

**Sandy Parish Church - St Swithun's Registered Charity No: 1130680  
Trustees' Annual Report for the Year End 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

**Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

Postponed from April 26<sup>th</sup> 2020 due to Covid-19 rescheduled for the Autumn

**REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

[www.sandyparishchurch.org](http://www.sandyparishchurch.org)

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**Rector:** Revd. P. Huw Davies  
**Full Name:** Sandy Parish Church Parochial Church Council – St Swithuns  
**Church Address:** 34 High Street, Sandy, Bedfordshire. SG19 1AQ  
**Correspondence Address:** The Rectory, 34 High Street, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 1AQ  
**Bank Address:** Barclays Bank, 45 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JF  
Account name: Sandy PCC  
**Independent Financial Examiner:** Howard Skinner 8 Powers Close, Sandy SG19 11JS

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL DURING 2019**

**Rector (Chair):** Revd. Huw Davies  
**Churchwardens:** Jean Peckham Sandra Watson Colin Osborne  
**Honorary PCC Secretary:** Stephen Snow  
**Honorary PCC Treasurer:** Kevin Reynolds  
**Deanery Representatives:** Julia Bickerdike,  
**PCC Members up to APCM 2019:** Annie Cousins, Carole Martin, Michele Canfield, Eileen Mansion, Nicolas Yuille, Ruth Lock, Elizabeth Gammell. Margaret Wilson, Matt Bushby, Stephen Hemmings  
**PCC members up to APCM 2020:** Elizabeth Adams, David Butcher, Annie Cousins, Matt Bushby, Anthony Bell, Michele Canfield, Elizabeth Gammel, Ruth Lock, Anthony Lock, Carole Martin  
**Curate:** -  
**Diocesan Reader:** Jane Godley

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is a corporate body established by the Church of England. The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Council Powers Measure. In respect of Safeguarding, the PCC adopt the Diocese of St Albans Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding Representative is Sandra Watson.

The PCC operated with four sub-committees in 2019

Standing Committee: Finance Committee: Building Team: Safeguarding Team:

## **OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES**

The primary object of the PCC is the promotion of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. The PCC has the responsibility of co-operating with the Rector in promoting in the parish the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, social and evangelistic.

Together we aim to ***Reach, Teach, Mend and Send***.

To this end the PCC at Sandy Parish Church are working on a Mission Action Plan (MAP) sharing the Diocesan aims of: **“Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities, Making New Disciples”**.

### **Specific activities undertaken in 2019 to achieve these aims included:**

- Development of an Administrative Team with Anna Davies and Denise Powell
- Development of Website, Twitter feed and Facebook page.
- Development of Junior Church Team with Hayley Yuille.
- A lot of time was spent by the PCC in 2019 discussing and deciding the priorities for the restoration and refurbishment of the church building in the light of
  - a) the needs of the external repairs and refurbishments as outlined by the Quinquennial Report
  - b) the need to face the challenges of change in our society and congregation in terms of worship and mission reflected in the seating and the internal furnishings of the church.
- Work began in September 2019 with David Llewelyn (architect) and Messengers (contractors) on restoration of the walls and gutters, mainly of the north transept and the Tower. Work will last best part of 12 months with an expected cost of £200,000.
- Remembrance Day and Civic Services conducted with the Council for the Community of Sandy.
- The worship in the church has been supported by the choir and the contemporary worship team.
- 2018 The church congregation agreed to enhance the Sunday worship with a new 3<sup>rd</sup> service launched in January 2018 offering a different style of worship. Continued through 2019.
- Summer picnics in the Rectory garden for families and Open Church Sunday went well.
- The Christmas Tree Festival in its sixth year grew to involve over 60 Community groups and 2,200 visitors compared to 50 trees and 1,500 visitors in 2018.
- Local schools have visited the church, including the Secondary School for its second Christmas concert and a number of members are school Governors.
- A small group went to the New Wine Family Summer camp in 2019 in Peterborough.
- The church has become increasingly popular as a venue for local concerts of many types including the new and growing free monthly lunch-time recitals.
- The Open Church weekend and visits to the top of the church Tower have been very popular.
- 2019 saw the first Summer Festival of Music with a variety of concerts over the fortnight.
- Members have been active in community support including The Need Project, School Governors, Music on Mondays in Nursing Homes, Open the Book in schools and social groups such as Bowls, local football and Brownies, Probus, Town Council and chaplaincy in Hospital and ATC.
- The Bellringing Team have expanded to teaching a number of new younger recruits.
- After many years of great service to the community The Drop-In Café closed during 2019.
- The Church Rooms remains an important venue for the community such as the new Sandy W.I. Natural Childbirth Trust and a new Toddler group which includes music and fitness – Lets Go Raa!
- The Leprosy Mission is supported by the Church and Wider Community raising over £21,000 in 2019 for the work in Nepal, education and outreach and hospital staff.
- The Children’s Society is also supported by the congregation and this year raised nearly £3,000.

