, he will be able to take a more proactive role in the pastoral work and life of the parish. His vocation is particularly to the sick, the dying and the bereaved. Paul will work alongside with Jill in her co-ordination of the pastoral care of the parish.

In July we will be joined by Nik Gower who is being ordained at Petertide on July 2nd in Winchester Cathedral. Nik is married to Heidi who is a nurse and youth worker. They have been married for a couple of years and have a baby on the way and a dog called Winston. Nik is currently studying at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. Previous to ordination he spent some time in the Army, serving with the household cavalry. Rhiannon Wilmott is developing her work as Children and Families Worker with projects in Woodley and reaching out to those who are unchurched as well as in schools. David Potterton continues to develop his ministry taking a lead with the youth group and also with Way In. He is also gaining additional experience by supporting the worship of Kings Somborne on two Sundays each month. Averil Bamber provides a fine preaching and teaching ministry at the Abbey and at St Swithun's and supports the Mothers Union worship admirably. Mich La Jeunesse is midway through his first year of training, and is getting more experience in leading worship. I hope that Fiona Jenvey can begin her Pioneer Training this year to add to the ministry which she is exercising at Wisdom House. In addition our rich and diverse team of Retired clergy/Honorary Assistant Priests provide a wealth of experience, wisdom and add to the variety of leading and preaching during the week and on Sundays.

Increasingly, we are being seen as a “Resource Church” – one which doesn’t hoard all these wonderful gifts for ourselves, but that Romsey is seen more of a hub to resource and support other churches locally in different ways. All these changes are exciting and bring their own share of opportunities. Please continue to pray for the growth and development of the ministry of the parish – both lay and ordained. It means that our roles and responsibilities change. I will need to have more of an oversight role making sure that our skills and talents are released more, and that we continue to release the gifts of lay and ordained together to develop our ministry.

It is easy to be spoilt here. We have a rich diversity and depth of ministry here, but we can’t take it for granted – neither can we keep it to ourselves. We exist, as we always have done in the words of William Temple “the church is the only organization which exists for the benefit of its non members” and whilst tonight is looking at the machinery and activity of the church. It is never self-seeking, self-absorbed or self-serving, but always for the benefit of others so that they in turn might know for themselves the love of Christ and find a home in His Church. That is what as the whole church we will spend time on Sunday morning to explore how we grow and develop and are more strategic in our outreach and relationship building.

My prayer is simple. “That we be a blessing”:

- That we be a blessing to the thousands of people who come to the Abbey and to the town, to work, rest, play, and pray.
- That we be a blessing to all who come onto our site seeking food for their heart, soul, or body.
- That we be a blessing to those who come seeking joy and any who arrive looking for hope.
- That we be a blessing to any who have practically given up on church, on God, on themselves, on life itself.
- That we be a blessing to any who might not be able to imagine how you can be congregational and commercial, you can be aesthetic and popular, you can be inclusive and faithful, you can be compassionate and pragmatic, you can be heaven and a town centre, you can be the church of the military and of the pacifists, you can be a church who would like us to be exclusive, but still be fundamentally inclusive.

My prayer is that people encounter us, by website, worship, coffee, or concert, and they shake their heads, and say, ‘I didn’t realise this could be done.’ And then they open their hearts to the Spirit of the living God, and say, slowly and quietly, ‘Maybe I can do unbelievable things too. Maybe I too can be a blessing.’

So thank you – thank you for putting up with me again, for your companionship in this great journey of the gospel. It continues to be a rich varied and exiting and sometimes frustrating ride, but also an unbelievably good fun one too!”

15. QUESTION TIME

- Mrs Pat Kerridge thanked the Vicar for his Easter Welcome.
- David Johnson asked where the new assistant curate would live. The Vicar explained that ideally, we had hoped the Diocese would buy a house in Abbotswood, the new large housing estate on the edge of Romsey but unfortunately this was not on. It will probably be a rented house in Romsey paid for by the Diocese.
- The Abbey Development Project. The Vicar explained that Keith Bamber had broken this huge project into manageable pieces. Keith had made a very informative presentation to the PCC to enable them to consider what we can do ourselves and where we need to buy in external expertise. We now need more detailed plans so we can start exploring what grants might be available. The Vicar reminded the room that the PCC are trustees of a Charity. At this point David Johnson challenged the spending of money on a painting but the Vicar pointed out that all that money came from bequests or donations. There was a need to balance what may help people with worship and the need to provide food banks and other charitable giving.

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

AGENDA ITEM 10 - PARISH REPORTS – PCC COMMITTEES

a) Deanery Synod

Much of Deanery Synod's focus this year has been on the consultation on the future pastoral reorganisation of the Deanery. Three consultation meetings were held in March, May and September. The third meeting considered the outcome of an open consultation, undertaken using an online survey to gather views from the wider community. Drawing on the feedback from the consultation, a proposal was drawn up for pastoral reorganisation which will give the parish of Romsey an additional stipendiary priest (reflecting that half of the population of the Deanery lives in the parish). Kings Somborne will revert to single parish benefice served by a House for Duty Priest and supported by Braishfield Benefice. Broughton with Bossington, Houghton, Mottisfont, Stockbridge, Longstock and Leckford will combine into one benefice. If formally accepted by the Deanery, the scheme will be passed to the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee for a decision in 2018.

In addition, the Deanery Synod meeting in February included presentation by the Revd Dr Marcus Throup, Vocations Adviser and Diocesan Director of Ordinands, In June, the Archdeacon Paul Moore and the Revd Phil Dykes presented the Archdeaconry Mission Action Plan, and in October the topic for discussion was the Rule of Life, with speakers presenting three different traditions. In September, the Deanery lost both its Area Dean, when the Revd Canon Tim Sledge left Romsey Parish, and Assistant Area Dean, when the Revd Canon Ron Corne retired. The Revd James Pitkin was appointed as Acting Area Dean.

