

**St John the Baptist Parish Church
Crowthorne**

**Annual Report
2012 - 2013**



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CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHONERS to be held on Sunday, April 28th 2013 in the Parish Church Hall after the 10:00 service at 11:45am

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of Parishioners 2012
4. Election of Churchwardens

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING of the CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL to be held immediately following the meeting of Parishioners on Sunday, April 28th 2013 in the Parish Church Hall.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Parish
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Parish Vision Update
4. Garden of Remembrance Overview
5. Update on Renovation Projects
6. Approval of the Annual Report and Accounts
7. Report on changes of numbers on electoral roll.
8. Presentation of Parish Reports
9. Elections
 - a. Parochial Church Council
 - b. Deanery Synod
10. Appointments
 - a. Hon Secretary
 - b. Hon Treasurer
 - c. Hon Independent Examiner
 - d. Welcome Teams
11. Notices
12. Closing prayers

AGENDA of FIRST PCC MEETING (to follow APCM on SUNDAY, APRIL 28th)

1. Minutes of the PCC meeting of the 17th April 2013
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
3. Committee Membership.
4. Dates of meetings for the year.
5. Correspondence
6. AOB

CROWTHORNE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Rev'd Lisa Cornwell (Chairman)
Rev'd Jane Manley (Curate)
Laszlo Gyenes (Churchwarden)
Karl Simpson (Churchwarden)
Beccy Al-Jadir (Hon Treasurer)
Jenny McKeever (Hon Secretary)

Meeting of Parishioners held after 10.00am service on Sunday 29th April 2012

Opening prayers

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Jill & Steve Pope, Bob & Maggie Wade, Doreen Norfield, Richard & Caroline Ireson, Carol & Gordon Cain, Carol Frost, Hilary Burton, Audrey & Brian Hooper, David & Sue Rance, Sheila Stickland, Maureen Raybould, Peter Hattersley, Beccy Al-Jadir.

Minutes

Approval of the minutes of the Parishioners meeting held on Sunday April 10th 2011 were proposed by Gillian Gyenes and seconded by Tracy Perrett.

Election of Churchwardens

Lisa thanked Laszlo Gyenes for his four years of service as a Churchwarden and presented him with a gift in appreciation of his support and service to the Church during this period. There was a warm round of applause from the meeting.

Anne Mohan has agreed to stand for election as the second Churchwarden, she was nominated for the role by Laszlo Gyenes. Karl Simpson seconded the nomination. All voted in favour of Anne's appointment and gave her a round of applause.

Karl Simpson has agreed to continue as Churchwarden. Ken Perrett nominated him and Hazel Berry seconded the nomination. All voted in favour of Karl remaining as a Churchwarden.

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Sunday April 29th 2012

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Bob Ebdon, seconded by Grant Robertson and agreed by all. They were signed by Lisa as a true record.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Parish Vision Update

Lisa gave an illustrated presentation of the present state of our Parish Vision which was launched at the APCM three years ago.

The Diocesan priority for this year is “Making a Difference in the World”.

The following priorities were highlighted for the current year:

1. “Concern for the whole of creation”; we have encouraged an eco-friendly church and congregation. We investigated a green heating route which, unfortunately, was not viable. During Christian Aid week we will host a meeting entitled “Time for Climate Justice” about the effects of climate change globally. The Pathfinders are raising awareness for the Palestinian issue and, closer to home, during the current economic climate, we propose to support the Bracknell food bank and collect donated gifts of food to take to the bank once a month.
2. “Immerse the life of the Church in Prayer”; the Parish Retreat went well and will be repeated in a couple of years time. Thanks to Hazel Berry (and to Lewis Simmons for putting up the box) the Churchyard Prayer Walk is now in place. Lisa encouraged us to try it out. Hazel interjected to say that the leaflets from the box have been used. Ken Perrett leads a regular house group and Lisa would like to see more of these. Post Easter study groups on Prayer are now available. Please sign up for a place on this course. There is a monthly Prayer Diary attached to St John’s News, thanks to Irene Simmons. There was a spontaneous round of applause for Irene. Ken Perrett reminded the meeting that a link to the Daily Office was available on the website. Lisa hopes to have people trained so that they can pray with those who wish it after church services.
3. Vocations; Today is vocation Sunday. Sandhurst will run a “growing leaders” course to take place over a weekend. Hazel and Lisa prepared a ‘prayer and vocation’ module for Oxford Diocese and plan to run the vocation section for the parish next year.
4. “Utilize Olympic Games as an opportunity to share the love of God and good news of the gospel with those on the fringe or outside the church”; as well as Olympic Games themed events we are holding a street party in the churchyard on Tuesday 5th June to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee also a special church service on the first Sunday in June.
5. “Maximise the use of space and create a comfortable environment for worship”; the heating will be replaced this summer.