<b>Sunday:</b>	8.15am	A reflective service of Holy Communion without music.
	9:30am	Holy Communion with sung liturgy supported by a robed choir and with children's activities in the Church Rooms
	11:00am	Contemporary worship with a worship team and children's activities
<b>Wednesday</b>	9:45am	Holy Communion
<b>Thursday</b>	7:30am	Holy Communion

**PUBLIC BENEFIT**

We recognise that in following Jesus we are called to be a community that not only builds up and strengthens our members but can also be a blessing to the town in which we live. Church members are involved in many community groups and activities, local schools including being school governors.

The refurbished Church Rooms have been used by Social Services, National Childbirth Trust (NCT), 'Sing and Sign', Art Classes, St Swithuns Singers choir and the 'Rainbows' and 'Let's Go Raa!' as well as the 'Drop-In Cafe' which serves many members of the local community with warm food and friendship.

We support the local 'Need Project' and The Leprosy Mission helping others across the world.

We use the Church building to host Remembrance Day service, Scout and Guide parades, the Town Carol Service and Christmas Tree Festival which acts as a platform for other local Charities and organisations.

We try to make all worship services and activities accessible and open including baptism, funeral, and weddings, wedding preparation and marriage and bereavement support.

We are very grateful to all who make possible the ministry outlined above by contributing weekly / monthly to the work of the ministry of the church through regular giving, Standing Orders and Direct Debits, Gift Aid and generous legacies. Contactless card payments have been introduced in 2018.

We are indebted to the voluntary effort and financial contributions of our members and sincere thanks are extended to the individuals and teams that help in the church community. The Wardens and PCC, those who teach and care for the children, the Readers, Prayers, the cleaning, flower arrangers and welcome teams, sides-people, bell-ringers, choir, worship team, the technical support and others who perform many varied tasks in the services and around the church and parish.

**Revd Huw Davies    Rector April 2020**

**Electoral Roll:**            April 2020 – 134

2015	Baptisms 11	Weddings 11	Funerals 23
2016	Baptisms 25	Weddings 7	Funerals 32
2017	Baptisms 18	Weddings 10	Funerals 35
2018	Baptisms 14	Weddings 4	Funerals 31
2019	Baptisms 12	Weddings 9	Funerals 24

**Safeguarding:** Sandra Watson

The PCC have fulfilled their responsibilities regarding Safeguarding and undertaken the required training. We have to date completed more than 20 DBS checks.

The Rector and Wardens have satisfied the Diocesan Safeguarding Team regarding the fulfilment of their responsibilities and duties.

In 2020 the Annual Meeting for St Swithuns Church scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> has had to be re-scheduled due to the Government restrictions placed upon the nation, indeed echoed around the world, in an unprecedented response to the Corona Virus – Covid-19 pandemic.

From March 22<sup>nd</sup> all public gatherings were banned, including church services and people were urged to stay indoors to help reduce the spread of the infection which if it spread unchecked would overwhelm the health care services and lead to many deaths. As it is by July 2020 the UK has had 50,000 deaths which might have been four or five times this number without the radical intervention of the Government and the compliance of the people as a whole society.