Julie Carlton

b) Abbey Development group

Formed in 2016 at the request of the Vicar, the Development Group has picked up momentum after 3 years of little action. I enlisted help, some from PCC members, some from other Abbey supporters. In our report to the PCC in January 2017, our main recommendation was to implement the overall vision through a number of smaller projects, significantly reducing the potential financial risk to the Abbey. We also recommended the formation of a new Trust to oversee fund-raising and the expenditure of funds raised, the staffing and organisation structure, and the quantity surveyor's estimates for various phases. The PCC requested the Group to continue its work.

We now have a detailed plan to create the Trust. We have had initial informal contact with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which will be *very* helpful in determining the scope of the first project if and when we proceed. Other sources of funding may be available, but the requirements of the HLF are so thorough ("the gold standard") that if we can satisfy these, we should be able to satisfy any other donor. Because members of the team have given so much of their time and expertise voluntarily, this has been achieved without any expenditure. I am very grateful for their help. Work remains, particularly in the area of education and the evaluation of the benefits. We are probably 18 months away from a formal HLF grant application.

Keith Bamber

c) Children and Young People

Over the course of 2017 there have been two key changes to children's ministry at Romsey Abbey with the introduction of Lego Church and Singing Storytime at St Swithun's. Lego Church meets monthly on the 3rd Saturday of each month in the Church Rooms and regularly has around 50 people attending. We are catered for brilliantly by Liz Wagner and her team and increasingly participants are asking to become volunteers at Lego Church. Singing Storytime meets on term time Monday mornings at St Swithun's Church. It's promoted generally to Romsey but specifically within Woodley, Abbotswood and Halterworth. We currently have an average of about 12 families and we are supported by Margaret How, Alison Baillie and Win Whittaker.

Last summer we ran a holiday cooking club for children. The plan had been to fill the group with children whose families depend upon free school meals, but in the event we threw it open to everyone. As a consequence, most of the spaces ended up being taken by exactly the families we'd hoped to target but without making it feel like a provision for 'the poor kids'. 40 children were signed up to cooking club and we were able to send food home to 24 families.

I have been overseeing the Toddler Group since last Easter. It's a small but very stable group although finding leaders both willing and able to take any responsibility for it is enormously challenging. This is partly because many users are fairly vulnerable themselves and partly because those who aren't come to the group whilst they're on maternity leave and are unable to commit more than a few months. The Toddler Group generally has around 20 families each week: a core of about 10, with others dipping in and out. Currently the group is free entry with a suggested donation of £1 per family, the response to which varies significantly from week to week. We continue to be well supported by the Mother's Union serving refreshments.

Rhiannon Wilmott

d) Church Rooms

Five meetings were held during the year. The Church Rooms 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 for fund raising, e.g. Parish Lunches, baptism parties, teas and providing coffee for events, have been taken. The use of the hall for baptism parties has increased. The Committee thanks the Parish Lunch Team and the Catering Team for their work, to help with fund raising. Sunday Coffee money has increased. The cost of emergency repairs to the Church Rooms continued to cause concern. The refurbishment of all the toilets has been agreed and three quotes have been sought, with the expectation of commencing in February 2018. Intyre Building Solutions Ltd are the successful contractors.

The Church Rooms complies 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. Several security issues caused concern. 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.

Jo Whitfield

e) Churches Together in Romsey

Churches Together in Romsey is formed of the Ministers and Representatives of the following Romsey Churches: Abbey 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 and acts, while also providing a means of circulating events organised by the Churches, other groups and their needs (e.g. Children and Youth, Food Bank, Christians against Poverty).

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a joint service was held at Romsey Methodist Church on 22 January, with Dr Howard Mellor as speaker. An Act of Witness was held at the Corn Market on Good Friday. All joined together in the *Say One for Me* prayer initiative during the nine days leading up to Pentecost (04 June). The Hope Group organised the following events: Prayer breakfasts held throughout the year and hosted at different church venues; Woodley Fun Day (24 June), workshop and nativity tableau at Lantern Parade (08 December). The Hope Choir toured Romsey residential homes at Easter and Christmas to sing familiar Easter hymns and Christmas Carols.

We welcomed Jonathan Beer as the new Minister of Romsey Baptist Church at his induction on 01 July 2017. Many representatives of Churches Together in Romsey attended Tim Sledge's farewell service.

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 Miles

f) Communications

The Revd. Canon Tim Sledge called the first informal meeting on 12th January 2017 to explore the possibilities of a new Communications Committee, the remit being to promote the Abbey and reach out to the wider non-Abbey-centred community. The current Magazine Committee was to become a sub-committee of the Communications Committee and to concentrate on magazine specific matters only. The Communications Committee met in March 2017 however there have been no further meetings.

Some of the Committee's remit has been taken up by me as Parish Administrator (Events & Marketing) regularly sharing content on the Abbey's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) and on the Abbey's website and in the local press. Rhiannon Wilmott also maintains a good online presence with Facebook pages for Children & Family Work and Baby & Toddler Group. The Romsey Abbey Technical Team livestreams a couple of 10am services each month and other special services.

