

**Sandy Parish Church - St Swithun's Registered Charity No: 1130680
Trustees' Annual Report for the Year End 31st December 2018**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting 4pm APRIL 28th 2019

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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 2018

Rector (Chair): Revd. Huw Davies
Churchwardens: Jean Peckham Sandra Watson Colin Osborne
Honorary PCC Secretary: Stephen Snow
Honorary PCC Treasurer: Liz Karunanantham up to April 2018 May 2018 Kevin Reynolds
Deanery Representatives: Julia Bickerdike
PCC Members up to APCM 2018: Colin Osborne, Annie Cousins, Carole Martin, Michele Canfield, Eileen Mansion, Nicolas Yuille, Ruth Lock, Elizabeth Gammell, Andrew Barber
PCC members from APCM 2018: Colin Osborne, Annie Cousins, Carole Martin, Michele Canfield, Eileen Mansion, Nicolas Yuille, Ruth Lock, Elizabeth Gammell, Margaret Wilson, Matt Bushby, Stephen Hemmings
Curate: Revd. Daniel Foot. Appointed to St Martins Guernsey Aug 2018
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 Ruth Lock.

The PCC operated with four sub-committees in 2018

Standing Committee: Finance Committee: Stewardship Committee: 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 2018 to achieve these aims included:

- Development of a website – www.sandyparishchurch.org, Twitter feed and Facebook page.
- Bibles have been put in the pews and 600+ gospel of Luke given to guests.
- On Remembrance Day 2016 and 2018 500 reproduction WW1 gospels were given out.
- 2018 saw the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1 led by the Rector in the Church and the Market Square and celebrated with a peal of bells ringing out across the nation.
- The worship in the church has been enhanced by the introduction of new music led by the faithful choir and the contemporary worship team and technical support.
- The church congregation agreed to enhance the Sunday worship with a new 3rd service launched in January 2018 offering a different style of worship.
- Summer picnics in the Rectory garden for families and Open Church Sunday went well.
- The Christmas Tree Festival grew to involve over 50 Community groups and 1,500 visitors.
- 4,500 people came to church during December including almost 1000 children.
- The Secondary School held its first Carol Concert at St Swithuns.
- Local schools have visited the church and a number of members are school Governors.
- ALPHA was run once in 2018 and a new SALT Home-group has begun.
- The Annual Civic Service focussed on the 100th Anniversary of the Suffragette movement.
- A small group went to the New Wine Family Summer camp in 2018 and others plan to go in 2019.
- The church has become increasingly popular as a venue for local concerts of many types including the new and growing free monthly coffee-time recitals.
- The Open Church weekend and visits to the top of the church Tower have been very popular.
- The church members have been very active in many areas of community support including The Need Project, School Governors, The Drop-In Café, Music on Mondays in Nursing Homes, Open the Book in local schools and many other social groups such as bowls, local football, Brownies, Probus, local Town Council and chaplaincy of the Sandy Air Cadets.
- The Bellringing Team have expanded to teaching a number of new younger recruits in 2018.
- The Drop-In Café still is an important venue for midweek coffee, snacks and friendly chats.
- The Leprosy Mission is supported by the Church and Wider Community raising £21,879 in 2018 for Doctors and Nurses salaries and operations in Premananda Hospital, Kolkata (Calcutta).

Sunday:	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
Wednesday	9:45am	Holy Communion
Thursday	7:30am	Holy Communion

A Challenge and an Opportunity

Just out of interest I have analysed the mission statistics for 2010 to 2016 for the archdeaconry of Bedford to see what the climate of the Church of England in the area surrounding us is. There are 143 churches in 6 Deaneries in our Archdeaconry stretching from Luton to Silsoe.

This is not a league table nor a competition. Many of the churches in our area are in villages and it is not a comparison of like with like. But the trend does show that it is difficult for any church to be growing in today's society. We are all called to bear witness to Jesus in our generation and seeking to reach the next generation. In that regard we succeed or fail together.

If for example we simply keep our numbers the same year on year it means we are reaching new people because we are always losing some. Thus a church that has 45 worshippers this year and 48 last year means on one level an overall decrease of 3 but it could represent a good year with 12 new people being reached but 15 dying or moving away.

With an ageing church population, it is inevitable that in some churches there will be more deaths. However, it would be good to see numbers increase and some churches show that this is possible but there is no simple formula to follow or else we all would.

One thinks that one new person a year would not be too much to ask?

It seems such a small figure to reach for / pray for?

But only one church out of the 143 in the archdeaconry achieved the equivalent of at least one new person a year for seven years in all three areas of Electoral Roll, Adult and Children attendance during 2010 - 2016. That, as it happens, was St Swithuns, Sandy.

40% had less than 25 adults on a Sunday. 70% had less than 50 adults

Only 7% had more than 100 adults on an average Sunday (10 churches out of 143)

30% had 1 or 0 children in church 67% had less than 5 children. only 15% had 10 or more

This tells us a variety of things.

A) The general trend in society is not toward people wanting to come to church on a Sunday.

We have to make an effort if we want to simply maintain numbers. Some churches do grow and some don't but no-one in our Archdeaconry is doing brilliantly. This both challenges me and helps me see our church in context and gives me hope and patience. We certainly have advantages and perhaps responsibilities compared to churches in small village populations.

B) 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. It would be interesting to know the demographics for those over 60 years old and those between 20 to 40 years old. We must value what we have and many other churches do not.