During the months when the church buildings were closed to public worship we at St Swithuns have been conducting gatherings and worship through the software technology known as ZOOM. As I write, things are still uncertain as to what the impact of this will be upon people's mental health, social interactions, finances, employment and family relationships as well as children's social development and schooling.

In such uncertain times it is important that the church remains a beacon of hope and a signpost to the One who is unchanging and who throughout history has walked with people through many difficult times with communities and with individuals.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever!" Bible Book of Hebrews 13:8

One thing is clear, many people are re-assessing their priorities and examining their values and purposes. For some a new spiritual awakening is happening while for others a new desperation is at work. Some are finding a new gratitude and generosity of spirit while others are discovering that life is more fragile and less predictable than they thought. This is bringing opportunities for ministry and mission to Christians to be salt and light in the community.

The PCC and myself are most grateful to you all for your support of the ministry of the church in Sandy. During this crisis giving Community Leadership as well as Pastoral Care and leading worship and recording of sermons is only possible with your financial support and the PCC are grateful for your continuing regular support as well as extra gifts and offerings as you feel able.

Some are finding they must reduce financial outgoings but many are increasing their charitable giving recognising people in here and in other countries are desperate for help more than ever before.

In addition I refer you to my comments in last year's Annual Report which still has relevance for today:

*Small churches particularly in the villages are finding it difficult to maintain ministry. Churches in the future will need to help each other. Even more so in the light of the lock-down and closures of 2020.*

*The numbers of children are very small and since children are counted as under 16 years old these numbers give great concern for the future but also indicate that there are very few teenagers in the churches.*

How we can recover the children and youth to our churches after the effects of the pandemic is going to be an even greater challenge to the future of the church as we know it.

*As a church with a few more people and a few more resources than many around us it is important that we understand our responsibility to encourage and support our fellow Christians in the smaller churches.*

*Across the country many churches are seen by their Diocese as key 'Resource Centres' for the area.*

*Who knows if this may not be part of the role God is preparing St Swithuns for in the years to come and how our preparations with sound and visuals, seating and heating may not be part of a bigger plan in the face of a changing and challenging time for the Church ?*

Thank you for the role you pray and play in all of this.

Sincerely **Huw**

The PCC met 12 times in 2019, inclusive of a meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2019 for the APCM.

**January** - Thanks to Keith Buckingham for re-decorating the Church Rooms kitchen. Huw has carried out repairs to the Chancel Step, making the Nave more accessible.

**February** - There was a deficit of Expenditure over Income of £10,000 for 2018. The Finance Committee will meet quarterly to monitor income and expenditure.

A draw down of funds for the repairs required after last year's Quinquennial Church Building Inspection was approved and our Architect was authorised to put the works out to tender.

**March** - Huw, Matt, Michele & Kevin attended a Diocesan conference on Fresh Expressions. Our Warden, Sandra Watson, has re-joined the Safeguarding Team. The PCC remain committed to ensuring St Swithuns achieve full compliance with CoE Safeguarding Policy.

**April** - The Grand Piano has become unstable and dangerous. Repairs are not worthwhile as it will not stay in tune. The Committee voted to replace it with a Bechstein upright. From the Fresh Expressions conference Matt will organise a team to run Summer Music Festival in July. This will be the 2nd outreach festival in the Church's calendar, to complement the Christmas Tree Festival. Huw has installed new lights into the Bell Ringers chamber.

**May** - Huw welcomed the new Committee Members to the PCC. The Church was filled to capacity for the Easter Services – thanks was given for this. The Committee reviewed tenders from 3 contractors for the repairs to the Church Building and voted to appoint Messenger Construction Limited.

**May to August** the PCC met numerous times for discussion in small groups to tackle the questions of what repairs and restorations were necessary to the outside of the building, what changes might be made to the interior of the church building and what should be our priorities.

**June** - Sandy Council will meet the cost of necessary repairs to the Tower Clock. The full programme of the Summer Festival is on the St Swithuns Facebook page. Huw has written to all Bell Ringers, Sidespeople and other Volunteers to ask them to complete the CoE On-Line safeguarding training.