The Magazine sub-committee has continued to meet throughout 2017 on its usual cycle. 'Open Door' magazine reports mainly on Parish news with occasional articles of ecclesiastical interest included from the Deanery, Mission Links or Church of England. The layout continues at 24 pages including a double-sided colour cover. For the October 2017 edition, a full-colour largely photographic edition was produced to commemorate Canon Tim Sledge's final service and time at the Abbey. The price has remained at £1 for 2017. The committee has recruited two additional personnel to shadow key responsibilities. 520 copies of the magazine are printed a month (400 subscribers, approx. 80 bookstall sales) which are kindly distributed by a team of 35 volunteers. We are grateful for the support of all involved and also to our advertisers and those volunteers who assist with the production of an A3 large print version and audio versions on cassette tape.

Amanda Taylor

g) Discipleship

No report submitted

h) Environment

The Parish Environment Group (PEG) is advisory providing recommendations to the PCC on environmental matters relating to Romsey Abbey. The group evaluates environmental issues and implements initiatives to aid the Abbey in becoming more environmentally friendly and reducing its carbon footprint. A strategy entitled *Going Green in '17* outlined possibilities for engaging with the congregation on environmental matters and suggested a programme of events targeting a range of people. Some of these suggestions were taken forward:

- July - Compline followed by bat walk; over 50 participants;
- August - World Honeybee Day; community awareness raising with members of Romsey and Southampton Beekeeping Associations. Friends of the Earth and The Bumblebee Conservation Trust provided informative resources. Over 120 people attended throughout the day;
- September - Apple Day – Transition Town Romsey event hosted by Romsey PEG;
- October - 'What will happen the day after tomorrow?' Talk and discussion on climate change and Christianity by Professor Meric Srokosz (National Oceanography Centre) – 80 people in attendance, retiring collection - over £100 in donations;
- November – Upcycling workshops - £60 made from selling upcycled goods at Christmas fair.

PEG met five times during 2017 and completed an application for Bronze and Silver Eco-Church awards (awaiting ratification). A 'green' noticeboard was created in the Abbey for sharing environment news and events. The group began liaising with other groups/PCC sub-committees over physical measures to reduce energy and resource usage and external experts on how to manage our land and buildings for wildlife. During 2017 PEG gained recognition around both Romsey and the Diocese of Winchester and began working in collaboration with other environment groups – foundations to be built on in 2018.

Charlotte Belcher

i) Fabric

The Fabric Committee is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Abbey church and grounds, considering and recommending to the PCC any new fixed items, works of art and practical improvements which required a Faculty from the Diocese, and proposing to the PCC any major works to the Church Rooms. Regular servicing has been undertaken to the heating boilers and controls, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, safety equipment lines and harnesses, lightning conductors, and roof alarms by professional companies. Volunteers have undertaken numerous small maintenance and repair jobs.

The principal contract this year has been the replacement of the ladders from the ringing chamber to gain access to the South Nave gutters; the provision of safety lines across the eaves of the pitched roofs which have parapets below 750 mm high, providing harnesses and training for personnel to carry out inspections and work on these roofs, North Nave Aisle, North Choir Aisle and Apse, East end Chapels, South Choir, South Transept, east, south and west; at the same time some clay tile renewals and lead repairs were made. Lighting in the retaining wall to the North Drive has been installed. The ground floor woodwork, fixed and loose has been treated with insecticide, new carpets have been laid in the Choir stalls and the seating repaired. In the South Garth, the upper part of the South boundary wall was rebuilt and two trees severely pruned at a neighbour's request, and weeds all around the Abbey church have been treated. Michael Drury, the Surveyor to the Abbey will be retiring in July 2018 and we are looking to appoint his replacement.

J. Diane Hargreaves

j) Fellowship and Fundraising (2F)

The committee began the year with a variety of events: two slideshows of past Open Door photos and two fascinating talks by George Richford and Carole Allen-Morley. However, at the 2017 APCM, three longstanding members of the committee stood down: Heather Phillip; Mike Perfect and Liz Hallett. Increasingly there has been a feeling that this committee had really had its day and that there are now many more organisations in the parish able to provide the fellowship which has always been one of our key aims. It had also become very difficult to book the venues for our talks. Efforts to find a new chairman failed but the group determined to continue with already-booked events. Thus we enjoyed talks by Jane Horne, Neil Howe and Mark Glover.

Over a weekend in early June we held our Celebrating Community weekend, filling the Abbey with voluntary groups displaying the many ways they serve our community. Tim Sledge headed another very successful Wine Tour later in June. The 2F Christmas card has and will continue under the enthusiastic organisation of Paul Quinnell, and the 2017 card raised well over £3,000. Thus altogether 2F raised over £4000 during 2017 before it ceased to function, also giving a sizeable donation to Vision Aid Overseas. We were able to support the Deanery Mission Committee and the Choir financially, while most of the income went to general parish funds. We thank former committee members and the many people who have supported us in the past. Towards the end of the year a new social committee was established. Working together with the events' organisers of the Friends of Romsey Abbey, they are looking forward to offering an exciting and varied programme of social activities in 2018.

Liz Hallett

k) Financial Resources (FRC)

Routine work undertaken by this committee during the year included the timely submission of Gift Aid claims, running a Giving-in-Grace campaign to consolidate regular giving, reviewing Business Continuity Plans for the Abbey, St Swithun's, and the Church Rooms as well as developing one for the Parish office; reviewing Mission and Charity Giving; the ongoing rationalisation of PCC bank accounts, and updating Financial Procedures and Policies, the PCC's risk register and the Succession Plan. The Committee also arranged for the PCC to take part in the trials for payment card readers and a contactless donation point (Goodbox) and has taken responsibility for ensuring that the PCC will be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation, which becomes law in May 2018. Thanks to all members of FRC who have contributed hugely to the committee's work but in particular to Tim Rogerson for agreeing to take over as PCC Treasurer only a year after stepping down. I also thank Margaret Miles for becoming secretary to FRC.