C) 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 who are increasing in number take this calling seriously and 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**

Church Wardens' Report on the fabric and maintenance

Goods, ornaments, fabric of the church and church rooms

- The fabric of the church is mainly in good order with no major expense during 2018, however our quinquennial report requires us to repoint the stonework with lime mortar and replace gutters. This will proceed when quotes are forthcoming during 2019.
- The organ, central heating, fire extinguishers and lightning conductor have been serviced. All electrics have been P.A.T tested. A new gas meter has been installed in the boiler room.
- The churchyard is kept in a neat and tidy manner and our thanks go to town council staff for their work. The trees along the front are now very large and we will sound our concerns to the council. 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. The kitchen units have been painted and look lovely.
- Church rooms cleaning: We are 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 have cleaned and those who still do. **PLEASE CAN WE HAVE SOME MORE VOLUNTEERS.**

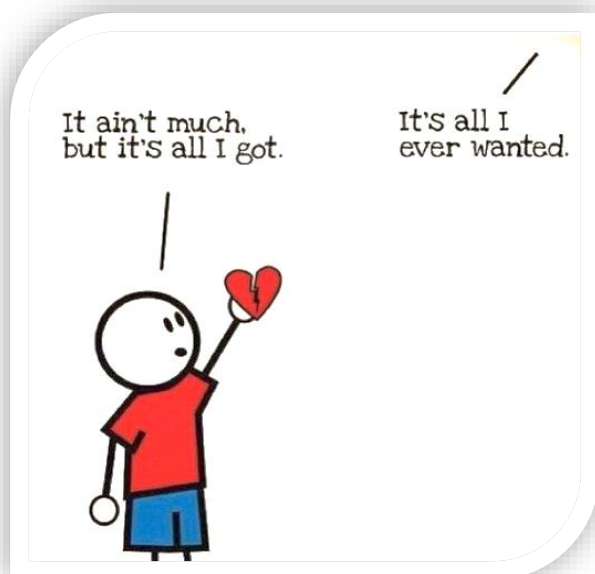
Refreshments

- Tea and coffee between the morning services gives all a chance to meet in fellowship. To those who serve, a grateful thank you. An appeal for more helpers has been good, so thank you all.

Jean Peckham, Sandra Watson, Colin Osborne Church Wardens

Note from the Rector: On behalf of all the Church and its members I would like to write a note of thanks here to the Wardens for their unflagging enthusiasm and hard work much of which only very few get to see but without which our worship and our church would be much the poorer.

A Sincere Thank You From All Of Us Huw



Mission Action Plan 2019 - 2020
Sandy Parish Church - St Swithuns PCC
PCC Meeting March 5th 2019

We understand Jesus' Commission to the Church in Matthew ch.28 is to
Reach, Teach, Mend and Send

We wish to be a place where all feel welcome and supported in their faith and life journey
Holding onto both Jesus' Great Commandment and Great Commission

Five Year Vision:

- That people encounter loving acceptance & experience the transforming grace of God at St Swithuns.
- That people from St Swithuns will be key in helping to run parenting, relationship and debt courses.
- That children and young people will stay within the church and grow into leaders of their generation.
- That the church will grow numerically and in harmony through all age groups and styles of worship.
- That the church will become financially stable and generous through regular giving and legacies.
- That the building will be refurbished as appropriate to ensure ongoing maintenance and usefulness.

As Goals for 2019-22 we will seek to:

- Embrace new people coming to the church and accept that this changes the status quo.
- Explore 'Fresh Expressions' that will help those who struggle to engage with traditional Services.
- Engage with people on the fringe and encourage a deepening of faith through the Alpha course.
- Encourage people to find their role in ministry and mission by acts of service and kindness.
- Explore ways of fund-raising and bringing into balance the regular expenditure met by regular income.
- Engage with the community through concerts, garden parties and Christmas events.
- Encourage pastoral care, small groups, prayer ministry, coffee mornings and Junior Church.
- Explore improvements to the building that aid and assist worship and congregational use.

Action already taken:

- Publicity and communication have improved, website and Facebook and an office established.
- A part-time Administrator, a financial book-keeper and a Junior church co-ordinator have been engaged with the help of grants from the Sandy Parish Clerks Charity and Fresh Expressions Diocesan grants.
- Personal faith has been encouraged and Bibles made available.
- Alpha has begun to help integrate guests and baptism families and new home groups have begun.
- Members of the church are involved in local politics, Town Council, and other community groups.
- The 'Drop-In Cafe' has played an important role in the lives of some local older people.
- The Church Rooms are used by groups that enhance the community, such as pre-natal classes.
- The 'Need Project' has a higher profile by being included with the Offertory every Sunday.
- The Christmas Tree Festival and Town Carol Service are entering their fifth year.
- Schools are engaging with the church more and four weekly 'Open the Book' sessions are held locally.
- Young people's work and Junior Church has received more support and encouragement.
- Summer picnics in the Rectory garden and New Wine summer teaching conference is being attended.
- People have engaged with raising significant sums for Leprosy Mission projects and other charities.
- The church has increased its profile as a venue for musical concerts of many different styles.
- The church has been re-lit inside and out, new noticeboards erected. Increased accessibility for sound and vision through improvement of the PA system.
- The PCC are making plans for external stonework repairs and exploring ideas for internal refurbishments.

PCC Secretary's Report: Calendar Year 2018.

The PCC met 10 times in 2018 conscious of its responsibilities, need for unity and vision.

January – Launch of 11am Contemporary Worship Services on Sundays to compliment the Traditional Worship Services of 8:15 and 9:30am. Preparations began for the quinquennial inspection of Church building to be held in the Spring. Safeguarding Team founded to ensure Church of England Safeguarding policies and practices are uniformly applied by everybody at St Swithuns.

February – No decline noticed in the numbers attending the Traditional Worship Service whilst the Contemporary Services have started well and enjoy a dynamic atmosphere. St Swithuns gained access to the Sharefaith internet package which proved a valuable resource for the Junior Church Team.

March – 2017 Final Accounts were signed off by our Auditors. Quinquennial Inspection was confirmed for 18th April so final preparations for this began. A letter was sent to the Council proposing alterations to the churchyard and general tidying up of the Wild flower area.

April – APCM. New members to PCC were voted in. Colin Osborne stepped into role of Church Warden and Kevin Reynolds took over the role of Church Treasurer. The quinquennial inspection was completed. A warm welcome was extended to the previous members of Potton Vineyard Church who joined us.

May – All PCC members to be DBS Checked and to complete a Church of England On-line Safeguarding training module and examination. The Church Tower clock has ceased to chime and a request was made to Sandy Council for repairs.