**July** - Estimated costs for repairs to the Tower are less than expected. Our Architect will ask Messenger for a tender for high level Tower repairs. New heaters will be installed in the Church rooms before the cold weather begins. These will be easier to use and more effective.

*(There was no PCC meeting in August).*

**September** - Archdeacon, Rev'd Dave Middlebrook, engaged us in a challenging discussion about the Church Interior. Changes must be for Christ centred reasons, not for aesthetic appeal. The changes give us an opportunity to bring the love and teaching of Jesus to Sandy for a long time ahead. Huw, the Wardens, David Butcher and our Architect, David Llewellyn, will meet with Messenger on 6<sup>th</sup> September to agree a start date for repairs. We still await Messenger's tender for the Tower Repairs. Very positive feedback was received to the Summer Festival.

**October** - The Harvest Festival Lunch was a great success. Huw thanked all involved. A Bulletin summarising each month's PCC meeting is now available for public viewing.

**November** – Huw showed the PCC photos of the work in progress on the Church Building. Some stone arches over the Clerestory windows were in poor condition and have been replaced. Lead flashing has been replaced in a number of places. All gutters and downpipes have been replaced. The entire PCC have been DBS checked for Safeguarding purposes. The Committee expressed their thanks to Valerie Haygarth for years of hard work and passion in running the Church Rooms Drop in Café.

**December** - 2,220 people visited our Christmas Tree Festival. Very positive feedback was received verbally and on Social Media. Our lease of the Church Hall has been renewed for a further 40 years

## **Church Wardens Report on the fabric and maintenance**

### **Goods, ornaments, fabric of the church and church rooms**

Our major undertaking of 2019 was to start the repointing with lime mortar and replacing where necessary the ironstone and stone as required by our quinquennial report. This is now well underway with all gutters and downpipes replaced. New headstones over some clerestory windows where needed. Ironstone replaced and all lime mortar on north and south upper levels has been completed. All lead gulleys and leadwork checked and repaired or replaced where needed. The tower is now ongoing into 2020 and we hope work will be completed by end of September. Our thanks go to the Messenger building team.

The organ, central heating, fire extinguishers, and lightning conductor have been serviced. All electrics have been P.A.T tested.

The churchyard is kept in a neat and tidy manner and our thanks go to town council staff for their work. When all building work is complete the damaged grounds will be made good. The trees along the front wall were checked and lightly thinned but not crowned albeit we understood this was the plan. The Fanny Graves grave, in accordance with the covenant, is in good order.

### **Church Rooms**

The church rooms are in good order with fire extinguishers, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms all checked.

Church room cleaning: we are still struggling to keep numbers up for this weekly clean. Keeping the rooms clean and tidy is essential for both our use and as a letting facility. Many thanks to those who volunteer. Our many thanks to all those who played such a huge part in running the Drop in Cafe. Having raised thousands of pounds it is now finished.

### **Refreshments**

Tea and coffee between the morning services gives all a chance to meet in fellowship. To those who serve, a very grateful thank you.

Church Wardens

**Jean Peckham  
Sandra Watson  
Colin Osborne**

## **Reader's Report**

**Jane Godley**

It has again been a privilege to serve as Chaplain to our local Air training Corps. I visit the squadron once a month, to lead a discussion on life, moral dilemmas and chat to the cadets.

The session usually includes a team building practical activity. This year I spent a week on camp in the wilds of Norfolk with the cadets, I found it challenging, but very rewarding.

Once a month I lead a Church Service at Allison House, you would be amazed at the singing; help would be valued with this, also with bringing residents to the service from their rooms.

I enjoy visiting and talking to those who have difficulty getting out and about. Some have been church goers all their lives, some have never been to a church service. I am pleased to take Holy Communion to those who and it is a privilege to pray with those I visit. If you know of someone who might value a visit, please get in touch.

[jane.godley6@virginmedia.com](mailto:jane.godley6@virginmedia.com) 01767 220352

## **The 11am Worship Team**

**Anna Davies**

Many thanks to the commitment of our enthusiastic and prayerful team who continue to facilitate the 11am service worship. In planning we continue to think of ways in which the worship connects and engages with those who may be new or unchurched.