Liz Wagner

l) 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. In May the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service held an evacuation exercise with the bellringers to test emergency evacuation arrangements from the ringing chamber. In June we organised fire safety training for key personnel.

The parish Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed and was signed off by the PCC in November, as was an updated Safeguarding Policy and Food safety guidelines. Anyone with an interest in ensuring we maintain a safe and secure environment would be most welcome to join the Committee.

Julie Carlton

m) Outreach

No report submitted.

n) Pastoral Care Committee

2018 was the first full year of operation of the Pastoral Care Committee, which met 5 times. Members are drawn from all areas of lay pastoral work within the parish. Nick Virgo ceased to be a member of the committee in November when he stood down from his role as Lay Pastoral Adviser. The committee is greatly indebted to him for much hard work and valuable input in getting its work off to a good start. It is anticipated that Revd Paul Hollingworth, who joined in December, will share responsibility with the Revd Jill Aussant in the oversight of pastoral care. 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, with the focus of each as follows:

Pastoral Visiting

Compliance with safeguarding procedures; the keeping of a confidential record of visits and people visited; the role of pastoral coordinators and the most effective means of identification and meeting of pastoral care needs; whether we should consider providing transport to services.

Occasional Offices

The importance of welcome and access to information for baptism families, also for wedding couples when they come to hear their banns read or on other occasions; how Rhiannon's work can help with the follow up of baptism families.

Young people

Welcome of families with small children; and how we can support Rhiannon's work in general.

Care of the elderly in residential homes, hospital and at home

Improving outreach into each residential setting, making known ways in which we can support residents. Live streaming of services in homes is ongoing.

It has been a good foundation year for the committee's work, with weaknesses noted, priorities set and potential areas for development of our pastoral care identified.

The Revd Jill Aussant

o) St. Swithun's

St Swithun's had an average congregation of 30 on ordinary Sundays. 51 people attended the carol service, 32 on Christmas Day, 40 on Easter Day, and 40 at St Swithun's Patronal Festival. There were 6 funerals, including those for Barbara Knight and Doris Bunting, and 7 baptisms, one of which took place during the morning Communion service. SPACE met at St Swithun's each second Sunday at 6.30 pm. The church was used for meetings of the PCC, Romsey Good Neighbours, services for the Mothers' Union and the Franciscans, and, in December, for Evening Prayer and some weekday communion services. The new carpets were laid in January 2017. Thanks to the PCC, St Swithun's own fundraising, and a generous grant from Romsey Extra Parish Council for paying for the work. Our new font was delivered in December.

Fund raising events included the ever-popular pie and prosecco lunch, a spring sale, 2 beetle drives, a monthly book sale, and a talk about the history of the church during the Romsey Festival. Harvest festival gifts were sold and the money raised given to Romsey Food Bank. We raised £1385 including £1000 for the Parish. 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 provide and arrange flowers, act as communion assistants, act as sidesmen and read lessons.

Richard Pratt

AGENDA ITEM 13 GROUP REPORTS - ABBEY GROUPS

a) Assistant Vergers and Servers

The Abbey's team of servers has continued to support the Abbey's services over the last year. I thank all the team for their continued dedication and cheerful help, which is very much appreciated. My thanks also go to Sarah Riley for her continued support in producing the servers' rota. The servers have continued to meet periodically for training and discussion of changes to the liturgy and its impact upon our practice. We were sad to learn of the passing of Mary Moon, a long-time Assistant Verger in the Abbey, who will be sorely missed. We were delighted to welcome Mark Glover back into our ranks and also to see the launch of a dedicated Servers page (<https://www.romseyabbey.org.uk/get-involved/groups-and-activities/servers/>) on the updated Abbey website. It is hoped that this page will provide new members of the parish and potential applicants for Priest-in-Charge an insight into our ministry here. We are constantly on the lookout for new recruits, with full training provided and no experience necessary.

In terms of our social and fellowship activities the summer BBQ sadly fell by the wayside again this year, however, we do have a provisional date in the diary for the coming year, so watch this space. The Servers, along with Communion Assistants and Sub-Deacons, again held a highly successful Curry Evening at Candlemas. This is becoming a feature of the Servers' social calendar, and an important aspect of the social and fellowship side of these ministries. The coming year is set to be one of change for the team as we eagerly await the appointment of a new Priest-in-Charge and the prospect of some exciting changes and developments within our liturgy.

Neil Howe

b) Bell ringers

The bellringers group rings the Abbey's 8 bells before Sunday services, for other services (by arrangement) and before and after weddings (by arrangement). The group meets regularly on a Wednesday evening to practise apart from during Holy Week when it is traditional that church bells are not rung. The group trains new ringers; all training is done on a voluntary basis. A small number of the group volunteer to be steeplekeepers, who undertake a monthly inspection of the ropes, bells and fittings, a process that takes between 1½ and 3 hours each month.

During 2017 the bells were rung for all Sunday Sung Eucharist services, most Sunday evening services, 29 weddings, school carol services, Crib Service, and on Christmas Day. A number of tower tours were undertaken, including 3 tours during the Romsey Festival. A local band rang the Christmas peal, for one person it was their first peal. A number of quarter peals were attempted, seven of which were successful. We rang carols on handbells at the Abbey Christmas Fair.

Four new trainee ringers joined the band during the year. They have been taught along with the existing trainee at the regular Thursday evening simulator practice. All are making steady progress and are enjoying learning new skills.

Caroline Daniels

c) Catering team

About 30 volunteers make up the Abbey Catering team who help by cooking, baking and serving at a very wide variety of Abbey and private events, small and large. During 2017 events included monthly Parish Teas on the last Sunday of each month, the Christian Aid Lent Lunch, Lego Church on the third Saturday of each month, Funeral Wakes, Wedding Receptions, a Lunch for Greater Churches conference and many more.