4. Update on Renovation Projects

Laszlo Gyenes gave a brief overview of the renovation project to-date. Thanks to successfully raising the funds, the roof was replaced in 2010. Consultation has taken place with heating contractors and it has been decided that the present system will be replaced with like for like. The antiquated boilers and radiators will be replaced with two condensing boilers and new, more efficient, radiators. The system will run itself with a little adjustment needed to programme it for special events. Comfort Building Services won the contract. Laszlo recently signed the acceptance document for the contract value of £47,149 + VAT at 20%, total £56,579. Fund-raising is still on-going. An application for a grant was recently submitted to Berkshire Churches Trust.

The lack of space in the Churchyard has high-lighted the need to have a Garden of Remembrance where ashes can be strewed rather than interred. Ken Perrett, who has been instrumental in developing the plan, explained the concept and illustrated his description with plans and sketches. The Garden will cover an area of 4m by 3m in the far NW corner of the Churchyard. Ken had approached 4 stonemasons to provide a plan. Only two responded. The PCC accepted the proposal of Giles MacDonald to include a mainly grassed area with a paved space along the side and a stone bench. There will be a memorial with a cupboard in it for a copy of the book of remembrance in which family members can include details of the deceased. It is estimated that the cost will come to approximately £5,800 of which £500 will need to be spent now to cover site visit, design and faculty preparation. Laszlo and Lisa thanked Ken for his work in heading up this project.

5. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts

Richard Price gave an overview of the Accounts from Section 2 of the Report and Accounts. He noted that if it had not been for two exceptional items of income of £5,000, namely a bequest and the deanery rebate, our income would not have met our expenditure and the accounts would show a deficit. Last year we were just able to sustain our charitable giving at 12½%. Gift Aid dropped to 20% and the value of the investments fell due to the state of the stockmarket. The latter will continue to fluctuate however the costs for the coming year will undoubtedly increase, the cost of heating and lighting is currently rising and the parish share due to the Deanery is to go up to £81,000. Richard would prefer to see the reserves standing at 3 months in hand. They are currently down to 2 months, a shortfall of £19,000. The Church needs to look at ways to cut costs and ways to increase general giving. The restricted funds for the organ began in 2003. Diana Gray asked why the gift aid had dropped. Richard explained that this came about when the basic rate of tax dropped to 20% some years ago but the government had introduced a gradual reduction for charitable gift aid claims so that this was the first year the rate had fallen to 20%. David Butler pointed out that there was a typing error in the total on page 9, £111,623 should read £116,623. Subject to the correction of this error Richard Price proposed that the accounts be accepted by the meeting. Christine Rees seconded the proposal and the accounts were approved unanimously. Hazel Berry proposed a huge thank you to Beccy Al-Jadir for her work as treasurer. There was a warm round of applause for Beccy. Lisa also thanked Richard Price for presenting the accounts and Laura Myers for auditing them.

6. Report on Electoral roll

Tracy Perrett, the Electoral Roll Officer, presented her report as follows: At last year's ACPM it was reported that the Church Electoral Roll figure stood at 257.

In the twelve months since then, 17 new names have been added and 10 removed. Accordingly the Church Electoral Roll figure now stands at 264.

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

Next year, in February/March 2013 there will have to be a complete revision of the Electoral Roll.

Lisa thanked Tracy for her report and said it was encouraging to see the numbers creeping up.

7. Presentation of Parish Reports

The Chair went through each of the sections in the Parish report as follows.