June – Rev'd Daniel Foot, our Curate, left St Swithuns to begin Ministry as the Rector at St Martin's Parish Church, Guernsey. Daniel was hard working and popular. We gave thanks for the tremendous support he brought to St Swithun's and extended our very best wishes to Daniel and his family for the future. Hayley Yuille was voted in as Junior Church Leader.

(There were no meetings in, July or August).

September – Positive feedback was received to the Open Church weekend held on St Swithun's weekend. St Swithuns hosted a Churches Together meeting in July with lively debate about how Churches must adapt to changes in the Social and Technological Environment to keep Jesus' Ministry at the forefront of popular awareness. A Harvest Lunch was held in the Church Rooms on 30th September.

October – The Quinquennial Inspection Report was received. The Church Building was found to be in good condition but re-pointing is required high up in the walls and the Clerestory windows need some reglazing. These repairs will require scaffolding. New chairs for the upstairs Church Rooms were delivered. A Confirmation Service was held on 21st October.

November – An All Saints service was held on 1st November for Remembrance. This was well attended and received very positive feedback. Remembrance Sunday once again filled the Church to capacity.

December – The Christmas Tree Festival was a resounding success. More than 1,500 visitors came to the Festival weekend. St Swithuns received positive feedback to all of the Christmas Services and we enjoyed welcoming many newcomers to the Church over the Christmas season. 4,500 in total during December.

Stephen Snow PCC Secretary

Treasurer's Report. Finance Overview Year End Dec 31st 2018

The Accounts are published as an Appendix to the Trustees Annual Report and are available to all.

THE GENERAL ACCOUNT

The 'day to day' running of the church incurred a shortfall of just under £30k in 2018.

There are however a few exceptional circumstances that need to be factored in and taking these into account I would suggest that the true shortfall for 2018 was about £15k, which is a very similar figure for the adjusted shortfall in 2017.

- £13k of 2017 Quota was paid in January 2018 due to end of year timings.
- £5k of 2017 reimbursements to Rector were paid in 2018.
- £7k income from Fresh Expressions came in autumn 2017 with expenditure incurred in 2018.
- £9k Gift Aid reclaim from 2017 arrived in 2018 plus also we have claimed for the whole of 2018.
- £10k grant was received in 2018 from the Parish Clerks Fund for administration and Office set-up.
- £11k was transferred from the Church Maintenance fund to General Fund in the light of the new Parish Clerks Fund which will help fund future capital repairs of the church.

THE GREAT NEWS

- The Sandy Parish Clerks Charity was set up many years ago authorising the Trustees (PCC) to use both the income and the capital for the work previously carried out by the 'Parish Clerk' and 'any other such pastoral and religious purposes in the parish as the Trustees should decide'. After decades of planning the Sandy Parish Clerk Charity sold half its land in January 2018 and the sum of £358k was generated. Some of this will go towards the administration and outreach of the church ministries and some towards the maintenance and refurbishment of the church building ready for the next generations.
- Whilst this Fund can be used for a number of projects it cannot make up for a shortfall of live giving.
- In 2018 we helped raise more than £20k for the Leprosy Mission and £3k for the Children's Society.

BRIEF COMPARISON BETWEEN 2017 and 2018.

Income rose by £7k from £88k to £95k. This was mostly from our giving.

Expenditure rose by £41k from £83k to £124k. Although if £13k underpaid Quota had been paid in full in 2017 then the difference would have been only £15k from £96 to £111.

Most of this extra expenditure was in support costs for the church and services e.g. new office equipment, additional support resource employment, and music equipment and paid for by the £10k grant from Sandy Parish Clerk Fund and £7k grant from the Diocese Reaching New People Fund.

BUDGET for 2019 agreed by the PCC

Projected income £106k (including £10k from Parish Clerk) Projected expenditure £118k.

Shortfall of £12k

The only significant expenditure proposal is circa £6k for a Parish Administrator. A vital role that Anna has been providing in the past and will become a part-time role two mornings a week in 2019.

This would leave a remaining funding need of £12k or £1k per month.

SUMMARY

We are greatly encouraged and thankful for the provision of funds to enable capital maintenance and refurbishment works on the church building to be undertaken in the next few years.

However, the general day to day costs of running the church are not being met, and it is our collective responsibility and privilege to help address this matter. Please do join us in praying about this matter.

I would be delighted to answer any questions that may arise at anytime and we shall keep you advised of the progress we are making.

Kevin Reynolds Treasurer

Junior Church – nursery to year 4. (3 – 10 years old)

For the past year, we have been meeting on Sundays at 9:30am and at 11am. We have a great team of teachers who put in lots of effort and commitment for our youngsters. Typically we see at least 10 children per week. Over the past year we have followed a series of videos on the Old and New Testaments, put in place by Daniel. We then changed format and looked at Parables during the early Autumn. We spent some time examining parts of the Christmas story and the children worked hard to put on the “Bethlehemian Rhapsody” performance for the Christmas Eve services, which the children did very well. Over the spring term we have been exploring the life of Jesus Christ following a resource called Click, from the Good Book Company. Please pray with us for these children to get to know Jesus and want to come back each week.

KWB – year 5 plus. (10 years old - teenagers)

We meet at 11 am when it’s not a family service week. KWB is also blessed with a lovely team of volunteers who pray for them and teach them. We started the school year with very low numbers, but are picking up slowly, with some wonderful young people coming along. We have looked at all the same themes as Junior Church, but aim to apply the messages more deeply and challenge our teens to live out their faith at school. They took part singing in “Bethlehemian Rhapsody” at Christmas and did a fantastic job. They made soups for Christian Aid week last May and hosted a lovely tea party for the older generation in the autumn.

Deeper – year 8 plus

A new group this year, meeting on Friday evenings at the home of Nicolas and Hayley Yuille. We have fun, eating, playing games, baking, or watching a film. We normally spend the last 15 minutes looking at the Bible, or thinking about our Christian lives. It’s a great opportunity for friendships to deepen and for the teenagers to put their faith into action in their daily lives. There are so many challenges out there we want to equip them to know Jesus and the Bible and live out godly lives.