In June, the Friends of Romsey Abbey came to Parish Tea and enjoyed cream teas with freshly baked scones and Cornish clotted cream. Since January 2017, the Abbey catering team has served refreshments at over 55 events to approximately 3,750 guests and visitors. In August a team of three catered for 35 Choir members on their five day Choir Tour to Durham Cathedral providing breakfast, packed lunch and dinner each day. Proceeds from the catering events, after expenses, provide funds for the PCC and during 2017 this total was almost £2,500.

We thank all the catering volunteers for their hard work and dedication in keeping the Benedictine tradition of hospitality alive in the Abbey today. In July the team was delighted to receive smart aprons with the new Abbey logo embroidered on. The team's thanks goes to Bridget Brook for her generosity in organising and donating the aprons which are often admired by visitors. The team looks forward to giving a warm welcome to new volunteers in 2018 both helpers and bakers!

Liz Wagner

d) Communion Assistants and Sub-deacons

During 2017, there were 6 Sub-deacons assisting at the Abbey. However, one person retired from this activity so a new member has now been recruited. This means that over the 3-month rota period, a Sub-deacon will usually assist at two of the 10.00 am Sunday services. During Holy Week and Easter, with the many additional services, each Sub-deacon will typically assist at three services. In addition, most of the Sub-deacons help at the Sunday 8.00 am service, at which since June 2016, only one assistant helps the priest.

The Abbey Communion Assistants now number 22, so again most of them will assist at two of the 10.00 am Sunday services over the 3-month rota period. There are two Communion Assistants who are willing to assist at the Sunday 8.00 services as well. In addition to the Abbey helpers, there are three Communion Assistants at St. Swithun's and another six assisting with the weekly hospital communion, the care & nursing homes visits, and house calls, as we try to ensure that parishioners who have requested communion can be visited.

As always, I am very grateful to those who are prepared to help out, sometimes at very short notice. Although the weekly Bulletin may not publish the names of those who are actually assisting, the priority is to ensure that communion is administered in a reverent and smooth manner.

Brian Drysdall

e) Home groups

The Harrage Home Group

Our home group usually meets on the second and fourth Thursday evenings of each month in The Harrage. In 2017 we also met weekly for the Lent course, and then joined in the very enjoyable Deanery Pre-Advent during November at Poppies cafe in Timsbury. Our fortnightly sessions used a variety of resources, including David Adam's book *The Awesome Journey* on life's pilgrimage, and a York course on different ways we can receive Christ. In the autumn we started studying Barnabas - the "son of encouragement". We enjoy our friendships and prayer support, and enjoy occasional social meals with partners. We have room for a few more members, even if you can't always make a Thursday evening.

Katy and Ian Clark

Barn House Home Group

We have continued to meet twice a month using the Life Builder Study Series *Mark: Follow Me* by James Hoover. We rotate the leading and have used discussion and sharing as a way forward to explore the Gospel. The sound recording of David Suchet reading Mark has brought the text to life. Social evenings and home communion are included in the programme with short breaks for Easter, summer and Christmas. We would welcome new members to join us.

Barbie and Jean Evans

Woodley House Group

We completed *The Awesome Journey* by David Adam in the first part of 2017. During Lent we attended Churches Together in Romsey ecumenical groups studying the York Course. After Easter we returned to the Gospel of John with Tom Wright and finished it by Christmas. In Advent we attended the talks at Poppies, organised by the Deanery. There have also been a few all-house group get togethers at Wisdom House which we have attended. Since the Autumn we have not been meeting every week in term time; sometimes we have met fortnightly. Our numbers vary a lot too, from about four to eleven. You are very 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've had another very enjoyable year in Infant Sunday School, both in our Sunday morning sessions and joining in the special events. Our average Sunday attendance is about 6 to 10 children most of whom come very regularly and whose parents are in the Eucharist service. At Way In our numbers are swelled by some younger children and their parents but we still have far fewer attending on a first Sunday. This year for Harvest we focussed on cake; thinking about the ingredients we use and where they come from but also on the way cake can help us to welcome, share, celebrate and console. We baked cakes to say goodbye to Tim Sledge who had such a big impact on our Sunday School children. He made them feel important and needed, valued their contributions whether edible or just a comment and the children put a lot of love (and hundreds and thousands!) into their good bye cakes.

We try and teach using a variety of styles, so this year we've dressed up, used Godly play and our story box, acted as well as told stories and generally had a lot of fun. The Good Friday workshop was well attended and we were able to explore the story of Holy Week and Good Friday in craft, cooking, gardening and chat. Talking with children whilst they are making something is such a wonderful way to teach and learn, for both adult and child. The shepherds and sheep made at the advent Way In by children and adults were used to decorate behind the altar on Christmas day. Finally some thank yous; to Anne and Fleur who are so great to work with, to Rhiannon who has supported us in practical and prayerful ways, to the parents for bringing their children and encouraging them, to our Abbey family for their interest and support and to the children for making it such fun.

Louise Newman

g) Junior Sunday School - No report received.

h) Ministers' Meeting - No report received.

i) Mothers' Union

Mothers' Union continues its ministry of prayer and support for both local and international projects. In Jane Horne, we have a member who is also a Diocesan Trustee, and whose passion is travel. So when we hear from Uganda, or Rwanda, or Kenya, Jane has been there and met the members there. It's a real bonus, making personal the links which have always been there with members living in such different circumstances. Dorothy Stokes is also now a Diocesan Trustee.