- ❑ *Vicar's report.* Lisa made no comment on her report.
- ❑ *Churchwardens report.* A huge thank you to Laszlo and Karl who have done sterling jobs as churchwardens throughout the year.
- ❑ *Adult Learning.* This should be re-named as Christian Discipleship next year. Lisa thanked Gillian Gyenes, herself and all those involved in the large and small groups throughout the year.
- ❑ *Befrienders/Baptismal support.* Thank you to Christine Rees and to all the befrienders. This is an important role concentrating on following up those families who come along for Baptism.
- ❑ *Book club.* Thank you to Anne Pelham for getting this going.
- ❑ *Choir.* Thank you to Tom Shorter for his report and to Tom and David for coaching the choir. It is encouraging to see the choir expanding in numbers and in quality
- ❑ *Cleaning.* Thank you to Vanessa and to everyone on the church cleaning rota. If anyone is not on the rota Vanessa will need your name.
- ❑ *Churches together.* Thank you to Jenny McKeever for report. Lisa encouraged everyone to support the combined services. The Good Friday service and Walk of Witness was very well attended.
- ❑ *Flowers.* Thank you to Carol Cain and the flower arrangers for the wonderful flower displays. If anyone would like to add their name to the list of arrangers please contact Carol.
- ❑ *Church Office.* Lisa expressed her gratitude to Ken Perrett who has streamlined the running of the office which is a hive of activity on a Wednesday morning.
- ❑ *Churchyard.* Thank you to David Bainbridge and the churchyard team for their work in the churchyard. Lisa urged parishioners to follow the prayer walk and take a look at the beauty around the churchyard.
- ❑ *Deanery Synod.* Thank you to Jenny McKeever for the report and to the Deanery reps. 2011 was not a dull year!
- ❑ *Fabric.* Thank you to Mike Thackray and to the Fabric Committee for their hard work and for moving the heating project forward.
- ❑ *May Fair.* Thank you to Mike for his report and to the committee for all their work. The May Fair last year was as successful as it could have been and we were fortunate that the forest fire did not start any earlier in the afternoon. All hands on deck for the upcoming May Fair and prayers for an improvement in the weather.
- ❑ *Mini-Advent Fair.* Thank you to Gillian and to all who contributed to the Mini-Advent Fair.
- ❑ *FairTrade.* Thank you to Anne Pelham and to all who man the stall.

- ❑ *GLorEE* Lisa expressed herself delighted with the continued enthusiasm of this group. She thanked Zella for the original inspiration and for bringing novelty to our worship.
- ❑ *Library.* The library has flourished over the last year. Thank you to Jan Lawson for her hard work.
- ❑ *Minus Fives.* Hugely grateful to Karen Billyard. Lisa hopes that two of the current mums will take over when Karen wants to return to work.
- ❑ *Missions/Children's Society.* Thank you to Hazel and to the Missions Committee who have worked very hard. Long may our mission giving continue at 12½%. A big thank you to Tracy Perrett who took over the Children's Society. Molly Papworth, on her journey to York using only her bus pass, has raised an enormous £1,800, nearly enough to pay for the tractor for Dayspring Elementary School.
- ❑ *Mothers Union.* A big thank you to Carol Frost and the Mothers Union committee. Margaret Barnes added a correction to the report to clarify that the Diocesan summer meeting will be held at St James, Gerrards Cross. Lisa commented that it was good to see that Carol is so much better.
- ❑ *Outreach.* Thank you to Jane Manley and to the committee for their hard work. It would be good to recruit some more members for this committee. They don't have to be members of the PCC.
- ❑ *Pastoral Committee* Thank you to Christine Rees for her report and to all involved in the pastoral care of our Church family and to those manning the welcome table. Lisa asked all members of the congregation to look out for each other and to be aware if any of the regulars are not at church and let herself or David Butler know about them.
- ❑ *Pathfinders.* Thank you to Tracy and to all the Pathfinder leaders for their ideas, energy and commitment, If anyone else would like to join the leadership team please come forward.
- ❑ *Prayer Groups.* Thank you to Carol Frost and to Gillian Gyenes for their reports.
- ❑ *Servers* Thank you to Chris Williams as head server. It is great to have the youngsters involved. We need more adults to sign up as servers.
- ❑ *Social committee.* Thank you to Jill Pope and the committee for the continued innovative ideas in the social events. Gene Matthews interjected with the comment "more pudding evenings please".
- ❑ *Stewardship.* Thank you to Steve Pope for his report. We had a Stewardship Sunday during Lent.
- ❑ *St John's News.* Lisa's thank you to Richard Ireson, was endorsed by a murmur of support from the meeting. SJN is a vital part of Church communication. On this subject, it is intended to set up a small communications group which will include Richard as editor of SJN.
- ❑ *Sunday School.* Thank you to Jayne Clark and to all the teachers for their creative input and commitment. There is room for more helpers.
- ❑ *Welcome Team.* Thank you to Doreen and to the Welcome Team members both for their welcoming roles and for their practical work setting up before and after church services.