Hayley Yuille **Junior Church co-ordinator**

Safeguarding report for APCM 2019

During the past year the PCC has continued to comply with the National and Diocesan Guidelines for safety. As part of the Diocesan Policy the PCC are in the process of completing the on-line safeguarding training. Other groups in the church will need to complete this in due course.

Ruth Lock **Safeguarding Officer**

Alpha Course - Exploring Christian Faith

After a successful and enjoyable course in the Spring of 2018 another is running in the Spring of 2019. Alpha continues to be an ideal opportunity for people who may be new to church and would like to grow in understanding of the Christian faith or simply explore questions about life and faith. It is an opportunity to make friends, ask questions and listen to engaging talks on the Christian faith in a friendly, relaxed and informal environment. The approach is warmly hospitable and non-religious. Team-work is essential and we are grateful to our volunteer team who cook, host and serve. Details of the Alpha Course are always available in the church. There are Alpha Postcards to give to friends, family, work colleagues. Anyone is welcome whether church-goer or not.

Huw and Anna Davies

Church Choir

2018 was a landmark year for the church choir, increasing our numbers from 12 to 15 on a weekly basis, but also adding extra members at special festivals. A group of dedicated and enthusiastic singers working each week to enhance the Sunday worship, they also sang at the Christmas Tree Festival in front of a packed church, not to mention the highlight of the choir's year, the Festival of Lessons and Carols on the last Sunday before Christmas. Our gratitude to the choir members for their dedication and commitment to enhancing the worship at St Swithuns and particularly Elizabeth Gammell for keeping the choir running successfully.

Luke Howard

11am Worship Team

We have much to give thanks for at St. Swithun's for the variety of music and worship styles we enjoy and for those who faithfully serve to bring worship that is reverent and meaningful. We value all music that helps people come to worship God and understand the Gospel and we value the contribution of all involved in the Choir, the Worship Team and the technicians supporting behind the scenes.

It has been a great pleasure to add new members to our enthusiastic team this year. We count it a privilege to have gifted and enthusiastic team of musicians and techies.

There are additional practicalities to cover such as the weekly projectionists, the set-up / set-down of PA equipment and the regular reporting of songs to CCLI required for the provision of our church music license. We also try to manage a rehearsal and team time together once or twice a month.

Contemporary Christian song/hymn writing in the national church has grown over the last 50 years and consequently there are now excellent resources and practical training opportunities for worship teams. Song Select - songselect.ccli.com - gives access to unlimited sheet music downloads of hundreds of worship songs, and these are also shared with our church choir.

Our annual Church Copyright License fee and membership of Song Select gives permission to download, project, play and perform music for Concerts, services, weddings and funerals and other events. This is currently £391.80 and comes as a surprise to some but it is a legal requirement and cannot be avoided.

Thank you to Mark, Mike and Luke who organised some beautiful lighting effects during the Christmas season, which greatly enhanced our special services and events.

It has been a joy for worship team and choir to join together for a number of special services - Christmas, Easter, Remembrance Day, the Civic Service and the Confirmation and we treasure this unity in worship across the different styles and traditions.

Anna Davies

Operation Christmas Child – Shoebox appeal 2019

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to show God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Once again, this year many dozens of shoeboxes filled with toys, toiletries, stationary and other goodies, were collected in the Church and sent along with tens of thousands of others to children around the world. Thank you to everyone who completed and brought a shoe box or those who made and donated items to go in shoe boxes.

Anna Davies

St Swithun's Group Flower Group

There are now 14 ladies in the church flower group and we arrange flowers every week during the year, usually two pedestals, and at Easter, Harvest and Christmas the whole church is decorated.

Special flowers are sometimes requested for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and in remembrance of family or friends which we are happy to undertake. Our funds come from group ladies themselves, donations from church members or special fundraising events. Our last fundraising event was a sponsored 'knit it' when we knitted small blankets for premature babies at Bedford Hospital.

Trixie Cooper

Bell Ringing Team

The bell ringers meet on Wednesday evenings for practice and hope to be able to ring the bells on the first Sunday of each month as well as for occasions such as Weddings, Easter, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas. There are currently 6 young people learning to ring (the youngest is 9); they are enjoying acquiring the skill and are all competent to ring the bell unaided. However, the bell ringers are struggling to recruit experienced ringers who could help the new members progress to being able to ring 'methods' - more complicated than just ringing the bells in order (rounds).

Terri Creed

Coffee Concerts

2018 saw a series of informal concerts take place on a Friday at 11:30am at the start of most months, featuring solo or duo performances by members of the Element String Quartet and professional musicians amongst their friends. These free concerts, with a retiring collection at each, raised over £1500 split between the church funds and the Leprosy Mission.

Violin performances by Caroline Waters and Emily Groom, by Kayleigh Tir on viola and Derek Archer (voice) as well as Emma Howard (flute) were some of the highlights and our gratitude goes to all who performed.

Luke Howard

The St Swithun's Singers

Now in its 36th year, the choir continues to flourish; we have over 30 members. Our Monday evening rehearsals are full of fun, friendship and laughter - but also a considerable amount of hard work in order to prepare for our performances. The Summer Concert was a most happy occasion; great to have such an appreciative audience who clearly enjoyed the variety of songs and readings. We repeated three songs from the Mary Poppins medley at the Civic Service - those attending might have been surprised to find themselves singing "Let's Go Fly A Kite" but they joined in enthusiastically. It was a delight to take part in the Christmas Tree Festival again, both decorating a tree and entertaining the visitors with a selection of festive music. We had the largest audience ever (the concert start was slightly delayed as extra chairs had to be deployed!) for our Christmas Concert and were able to make a substantial donation towards the upkeep of the church.

Elizabeth Gammell

New Wine 2018

New Wine is a summer Family Conference attended by 30,000 Christians each year. For the last 25 years it has been held in Somerset but this year has found a new home in Peterborough. Ideal for a Day Visit from Sandy.

A number of us have been going from St Swithun's for the last four years and 2018 was a fantastic experience. The seminars were really insightful; arming me with so many useful tools with regards to my faith, and always pointing me back to the Bible to give me a chance to reflect on my own views.