Closer to home, we enabled another Romsey family to enjoy a holiday Away From It All (AFIA). Funding comes from members' activities, and also some generous donations from the wider congregation. In 2017, we welcomed local speakers, offering information, inspiration and entertainment. We shared favourite poetry; we enjoyed strawberry tea; and we welcomed guests. Twice a year, we hold services in the Abbey which Tim Sledge led during his ministry here. Both Tim and Caroline are Mothers' Union members. It was a great pleasure to have Tim lead our Autumn Service just before his last Sunday Eucharist in the Abbey, to remind us that God always finds something new to show us, if only we keep our eyes open. Something to make us stop and think: 'Wow!' like a small child discovering new wonders. Something new - a timely reminder that there will always be new ways to follow Mary Sumner's inspiration to support in prayer and action the wellbeing of families and the nurture of children.

Averil Bamber

j) Parish Lunch

The first parish lunch was served on 8th February 1996, so we are now into our 23rd Year, although we currently charge £4 per head instead of just £2. I took over from Barbara Knight, who was the last remaining member of the original team, in February 2017. Our aim is to provide a two course, home cooked lunch which can be enjoyed with friends in convivial surroundings which is particularly appreciated by those living alone.

We usually have 12 lunches per year, on the second Thursday in the month, and during 2017 we served 574 lunches, which generated just over £500 in income. This has been pretty well doubled by the raffle, the prizes for which are donated by attendees. Sadly, some of our equipment disappeared this year, which has necessitated buying replacements, but we have an accruing balance in the bank. Thanks are due to the team who shop for the ingredients, cook the meals, serve and clear up afterwards. We are also very grateful to those who come along to assist by waiting at the tables and helping with the clearing up. We donate the funds raised by the lunches to the PCC for the Church Rooms.

Liz Holloway

k) Romsey Abbey Choirs

The Choirs and Music of Romsey Abbey seek to enhance worship and liturgy by the provision of the highest standards of church music-making through the education and development of children and young adults, supported by able and experienced adult practitioners. 2017 was another year of foundation laying and exciting growth. Numbers have continued to increase and with a change in constitution to the girls' choir, we now see two separate top-lines of girls; vitally the introduction of girls aged 7 – 14 who will gradually train to sing on an equal footing to the boy choristers of the same age. The boys have enjoyed a programme of study surrounding Early Music for which the St Teilo organ was invaluable and culminated in the Tudor recording, made in the summer and released in the winter which has received excellent reviews. The Choir Tour to Durham was a great success. The back row of the choir has been strengthened by the Southampton University choral scholarship scheme. Henry Roberts has been appointed Junior Organ Scholar and Myles Tyrell is the senior organ scholar. The Consort choir is directed by Craig Lawton and they have continued to grow in number. Craig also conducts the Romsey Sinfonietta which has played with the Abbey Choirs on several occasions, not least the monumentally successful Snowman performances and the closing ceremony to the Romsey Festival last year.

The two most noticeable and radical changes that we have enjoyed in 2017 have firstly been the URC rooms that have revolutionised the way we work. There are two teaching rooms, a designated library space, a rehearsal room and kitchenette as well as a lounge area and place to robe up. Secondly, the introduction of Thursday evensong has proved very popular and well-attended (including a surprise visit of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh!) and has enabled the continued development and improvement of part of the choir.

George Richford

l) 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 each 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 have enjoyed a number of talks on wide-ranging subjects this year, from the delivery of services (a floating church and doctors office, a holiday escort, and a mobile library), two inspirational talks (one by our past Mayor, Dorothy Baverstock), a tribute to the WW1 Centenary with a talk on "Battlefields: The Romsey Connection", and an extremely informative talk on "Older Driver Awareness". As usual we had a number of evenings of fun and frivolity, and enjoyed our various parties with munchies and wine – an around the world photo quiz, a skittles party, our AGM, Christmas gift wrapping, and finally a fish and chips Christmas party.

Carole Allen-Morley

m) Romsey Abbey Primary School

Our visit by Ofsted early in the year gave us a clear focus and direction for the year ahead. School leaders have worked alongside the Governing Body to ensure the school remains on its trajectory of improvement. Throughout the year we have continued to both maintain and develop our links with Romsey Abbey. These were strengthened with the appointment of a teacher to our team who has taken responsibility for leading on RE and worship and our PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) across the school. Much of this work has been alongside Romsey Secondary School as we develop Habits of Mind with our children (a learning to learn programme). Our building work was finally completed and over Easter we moved into the new part of the school. It is lovely to have all classes together and close to the playground where outdoor learning can more easily take place. As a result of this building work we have really focussed on ensuring the school is a tidy environment. All children have lockers and we are gradually replacing classroom furniture. The appointment of a new Site Manager has meant that the school environment is really improved. We look forward to continuing with our developments as we *“walk in the footsteps of Jesus with love, trust and forgiveness”* during the year ahead.

Julie-Anne Palfrey

n) Romsey Abbey Technical Support Team (RATS)

2017 was very much a consolidation year for the team building on the upgrade to high definition for the screens and beginning to review the sound system to improve its reliability and coverage. We also started regularly live-streaming the Eucharist service twice a month and have a growing regular audience both within the town and further afield. With the help of the Friends of Romsey Abbey we have been able to ensure that a number of rest and nursing homes in Romsey are able to broadcast our live-streamed services to their residents. We also continued to offer the option to live-stream weddings and funerals. In December we broke all our records for audience figures for live-streaming when the Mountbatten School Carol Service was streamed and had almost 3,000 views over the month it was available online.

During 2017 the ‘Tech Team’ started taking over the stage building from Bob Smith and his Music in Romsey team – we thank Bob for his sterling work over so many years. We are always looking for more volunteers, so if you want to come and try your hands on a camera, try live mixing TV, want a ‘free gym session’ stage building or have a bent for anything technical please contact David Newman or Chris Pritchard.