- *Web Site* This is a new report this year. Thank you to Ken Perrett for managing the website and to Brian Turner for his support and to all those who contribute.

8. Elections

There are 4 vacancies on the PCC for terms of 3 years.

There are 4 names on the list for these 4 vacancies.

<u>New nominations</u> FOR 3 YEARS	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Secunder</u>
1 Diana Gray (Re-election)	Jenny McKeever	Pam Hills
2 Graeme Muirhead	Danzi Castle	Anne Pelham
3 Anna Pearce	Grant Robertson	Joyce Hull
4 Sylvie Pedersen	Anna Pearce	Shirley Mather

As there were only 4 nominations for the vacancies they were all appointed without a vote.

To assist with the workload of the Churchwardens it has been decided to appoint a deputy churchwarden. David Rance has agreed to stand as a deputy churchwarden. Jean Butler proposed that he be appointed. Sarah Dewson seconded the proposal and David's appointment was approved.

9. Appointments

Hon. Secretary, Mrs Jenny McKeever was proposed as secretary by Ken Perrett seconded by Diana Gray and agreed by all and was so appointed.

Hon. Treasurer, Beccy Al-Jadir was proposed by Margaret Barnes, seconded by Shirley Mather and all agreed and was so appointed. Although Beccy is no longer an elected member of the PCC she is automatically included as an ex-officio member.

Hon Independent Examiner Mrs Laura Myers, was proposed by Hazel Berry and seconded by Tracy Perrett and agreed by all and was so appointed.

Ann Cottrell will take the place of Julia Warnes on the 10.00 a.m welcome team.

Doreen Norfield will recruit a man to replace Ross when she returns from holiday. The Welcome Teams as listed , for the 8.a.m. and with the above amendment for the 10.am services were proposed by Anne Mohan and seconded by Anne Pelham and agreed by all and so were reappointed on bloc.

10. Notices

Diana Gray urged everyone to come along to the May Fair.

Gillian Gyenes encouraged everyone to return to church at 6.00 p.m. to support Tom Shorter and his wonderful musicians.

Lisa brought the meeting to a close with the words of Dag Hammarskjold “For all that has been, thanks; for all that is to come, yes.” The Grace was said.

Vicar's Report

At the start of the year, the PCC continued its practice of reviewing the vision actions for the previous year and setting priorities for the coming one. As well as identifying priorities for 2012 from our Parish Vision, we incorporated the Diocesan Vision priority: "Making a difference in the world" and took into consideration national events, namely the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Five key priorities emerged as follows:

1) Diocesan Living Faith priority "Making a difference in the world"// St John's Vision area "Concerned for the whole of Creation: passionate about global justice, peace and the sustainability of our planet"

This was mapped out in three areas:

i) Aiming to reduce our carbon footprint individually and as a church

Visiting preacher, John Madeley, pricked our consciences on this issue in October and our own Hannah Brooks delivered a Christian Aid Global Climate Justice talk back in May and led a session for the Pathfinders. The campaign was followed up in September with a Climate Justice walk and a stall in the high street and the local press were involved.