The festival is such a welcoming place: fun for people who have faith, and also for people who don't but want to learn more in a non-pressured way. It's an incredible way to develop your faith as a Christian, and you grow so much closer to the people that you go with. I learnt so much about my camp-mates, and the new friends we met at New Wine, and we had loads of really interesting theological conversations which challenged me to think about my own faith and perspective.

The worship at New Wine is fab. There are actually three different services to choose from which means that no matter what you're comfortable with, or whether you want to try something new, there is something there for everyone to enjoy and to really connect with God.

The fun activities like movie nights, open mic nights/music nights, sports events and all of the different venues themselves mean that there is always something to do. Be it theological development, finding new resources, making new friends or reconnecting with old ones – I can't recommend New Wine enough as an asset and resource to the church. Do please ask about how to make a day visit this summer.

Grace Jukes

SALT – Annual Report 2018-19

SALT - **Sharing And Learning Together** is a house group born out of Alpha that continues to ask questions of how Jesus, the Bible and our Faith integrates and influences our daily lives.

We are a fully inclusive group and welcome everyone to become involved in our studies and friendship.

We have built on last year's work and continued to have another good year. Denise and Mark have joined us this past year and have added another fantastic dimension to our discussions that take place. We are an informal house group which explores the questions and challenges that arise between the lives that we lead everyday and our faith and hopefully provides some answers. In so many instances we don't know the questions that we want to ask until the Holy Spirit comes amongst us and provides responses that we typically just couldn't have imagined. We do this with food and fellowship in a relaxed friendly surrounding.

This past year has seen us look at some of the challenges that Huw has set us in some of his Sermons. We've also discussed the influences that God and Jesus can have upon our lives through our everyday encounters, be it in real life experiences or through the teachings of the Bible. A key component of our group is to support and help one other's lives. Overall, it's been another uplifting year that's been really invaluable to us all.

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Our format is food, fellowship, bible study and discussion, continuing to meet in various houses around Sandy.

We are always open to receiving new people to our group, subject to the limitations of the size of the hosts' house. Alternatively, we'll be happy to assist in creating a second group.

Would you like to add a little more SALT to your life? We hope to see you soon or don't hesitate to ask me for more information.

Mike Green

The Leprosy Mission

The Sandy Branch of The Leprosy Mission – with the great support of so many people both inside and outside the church – enjoyed another successful year of fundraising with a fantastic total of £21,879 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.

For the fourth year running, monies raised went to a specific project.

In 2015 £20,000 went to help refurbish the roof and wards at the Leprosy Hospital in Purulia, West Bengal.

In 2016 £19,000 went to the Bankura Rehabilitation and Training Centre visited by Rev Daniel Foot.

In 2017 £21,000 went to Purulia to help build an Out-patients Department and staff accommodation.

In 2018 £21,879 was the funding for the whole year of a doctor and two nurses at TLM's Premananda Hospital in Kolkata (Calcutta), India. Such was the success of the project that we were able to fund a third nurse for the year.

2019 sees the 50th anniversary of supporting The Leprosy Mission's work here in Sandy and we have several special events planned included a Celebratory Concert on Saturday 16th November hosted by Pam Rhodes. This year we have pledged to raise £20,060 to fund five hospital beds, with associated medical care, for the whole year at Anandaban Hospital just outside Kathmandu in Nepal, along with eight reconstructive surgery operations and after-care.

Colin Osborne.

Children's Society

The Children's Society prefers to keep the figures for Christingle services separate from those for box collections. This report therefore has separated the figures.

St. Swithun's has for some years held its Christingle service in February but, after discussion, it was felt that the Christingle should be moved to be part of the Advent preparations for Christmas. As a result, there were two Christingle services in 2018. The sum collected from the February service was £310.05 and that from the December service was £130.68, giving a total for the year of £440.73.

As to box collections, the figures were £1,159.51 collected in March/April and £1,150.40 in September/October, giving a total for the year of £2,309.91.

Overall, therefore, the total sum collected for The Children's Society – Christingle services and box collections – amounted to £2,750.64.

A big thank you to all. If you would like to have a Collection Box for your loose coins which all add up and help towards the work of supporting some of the most vulnerable children and teenagers in our society please do ask me for details.

Jennifer Watson

Volunteering with 'The Need Project'

I have been delivering food parcels for just over three years (for the last 18 months Anthony has been my Friday co-pilot – volunteers always work in pairs) and it has been a real privilege to serve, not only because it has been humbling and rewarding to help feed those in need, but also because I have worked with some really fabulous people. It has also improved my navigational skills, having been to such far flung climes as Blunham and Tempsford.

The diversity of the client base never ceases to astound me and I now truly understand 'there but for the grace of God go I.' Sometimes the need is long term, sometimes it is a very short term issue which creates the need for assistance. Sandy is currently the second busiest hub, the figures from the latest report produced by the charity showing that the average distribution is 33 food parcels a month, almost twice as many as Biggleswade. In December the hub distributed over 60 Christmas parcels, and I am so grateful to Val, Carole and Jane (you were amazing, ladies!) who joined a very small deliver team and made what was looking to be a very scary task not only bearable but pleasurable!

Thanks to all those of you who regularly donate food and to Steve who, week in, week out, transports our gifts from St Swithuns to the hub. You are doing something wonderful and I just wish you could see the relief on the faces of the recipients, they know they are cared for and loved and that is down to you.

I do not know the future of the Sandy hub, as over the last 2 years there has been a steady decline in volunteers, primarily because of changes in circumstance. When I started volunteering there were enough of us to get parcels out every weekday, a hub manager, others who collected from Tesco and two others who managed the stock cupboard (15-16 people working together). Sadly, now that is down to 5; two collect from Tesco, one maintains the store with my help if required, and Anthony and I deliver on Fridays. The rest of the time Sandy deliveries have to be done by the Project Manager, Gordon Hamilton. By the time you read this Anthony and I will also have stepped down. This does not mean that donations will not be feeding those in need in Sandy, simply that it will not be Sandy folk distributing it.