David Newman

o) Romsey Abbey Youth Groups

The Youth Group provides a safe space, where young people can socialise and explore faith together in a way which is relevant to their lives and issues they face. The Youth Group meets on Tuesday evenings (6:45-9pm) during term time. When the weather is warmer we normally go straight to the memorial park for games and to socialise and then move to the Church Hall for the second half of the evening. We looked at a theme each term, such as ‘peer pressure’. Normally this is done as a short reflection from a Christian perspective. The rest of the time is spent playing games such as football or computer games. There is also a small tuck shop, which pays for itself.

During 2017, approximately 12 young people regularly attended. Revd. David Potterton and Charlotte Belcher looked after the youth group until David handed over to me in September. The highlights of the year were the two summer events, Soul Survivor and the Youth Weekend Away, which are both deanery led headed up by Revd. Jane Thompson. They involved Bible teaching, worship, prayer and games. The age range is 12-20 (with those over 18 completing a DBS check). In summary:

Events: Weekend away; Soul Survivor (youth camp); Sponsored sleep out; Pentecost Service at Winchester Cathedral; Upcycling; and Lantern parade.

Social activities: Archery; Ice skating; Cinema trip; Thorpe Park visit; Summer BBQ; Christmas party; Movie nights; and football match.

Revd. Nik Gower

p) Sewing and Knitting

This year we have had several large donations of wool which have kept us very busy. We are continuing to support The Trussell Trust, Samaritan's Purse and The Mission to Seafarers. We have been knitting twiddle muffs for use in hospitals and nursing homes. Also some muffs have been given to special needs teenagers who have added their own 'twiddles'. In the spring we sent knitted garments and blankets, via the Mothers' Union, to Syrian refugees. Dorothy's sewing group has been busy sorting buttons and putting them on cards to sell for Mothers' Union funds. We are very grateful to all those who have donated wool and to all who knit and sew for our group.

Maureen Batten, Anne Hewett, Dorothy Stokes

q) Stewards

The rota of stewards was maintained during 2017, 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. We need to cover 23 two hour sessions a week. Stewards work in teams of two with the majority volunteering every fortnight, and training is provided. In 2017 we had 73 permanent stewards, and 24 who stand in for absences. Stewards welcomed nearly 48,600 visitors to the Abbey during 2017, about 6,000 more than 2016. Some of this increase was undoubtedly due to the Romsey Festival, in which the Abbey played a significant part. The stewards' role has continued to be highlighted in very positive Trip Advisor comments.

Sadly there were losses to the team in 2017, through death and resignations due to declining health. Most stewards are retired and the majority have volunteered for many years. Sixteen new stewards were recruited and this effort will need to continue in 2018. Two guided tours of the Abbey were well attended by stewards, giving them information and insight into specific items of interest which they could share with our visitors. An informal meeting of stewards was held in the Church Rooms in May, and in December a joint coffee morning was held with the Gift Stall and Bookstall helpers.

Sheila Latimer

r) Web Site - No report submitted

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

a) Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund

The Trustees of the Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund continue to support financially the maintenance of the fabric of Romsey Abbey. The Appeal Fund has made grants to the PCC of £16,678 during the financial year to August 2017 to fund repairs and the installation of high level safety lines on the roof. In the five preceding years it has made grants totalling £173,000 to help finance works carried out on the heating system, the fire alarm, a new roof protection system, various repairs to stonework and stained glass and repairs to the Jubilee gates and to the Organ. Recently it has made a further grant of £41,000 to fund further works on the roof and for the high level safety lines.

We have some regular income generated by visitors to and tours of The Abbey but we do rely almost entirely on lifetime gifts and legacies. The Abbey Appeal Funds amounted to £648,000 at our last financial year end in August 2017. This sounds and indeed is a large figure but it can be depleted quickly if major works and repairs are needed to be carried out. The funds have been substantially increased by two large legacies with which we have been blessed and are very grateful to have received in the past few years. If you would like to continue to support us in our work 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, telephone 01794 367116 or email to redwards.proureed@btconnect.com

Rachel Edwards

b) 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 nearly 400 members. Last year we had some excellent events including a popular annual canal trip in April and a visit to the Swanage Railway and Corfe Castle. We visited three Test Valley Churches and the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum, ending in December with our theatre visit to Sonning Mill, Reading for the production of My Fair Lady. A highly professional cast, excellent lunch and a full luxury coach. We also sponsor the Ethelflaeda Festival.

With a shortage of organisers, our Events programme for 2018 looked doubtful. However, the Events committee has modified its approach and we have an excellent Events Programme for the year with members volunteering to run them. We now have our Events Committee directly supporting the Organisers. Our Social activities were greatly enjoyed too. Our Friends 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. They are extremely popular and very well attended. Non-members are welcome. We run the bottle stall at the Christmas Fair.

The Projects Group delivers our funding to Abbey Projects. This year the Friends funded the Abbey with approximately £8,500. Among other things we paid for additional printing of the Abbey Visitor Leaflets and the new Tourists brochure, and for new microphone equipment for the Abbey. We also helped to part fund the Abbey's Children and Families Worker.

Jill Hall

c) The Children's Society

The Children's Society committee 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 disadvantaged children in the UK to have better lives. Last year, it worked with over 13,000 vulnerable children and young people, while the Society's campaign wins will bring life-changing support to more than 3 million. You can read more about the work of the Society at: www.childrenssociety.org.uk. The Romsey committee holds local events, organises an annual street and house-to-house collection, co-ordinates the Abbey Christingle service and distributes the gifts from the Epiphany gift service. A large part of the income comes from generous parish home and business box-holders.