There have been some highlights worthy of note when Worship Team and Church Choir have come together to enhance the worship. Special occasions such as Remembrance Day, Christmas Carol Services, Easter Day and Songs of Praise being among the most memorable. We value our unity across the different styles and traditions at St. Swithun's.

Thank you to Mark Powell for his invaluable and patient help in fixing and ironing out the technical problems which occasionally arise and also for providing the church with beautiful, creative lighting which enhance our church environment for worship and other music events.

On a practical note, there continues to be a shortage of volunteers to help with the audio and visuals at both the 9:30am and 11:00am services.

## **Church Choir**

**Luke Howard**

2019 saw an increase in the membership of the church choir which is now up to 18 members: 4 basses, 4 tenors, 4 altos and 6 sopranos. We not only provided a lead to the worship each Sunday at 9.30am but also provided music for civic services, Remembrance Day, Easter Sunday, by request at private funerals and weddings as well as at the Christmas Tree Festival and all the additional services in Advent and Christmas. My thanks to Elizabeth Gammell for her leadership and to the choir members for their continuous and ongoing commitment.

## **SALT 2 Home group**

**Jan Woodward**

'During the Group's second year, because of family circumstances we sadly lost two of our members (Hayley and Nicolas) and with them our venue in Sandy. We now meet at Bethany, in Potton (Bethany - a place just outside Jerusalem where Jesus met with His friends; the friends have changed, but He never does and He still meets with us here)

We usually meet on the second and fourth Mondays of the month and over the past year, we have studied Nicky Gumbel's book, 'Living the Jesus Lifestyle', which has been quite a challenge. About half of the group members already knew each other quite well but this topic has enabled all of us to get to know everyone better.

We have aired some quite controversial views, shared life experiences, prayed for one another and each others families, enjoyed eating and drinking together, watched some interesting videos and built up closer relationships with one another.

Those of us who only became part of the Sandy Church congregation two years ago, as 'refugees' from Potton Vineyard now feel completely integrated into our new spiritual home - no longer 'orphans' from over the hill, but accepted and welcomed as part of Huw's 'much loved family' as he refers to the St. Swithun's congregation.

We would welcome any newcomers especially if they have not had much exposure to Home Groups, so if anyone is free on the 2nd and fourth Mondays of the month, between 8.00pm and 10 pm, more details are available from Kevin Reynolds or Jan Woodward.'

## **Alpha Course - Exploring Christian Faith**

Denise Powell

Alpha continues to be an ideal opportunity for people who may be new to church, seeking baptism or confirmation, or simply wanting to explore questions about life and faith in a relaxed, informal environment. The approach is warmly hospitable and non-religious. Team-work is essential and we are grateful to our volunteer team who plan, prepare, cook, welcome and serve. Details are available in the church and there are Alpha Postcards to give to friends, family, work colleagues etc. Anyone is welcome whether church-goer or not.

Mark and Denise Powell, Huw and Anna Davies

## **Bell Ringers**

Terri Creed

We practice on a Wednesday evening but have lost a couple of our young ringers due to academic priorities and this has impacted on practice nights. We don't have enough experienced ringers to help bring the learners/improvers to a higher level which is quite disappointing. It is still our intention to ring on the first Sunday of each month but, again, it depends on support from all the current ringers.

## **Coffee Concerts**

Luke Howard

I held a series of concerts at St. Swithun's during January February March / June July and August 2019 raising money for the Leprosy Mission and St. Swithun'. Some of these were solo and others were with friends from my ensemble, the Element String Quartet. These were well attended and raised a total of £877.60 which was divided equally between both the Leprosy Mission and the church. My thanks to Val Haygarth and her team for providing the all-important refreshments for all 6 concerts and we hope to hold other such events in the future.