I pray that more volunteers will come forward. If you do feel that you could give a few hours a week I am sure that Gordon would love to hear from you.

Sue Bell

Music on Mondays 2018-2019

Thanks be to God, this outreach to the elderly in the nursing homes in Sandy is still in existence!

Thanks also to Susan Marks who organised monthly visits to Park House last year after I had stepped down. However, during last summer Susan moved to Norfolk, so I have once again resumed the leadership and have been ably assisted by Julia Bickerdike whenever she is in Sandy.

We present an hour-long programme of songs, hymns, readings and poems on the third Monday afternoon of every month. Residents look forward to our visits which always begin with a personal chat with any residents who are capable of conversation.

Last week's programme was centred on the theme of 'Love'. Residents joined in with the singing of hymns such as 'Love Divine all loves excelling' and 'Yes Jesus Loves Me', and songs such as 'If I Loved You' (Frank Sinatra) and 'When I Fall in Love (Nat King Cole). We had two short Bible readings; 1 John 4: 7-8 and 20-21, and three short poems. I am very grateful to Corinna, (Entertainments Organiser at Park House) as she has undertaken the production of decorated song sheets and actually switches the CD's on and off for me, which has made my task much easier!

I would be grateful if anyone would like to join us just once a month. The elderly friends do love to welcome visitors and to see different faces. We meet again on 18 March- 'Walk in the Light' and on 15 April -'Easter Blessings.' Please have a chat with me if you would like to learn more or are able to help in any way.

Doreen Lawrence

'Open the Book' Report for the year ending December 2018

2019 will be the twentieth anniversary of this wonderful Christian work in state schools which actually began in Bedford and has spread throughout the UK.

Churches Together has once again supplied four different teams of Storytellers to visit the four primary schools in Sandy. Jenny Endersby has continued to be in charge of the costumes and props, so we are very grateful to her for the weekly delivery of the prop boxes which are shared by all of the teams.

In 2018 we presented stories from the Year Three programme.

We have said goodbye to a few faithful storytellers, so are urgently seeking new volunteers. We have now completed our thirteenth year, so many of our original storytellers are looking to 'retire'!

Please ask me for more details if you think you could help us.

Doreen Lawrence

St Swithuns Drop-In Cafe

The café opened in 2007 after a request from the Bishop of St Albans for each church in the diocese to try to find a way to reach out to the Community.

We began by serving drinks, and light snacks, this then developed to include a full two course luncheon menu and over a period of eight years lunches were served to an average of 35 people two days per week which totals some 23,000 hot meals being cooked and served by volunteers. Well done and thank you.

In 2017 it was felt that this was too much for the helpers, who were now not as young and fit as they had been and we reverted back to light snacks, drinks and cakes on Wednesday mornings only. This still continues and we are seeing around forty people each week.

In addition to providing refreshments, we are often called upon to give support to those who are in some form of distress either through, bereavement, family disputes, or money worries. We try to lend a listening ear and give comfort and sometimes advice, if it is asked for.

It was never intended that the café should be a profit making concern but with the generosity of our customers and careful shopping we have on this period generated funds which have enabled us to donate a total of £20,048 to various charities.

We also run a Second-hand Book Stall and for every £200 received in sales we donate this sum to worthy causes advocated by our customer and total of £4,725 has been raised by these sales. We are most grateful to those who provide us with books in pristine condition and to those customers who purchase them.

Val Haygarth

Sunday afternoon Summer Picnics - May-August

Our summer lunch-time picnics on the first Sunday of the month in the Rectory Garden have continued to be very popular. They provide a lovely opportunity for our church community to invite family members and friends, bring a picnic and enjoy a relaxed few hours together.

July 2018 was particularly memorable involving a 'Bring and Share Lunch with BBQ' and around 130 people came. We were also on this occasion saying good-bye to our curate Daniel.

Special thanks must go to all the guys who brought in the large BBQs and endured the cooking of so many burgers and sausages for 2-3 hours in the blistering heat of the day! Also, thanks go to the Sandy Horticultural Society who not only lent us their large marquee but generously delivered and assembled it for us in the garden.

The trampoline, swing and garden games - which included an impromptu "water fight" on one particularly hot Sunday! - have proved popular with the children and parents have enjoyed talking together knowing that the garden is safe and secure.

Anna Davies

Report from Churches Together in Sandy and Beeston

Churches Together includes six Churches working together to show God's care & love in our communities. The six churches are, Sandy Baptist Church, Beeston Methodist Church, Sandy Methodist Church, Sandy Community Church, St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, and St Swithun's Church.

Representatives from each church meet several times a year to pray, plan and review events, and share good and not so good news from our respective churches.

During the year Churches Together has organised and taken part in the following: -

- Lent lunches raised £315.23 was sent to CAFOD this year, with matched funding from the government.
- A 'Walk of Witness' took place on Good Friday, led by our then Curate Daniel Foot.
- Volunteers from the churches continue to take 'Open the Book', (dramatized Bible stories) into our four Lower Schools.
- Assisted in the collection & distribution of food and essentials for the Need Project, more volunteers are urgently needed.
- An Ecumenical Holiday Club, led by Jenny Vass and run by volunteers from our churches,
- Carol singing outside the Co-op resulted in £100 each being sent to Crisis at Christmas and Embrace.
- Churches Together had a stall at the 'Sandy Lights Switch On', distributing star biscuits with a message.
- A CTiS&B tree was displayed at the Christmas Tree Festival.
- The Men's Breakfast Club continues to be an ecumenical venture.
- An ecumenical prayer group continues to meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at Rosemary Hooker's home at 8.00pm.
- A service of Prayer for Christian Unity was held in the Baptist Church in January.
- In March 'World Day of Prayer' was held in St Swithun's.
- During Christian Aid Week £2,896.24 was collected by volunteers from all the churches,
- The Easter story Trail will have taken place at Sandy Baptist Church. Over 400 children will have experienced the retelling of the events of Holy Week in Jerusalem.

Jane Godley (Moderator)

Have you recently explored our website?