In 2017, key fundraising events were a curry evening at Natraj restaurant (delicious!), a coffee morning held in the beautiful garden of Liz and David Sharman and an Autumn Fair held in the Town Hall. The many lovely Epiphany gifts were distributed to and gratefully received by Romsey Family Support Group, Romsey Young Carers, Allsorts Disability Group and Youth in Romsey. This year, we have raised around £5,000. We thank the congregation and our wonderful box-holders for their generous support. We are currently seeking a new chairman, as I will be stepping down after 10 years at our AGM, which will be 7.30pm on 8th May in the Church Rooms. If you would like to know more, please do contact me on 01794 390913

Angela Howes

d) Christian Aid Report

Romsey's Christian Aid (CA) Committee meets three times a year and is made up of representatives from Romsey's churches: Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed, Anglican and Catholic. The committee raises funds throughout the year with a variety of events and appeals. 2017 fund raising activities included Lent Lunch, Door to Door Collection during CA week in May, Street Collection in October and entry into the Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival in December. The totals raised by the Abbey in 2017 were £200 from the Lent Lunch, £1,756 during CA Week, £195 from the Street Collection and £1,000 from the PCC's mission giving, making a total of £3,151 plus £1,000 from the Government in match funding.

The Romsey CA Committee raised £10,398 in 2017 (£8,091 in 2016) with the bulk of this coming from CA Week: £6,642 (£6,164 in 2016). The Romsey CA Committee has raised a total of £304,077 since its foundation in 1972 with an average of £10,680 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. Unfortunately appeals for more Abbey & St Swithun's representatives on the local Committee have been unsuccessful but grateful thanks to all those who contribute, support and work hard on the specific campaigns to enable this tremendous sum to be raised each year contributing too Christian Aid's work around the world.

Liz Wagner

e) George's Trust

George's Trust has had another successful year. We reached our first goal of £100,000 pledge, 18 months ago, to help fund the Teenage Cancer Trust Unit in Southampton General Hospital, which is now fully equipped and doing amazing work. George's Trust launched a new direction for its fundraising at our Christmas Concert in December. We have committed to raise £50,000 towards a blood testing machine for Immunotherapy Cancer Research at the new centre in Southampton. We are working with Professor Peter Johnson who heads up the immunotherapy clinical trials for young people suffering from Lymphoma Cancer. George O'Brien, in whose memory the Trust was set up in 2009, died of a rare Lymphoma cancer, so it is very important to me and the Trustees that we help this research in some way.

To date the Trust has raised £150,000. The majority of this - £104,000 - has been awarded to the Teenage Cancer Unit and to the education team within the Teenage Cancer Trust. The remainder has mainly been allocated to young people in this area to help with all manner of projects and equipment, with a small proportion being allocated to the minimal charity running costs. George's Trust is very fortunate in that as well as the events the Trust holds, we receive amazing help from so many people donating money and time and holding their own events. This proves that George's Trust has become a highly regarded local Charity, which is something that we feel George would be very proud of. The highlight of the Trust's fundraising year continues to be the very special Christmas Concert that we are lucky enough to hold in Romsey Abbey and we are very grateful to the Clergy and the Churchwardens for their continued help with this event. Finally, George's Trust thanks everyone for all their support throughout the last year.

Jane O'Brien

f) Music in Romsey

Music in Romsey had another extremely busy year with the MIR brochure listing twenty evening concerts including six within the tri-annual Romsey Festival. These concerts included 10 choral evenings, three orchestral, one wind band, a Schools Choirs Festival raising money for Jane Scarth House, a joint concert of four Male Voice Choirs, an unusual music and chat evening (as part of the quilting exhibition during the Festival), a visit from The Royal Marines Band together with Portsmouth Military Wives Choir playing Last Night of the Proms, a joint concert featuring Cheam School Orchestra with musicians from The Mountbatten School and a first visit from The Hanover Band and Chorus who performed Messiah by Candlelight. The Hanover Band was thrilled to be performing in Romsey Abbey and will be returning. As well as being successful for each individual group of performers and raising a large amount of money for various charities Music in Romsey was also raised £14,000 for the Abbey funds in the year.

As well as hosting extremely talented and successful musical events Music in Romsey enjoys arranging and helping the performers to achieve their success. A team of volunteers put a huge amount of work and planning before, during and after each event. Anyone who would be interested in joining this team in a variety of ways would be very welcome to make contact on 01794 512502.

Edna Rowland

g) Triangulate

During the early part of 2017 our work was focused on The Light, an ambitious art installation of a 4 metre, pulsating and illuminated globe hanging in the Abbey. The launch event included a large choir, a spectacular lightshow and film clips focusing on aspects of mental health. We used the globe also as the focus for our Mental Health Sunday service and again later in February when we delivered an Employer Event attended by over 100.

We have extended the range of booklets available from our stand near the South Door and keep the information display up-to-date. We work with Louise Roberts to source relevant wellbeing titles for the bookstall and are grateful for her support.

Our annual entry in the Romsey Relay Marathon raised a total sponsorship of £1020. There were more teams than ever taking part and again this was a brilliant community event, at which we met many of the town's community groups. Opportunities arose for us to support sessions promoting positive mental health in the workplace. We arranged for Time to Change to facilitate a session for staff at Balfour Beatty in Southampton, providing leaflets in support of the session. We also delivered two awareness-raising sessions for a large electronics company in Dorset. We are hugely grateful for the continuing support from the congregation and PCC. No record of the year would be complete without noting our enormous thanks to Tim Sledge for all that he contributed to the concept, development and activities of Triangulate.

Bridget Brook

This document has been compiled by the PCC Secretary and edited by the PCC 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.