## **Christmas Tree festival 2019**

Corinne Hetherington

St Swithuns Sandy hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> and very successful Christmas Tree festival in December 2019. Almost 2,500 Visitors turned out to view the trees and soak up the festive atmosphere. This year we extended the festival to two extra evenings and also invited small groups from local primary schools and brownies to view the trees which they could do so during school time. Both ideas proved popular and will definitely be considered again at this year's event. The festival continues to grow each year, not only in number of applicants but also in creativity. With over 60 trees on display, visitors were delighted by the display of imaginative decorations. Visitors were also able to enjoy some beautiful live Christmas music from local singers, musicians and choirs. There was also the opportunity to join in with carol singing around the piano on the Saturday afternoon which always proves to be good fun!

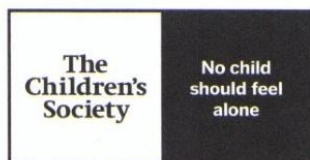
People tell us that "Christmas in Sandy starts with the Tree Festival".

The feedback has been fantastic with many already discussing their plans for a tree this year. The whole community is really getting involved, with tree entries from schools, groups, charities as well as local businesses.

The most talked about tree this year was definitely the most imaginative! This is the tree that was entered by the stonemasons, Jim and Paul and the team who are currently undertaking the church restoration. The tree is constructed out of scaffolding poles and looks brilliant. If you haven't seen it, it is not too late as is still in position inside the church (minus its Christmas decorations of course!). Do come and take a look.

A big thank you to everyone that helped, took part and contributed to the festival being so successful. There is a lot of hard work that's goes on in the run up to the festival as well as during the weekend itself. We couldn't have done it without our dedicated team of volunteers.





## **Children's Society**

Jennifer Watson

This report covers the year ended 31st December, 2019.

I am happy to report that sums collected for the Children's Society are as follows:

April Box Opening	£1,322.16
October Box Opening	£1,220.80
Christingle Service	£140.32
Donation*	£76.50
Total	£2,759.78

- \* This donation was handed to me following the Christmas Tree Festival. The Ladies of Sandy Library Knitting Group dressed a Christmas tree with little knitted figures and animals, and sold some of their work raising the above sum and a similar sum which they have donated to Barnados.

Thanks are due to the Box Holders and the Customers of Pete's Mini Market as well as the general Church congregation and the Sandy Library Kitting Group for a splendid result this year.

## **The Leprosy Mission**

Colin Osborne

The Sandy Branch of The Leprosy Mission – with the great support of so many people both inside and outside the church and from the surrounding area – enjoyed another successful year of fundraising with a fantastic total of £21,648 being received.

This came from a variety of sources – collecting boxes, gift envelopes, donations, talks, coffee morning, quizzes, weekly stall, concerts, outings, dinners, catalogue sales, gifts for life, etc.

The Branch celebrated its' 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of supporting The Leprosy Mission's work here in Sandy by holding a special Celebratory Concert in St Swithun's during November, compered by TLM's Vice-President, Pam Rhodes.

For the fifth year running, monies raised went to a specific project which, in 2019, was the funding of five hospital beds, with associated medical care, for the whole year at Anandaban Hospital just outside Kathmandu in Nepal, together with eight reconstructive surgery operations and after-care.

This year we have pledged to raise £19,673 to support the work of TLM's Chanchaga Orthopaedic Workshop in Nigeria. Over 50,000 people affected by leprosy in that country suffer from disabilities. Our fundraising will support eighty people coming to the Workshop for wheelchairs and artificial limbs. Chanchaga also makes prosthetics for others who have lost limbs due to war and violent terrorism.

### **St Swithun's Flower Group**

**Trixie Cooper**

The flower group provides two arrangements in church every Sunday throughout the year and flowers for special occasions such as, weddings, birthdays, and civic services etc.

We raise funds to purchase flowers in various ways but this has dwindled in the past few years. This year I have asked for sponsors from our congregation and have received a positive response to this request. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have given generously enabling the group to continue making our church look welcoming. We now have only 12 members and of course would welcome newcomers.