There is much to discover at www.sandyparishchurch.org

Do you follow us on Twitter or Facebook?

Why not be sure to regularly share posts that you like with your friends.

Summary Report of Deanery Synod meetings in 2018

Synod met three times during 2018 and at each meeting there was an element of business to be conducted which included Finance, a report from the Mission and Pastoral Committee and matters raised by either The Rural Dean or the Lay Chair.

8th March 2018 at St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade

The Archdeacon of Bedford, the Ven Paul Hughes led us in a service of Commissioning for our newly appointed Rural Dean, the Rev'd Guy Scott.

Fr Kevin Goss, Vicar of St Paul's Church in Bedford and our General Synod link member, gave us a presentation of the February meeting of General Synod.

11th July 2018 at St Swithun's Church, Sandy

Our speaker was Mr Mark Dunwoody, Diocesan Fresh Expressions Development Officer for the Bedford Archdeaconry who gave us an insight into this whole subject.

Diocesan Synod Elections – The House of Clergy members are The Rev'd Fiona Gibson, The Rev'd Tim Robb and The Rev'd Guy Scott. The House of Laity nominations were Jane Gogarty and Ken Ebbage and they were duly elected. There was no nomination for the third member and a vacancy was declared. Jane Gogarty agreed to continue as a member of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Correspondence It was reported that a Safeguarding event was being held in Biggleswade and another event at Eaton Socon in September 2019.

Deanery Calendar The Secretary agreed to maintain the Deanery Calendar and ensure it was published when necessary.

18th October 2018 at 7:30pm at St Mary's Church, Potton

The Rural Dean gave us an address and slide presentation on Finance and Budgeting at Diocesan, Deanery and Parish level giving a good indication as to how all three are linked.

Deanery Project 2019 Presentations – Two nominations had been received. One for CHUMS and one for purchasing Bibles for the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in North Bedfordshire. After the respective short presentations members were asked to vote for their choice. The result was Yarl's Wood 11 votes and CHUMS 13 votes. It was noted that this was the closest vote for some time.

Diocesan Matters – With regard to the vacancy for a Lay Member on Diocesan Synod Graham Daniels was nominated and seconded to fill that post and the Lay Members present agreed that he fill that vacant post.

Jane Gogarty was formally elected to be our nominated representative on the Diocesan Board of Finance. There were no nominations for the Diocesan Board of Education.

Rural Dean / Lay Chair Matters – Thanks were expressed by the Rural Dean and the Lay Chair for the warm welcomes they had received undergoing the annual Archdeacon's Inspections

Graham Daniels, Deanery Secretary

MISSION ACTION PLAN - In terms of St Alban's Diocese Mission Statement: -

A Working Document for Mission and Ministry

Reach – Teach – Mend - Send

Jesus' Greatest Commandment as recorded in Matthew 22 calls us to **love God** with all our heart and to **love our neighbour** as ourselves. Jesus' Great Commission to us as recorded in Matthew 28 is "to go into all the world and make disciples teaching them all that I have taught you".

a) Going deeper into God

- The development of the accessibility and variety of Sunday worship. The children's work is encouraging with the growing number of adult team taking part in teaching Junior Church.
- The formation of midweek small-groups for prayer and support.
- The new 11am Fresh Expression of worship has opened the door to many new people.
- The Robed Choir and the Worship Team have both significantly grown and developed in 2018.

b) Transforming communities

- An Office and administration continues to develop as does publicity, website and communication.
- To encourage the many ministries of the people of the church supporting the NEED project, Open the Book and the Drop In, pastoral social care and their influence at home and work.
- Following the success of the 'Boundaries' and 'Parenting' courses we hope that we might one day be able to expand these to the community and include marriage and debt counselling courses.
- Closer links are being forged with the schools and community with hopes for more links in 2019.
- The church building is being used more by the community for concerts and schools visits and 2019 will see the PCC consider how the building might be enhanced and developed to aid the worship and mission of the church for the next generation.

c) Making new disciples

- A commitment to reach those under forty whose culture, life-experience and expressions of worship are so different to our parent's generation and are largely missing from most churches.
- The new 11am contemporary worship service has seen an increase in the number of 20-30 year olds worshipping at St Swithuns in 2018. They have started a small-group.
- A renewed openness to those on the journey of faith offering a variety of worship and social activities, welcome and accessibility at the key moments of christenings, marriages and funerals.
- The Alpha course has continued to be of real value to the people of the church as well as an open door for new people to join the church. We will continue to use it in the years ahead for those wishing to discover more about the Christian faith, who have questions about faith and especially those on the fringe and outside of the church.
- Renewing the audio-visual system to enhance the worship and teaching for a new generation and improving our digital communication website - www.sandyparishchurch.org

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and Vestry Meeting
Sunday 29th April 2018 4:00pm in St Swithuns Church Presented to the PCC 1/5/2018

Present: The Meeting was chaired by the Rector, Rev Huw Davies 34 Electors present.

Apologies: Julia Bickerdike, William Lawrence and Jane Godley

Vestry Meeting

1. The Minutes of the Vestry Meeting from 23rd April 2017 were read aloud, approved and signed.
2. Huw expressed his thanks to all 3 wardens for their hard work and support throughout the last year.
3. Huw then asked Valerie to give a few words as today marks the end of 21 years of service as a Church Warden to St Swithuns and 23 years as a member of the PCC. Her contribution to the running and maintenance of the Church in this time has been invaluable.
4. The Church Wardens elected for May 2018 to April 2019: Jean Peckham, Sandra Watson and Colin Osborne.
5. There being no other business the meeting closed with a Prayer.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

1. The Minutes of the previous meeting on 23rd April 2017 were approved and signed.
2. The Vestry Meeting was reported and the appointment of the 3 Churchwardens notified.
3. **Trustees Annual Report.** This was previously circulated along with the full examined accounts:
 - a. **Rectors Report.** Huw gave a talk giving a brief overview to the meeting of St Swithun's Objectives & Activities, Specific Activities in 2017, Mission Action Plan, Fresh Expressions, the introduction of the Contemporary Service, the new teaching St Swithuns is bringing to Sandy (eg Practical Parenting and Boundaries Courses) and how the Church Building and Rooms are being of use to Sandy in general.
Huw expressed his thanks to Luke Howard and Elizabeth Gammell for the musical contribution they are bringing.
 - b. **Statistics** Electoral Roll: 134 Baptisms: 18 Weddings 10 Funerals 35
 - c. **Churchwarden's Report**
As circulated. The Quinquennial Inspection is complete and the general fabric of the Church Building is good. No questions raised. Jean stood up to observe that the last year was a particularly good one. St Swithuns is still drawing people in to all Services. The hope and expectation is that people enjoy coming to the Church and it is important that we are all aware of the need to extend a warm welcome and be accessible to new Members.
 - d. **PCC Report.** As circulated. No questions raised.
 - e. **Treasurer's Report and Accounts.**
Accounts were examined by Howard Skinner and approved by the PCC on 6th March 2018.
Huw read Mr Skinner's report out loud to the meeting and then talked through the main points of the Accounts including specific items in Payments and Receipts. Huw gave thanks for the generosity of Congregation members in supporting the Church. The excess of total payments over total receipts might be reduced to zero with a small increase in the value of donations from Congregation members. In absentia, Liz Karunanantham expressed her thanks to the congregation.
Huw was keen to Minute his especial thanks to Liz Karunanantham for her help in stepping in to act as Treasurer last year after Paul Godley stepped down from the role. Liz is now stepping down.
The Accounts were received by the Meeting.
Questions were invited from the floor but none were received.
 - f. Mr Kevin Reynolds has been appointed as Treasurer from 1st May 2018.
 - g. Mr Howard Skinner was appointed as Financial Examiner for 2018-19.
 - h. **Election of PCC Officers**
Nominations were; Stephen Hemmings, Margaret Wilson, Kevin Reynolds, Carole Martin, Annie Cousins, Elizabeth Gammell, Eileen Mansion, Julia Bickerdike and Nicholas Yuille. Stephen Snow.
There being no objections the PCC was elected en-bloc by a show of hands..
 - i. **Appointment of Sides Persons.** Huw read aloud the current list of Sides-persons and there were no objections to these being appointed again for the new year.
 - j. **Independent Financial Examiner.** Bob Browning proposed that Howard Skinner be formally appointed as St Swithuns Independent Financial Examiner. This proposal was seconded by Michele Canfield and accepted by the meeting

4. There followed a Free Forum for Discussion and Comment.

Adrienne Massey - What is being done with the Steven Taylor memorial fund (Value: £8,577)

Huw: This fund was created for the purpose of support and help for teenagers. There is a sizeable number of children in our present congregations but the vast majority are 12 years or younger.

Stephen Hemmings - Luke Howard is "Brilliant" as the organist and the Choir are "Phenomenal". Stephen was keen to record his thanks to Luke for the great musical support underpinning the Services at St Swithuns.

Sue Bell - Thank you to St Swithuns Congregation Members for the contributions of food and toiletries made to The Need Project. Unlike the Trussell Trust, The Need Project delivers the food directly to the recipients as this allows the Project Team to engage more closely with the people they are supporting. This, in turn, allows the Project to offer them more support and help as they can understand the problems facing the people. The Project have 3 Volunteers delivering supplies but more are needed.

Bob Browning / Jennifer Watson - Bob is now stepping down from supporting the Children's Society, after 36 years of service, and Jennifer will be taking over. During the last year collections for the Children's Society have totalled more than £2,000. Huw gave thanks to Bob for his support and hard work. Jennifer will arrange for a representative of the Children's Society to visit St Swithuns and speak to us all about their work.

Deidre Porter-Hanson - How much extra would Congregation Members need to give for the Excess of Payments over Receipts to be reduced to Zero? **Huw** - if all Congregation Members were to give an additional £2 to £3 per week this would make a big difference. The situation is, of course, fluid with, e.g. help from the Diocese being received to support Fresh Expressions and new innovations (such as contactless payments).

Margaret Wilson – Very pleased that the new pattern of Sunday Services is working well with strong turnouts for the Traditional and the Contemporary Services. Margaret expressed her thanks to those supporting the services with their time and hard work and reminded the meeting that some Congregation Members may only be able to support the Church in this way and won't necessarily have the funds to give financial support. Huw expressed his thanks to Margaret for her needlecraft and other ways of helping at St Swithuns.

Elizabeth Gammell – Wanted to repeat the invitation to all Congregation Members to attend the Prayer Session that precedes the PCC meeting on the 1st Tuesday of every month in the Church at 7pm. The Prayer Session creates a feeling of Grace and Peace and is often enhanced when Anna leads with the keyboard.

Jean Peckham – asked to record her thanks to Anna for her music support to the services and in so many other ways behind the scenes. To Luke for his organ playing and direction of the Choir and to Daniel for his support and hard work over the 3 years he has been Curate at St Swithuns.

Luke Howard – It is great to be a part of the St Swithuns team for another year. He visits other Churches but always wants to return to St Swithuns.

Rev'd Huw Davies – Expressed a warm welcome to Members of Vineyard. It was brave on their part to respond to God's calling to re-assess their calling. The Vineyard at Potton has had a good reputation and Huw was grateful to St Swithuns Congregation members for making room to accommodate and engage with them. Huw expressed his thanks to Anna for her prolific and invaluable behind the scenes work. He also gave thanks for the work of people supporting the Church generally – e.g. Sides-people, people cleaning the toilets etc. Liz Karunanantham will step down from her post as Treasurer and grateful thanks are recorded to her.

Rev'd Daniel Foot – Expressed his thanks for the Support, Blessings and Love that he has enjoyed from everybody at St Swithuns over the last 3 years. Daniel will be very sad to leave in the summer of 2018. He said that the curacy here had been a very positive experience and thanked the Rector and church for his training.

Daniel closed the meeting with a Prayer giving thanks for all that he has learned and experienced in his time at St Swithuns and asking for God's blessing on the Church in the year ahead.