Flower arranging in a quiet church can be a relaxing therapeutic hobby so if you are interested in joining our friendly group please contact me. We will of course give help and advice if you are new to flower arranging. Trixie Cooper 01767 681999

### **St Swithun's Singers**

**Elizabeth Gammell**

Now in their 36th year, the Singers continue to flourish and greatly enjoy singing together. With a membership around 30, the choir meets on Monday evenings to work on music for the next concert but also to thoroughly enjoy each other's company and fellowship. Singing is a great way to relax and have fun.

In July, the choir opened the first Summer Festival at St Swithun's with an evening of songs from musicals. You know it's a popular concert when the start has to be slightly delayed for more chairs to be put out! During the autumn not only did we work on music for the Tree Festival and Christmas Concert but a number of members and friends knitted little angels to decorate our "Swing Down Angels" themed tree. The Singers also participated in the Sandy Choir Festival. New members have joined the choir and we are looking forward to our music-making in 2020.

### **Music on Mondays/ Together on Tuesdays**

**Doreen Lawrence**

St Swithun's Church has been reaching out to the elderly in Sandy's Nursing and Residential Homes since 2008 . At one time we visited 5 different venues, but now we just visit Park House on the third Monday or Tuesday of each month.

We begin by speaking individually to each assembled friend, then we share a programme of hymns, songs, Bible readings and poems. I work with Corina, the Park House Entertainment Organiser , to choose a suitable programme, using our large collection of CD's . Once a programme is chosen, Corina prints out the words of the songs and illustrates them so that they are attractive and easy to read.

Some residents join in with the singing, others just listen, but they all seem to enjoy our visits. I am grateful to Julia Bickerdike for her continued support and would like to invite any other Church members to come along and share the love of Jesus with these dear old friends.

## Open The Book in Sandy

Doreen Lawrence

Of course, the book we open every week in Sandy's Primary Schools is **The Bible**. In our weekly visits to school assemblies, we dress up and dramatise these important stories. The majority of Sandy's children would not hear any of the gospel message without this initiative. We began 2005 and many of the original storytellers are still faithfully delivering the Good News. We are, of course, now fifteen years older so are searching for new recruits.

Do you have a couple of hours a week where you could join one of our teams? We need men or women who would enjoy spreading God's message to the younger generations. It is great fun as well as rewarding to be part of the team and the children are very responsive. Your own Church would take care of safeguarding checks and you would be given a set of easy to follow books with all the words you need to tell the story. We understand that there will be times when other things prevent your participation, but because we work as a team this is not a problem.

You may prefer to be in charge of Props., working each week in a room at the Baptist Church to collect together all that is needed for that week's story then delivering it to Laburnum School for their Monday afternoon session. The props would be returned to you on Thursday afternoon. We are at present in desperate need of one or two people to do this special job.

Four members of St Swithun's Church are already Storytellers: Patricia Harper, Jane and Paul Godley and me. Please feel free to ask any of us about Open the Book..

## Annual Report from Churches Together

Jane Godley

'Churches Together in Sandy & Beeston' is there to take the love of God into the community through the churches working together.

This year members of the five local churches have organised and taken part in several activities. Joint services took place in January at the Baptist Church for Christian Unity, in March for World Day of Prayer at St Swithun's Church. Lent lunches took place each Friday in Lent at Sandy Baptist Church and £275.51 plus gift aid, was raised for Christian Aid. Just before Easter there was the Easter Story Trail, where over 400 children experienced the Easter story acted out by costumed story tellers in five realistic rooms. The walk of witness took place on Good Friday and was led by Mike Yates, the Baptist Minister. Christian Aid week in May raised £2681.49, helping the poorest people of the world. At the Sandy Carnival a group of people from Churches Together performed four Bible stories. A wonderful Holiday Club organised by Jenny Vass took place in August and included helpers from the different churches with an average of 40 children a day taking part. The week culminated in a barbecue, where 150 burgers & sausages were eaten! Churches Together had a stall at the Sandy Lights switch on where both children and their parents were able to dress up in nativity costumes to have their photograph taken. In November the role of Moderator for Churches Together was taken on by the Rector. If you would like to be involved as a representative of St Swithun's, help organise events, or have new ideas of future events, please get in touch.