In terms of our church building, the new roof has reduced heat loss and the new heating system should lead to greater efficiency, although the real eco-options considered had to be ruled out for our situation.

ii) Raise awareness and campaign for justice over the Palestinian Issue

The Pathfinders learnt a lot about life in Palestine over the course of the year, producing interesting displays and updates in SJN. In September they put together a very moving café style evening service on the plight of Palestinians. Hazel Berry also kept us informed. Chris Rose, Director of the Amos Trust, was our guest speaker for Missions Sunday on the festival of Christ the King. He updated us on the current situation in Palestine and the work of the Amos Trust, promoting justice and hope for forgotten communities.

iii) Recognition of those affected by local economy

In recognition of local need, as well as that of further afield, it was agreed that we would find out about the Bracknell foodbank run by the Kerith Centre. Pat Hallett came to preach on this in May and received a very positive response. Subsequently, St John's has been collecting food, which is delivered monthly by a rota of volunteers to the Foodbank. Now that the Vineyard Church has opened the Crowthorne Foodbank in the High Street, as a satellite of the Bracknell Foodbank, we have redirected our collections there.

2) Immerse the life of the church in prayer

A parish retreat, initiated by Ken Perrett, was held at Stanton House Retreat Centre last March. It was conducted by David Norwood and valued by those who attended. The monthly prayer diary continues to be a success and the churchyard prayer walk was launched, thanks to Hazel Berry. Articles have been written in St John's news to encourage daily prayer and inform about the variety of approaches. Sadly, the planned post Easter study groups on prayer did not get off the ground due to insufficient take up and we have yet to multiply our church house groups; the latter will be carried over as an ambition for this year.

The other intention was to promote Spiritual Direction in the parish. We have just run two "Holy Listening" sessions, facilitated by members of the Spiritual Direction Network for Bucks, Berks and Oxfordshire, which were widely publicised. There was a good turn out but not many from our own parish. A few of our folk had previously attended a session on this when it was hosted at Finchampstead.

3) Promoting & discerning vocations - lay and ordained/ growing leaders

Succession planning for the ministry team, PCC and other roles in the church continues to be a priority. We observed vocations Sunday on 29th April with a sermon on the subject, recognising the "ministry of all believers". There have been reminders about the "Time & talents" list to encourage all church members to

take an active role in the life of the church. At the start of this year, Hazel and I ran two evening sessions on Vocations, looking at vocation in general and specific vocations to the ordained, lay ministries and religious orders. We have not been able to participate in the "Growing Leaders" course yet, but this is not being ruled out for the future.

The Rev'd Jane Manley completed a year's curacy placement at St John's last August. For a brief period we were in the unique position of having two curates, for at the end of June we welcomed Rev'd David Ramsbottom, following his ordination as a deacon. David has been "learning the ropes" and is a valuable addition to the ministry team. He is a Self Supporting Minister, with us for 24 hours a week, including time for Initial Ministerial Education.

After being nurtured in her Christian faith at St John's and making a considerable contribution herself to church life, Hannah Brooks was selected to train for ordination. She is now studying at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, and we have enjoyed hearing about her progress.

4) Utilize Olympic games as an opportunity to "share the love of God and good news of the gospel with those on the fringe or outside of the church"

The May Fair drew on the Olympic theme and the Social Committee organised a very entertaining Olympic quiz night after the event in November. Whilst we did not utilize the games as much as we might have done, we did also take advantage of opportunities afforded by the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, holding a special celebratory service and a "street party" which ended up in the church hall due to the intemperate weather but a good time was had by all.

5) Maximise the use of our sacred space as a means of engaging with God - Ensure a comfortable physical environment for all who come to worship.

The church was certainly filled with the glory of God during the Flower Festival last summer and the atmosphere and architecture continues to be appreciated by visitors and worshippers alike as an aid to focusing upon the divine.

The renovation project phase 2, replacement of heating system, took place over the summer. We are grateful to Laszlo Gyenes, Mike Thackray and the Fabric Committee for all their hard work in overseeing this. Once implemented, much to the angst of the fabric committee, after years of grumbles about it being too cold in church, there were complaints about it being too hot! This was part of the bedding down process of the system. It is now more under control and we are feeling the benefits.

In reviewing the actions, the PCC noted with satisfaction that, on the whole, our vision priorities for the year have been largely achieved. The vision priorities identified for 2013 will be shared at the APCM. I continue to be grateful for the efforts of so many, often behind the scenes, in supporting the maintenance, ministry and mission of our church. There is always so much that could be done but we cannot always do it all. We have to keep discerning what is the bigger "yes"? What is it that God is calling us to at this point in time? In all our activity, may we retain sight of our greater purpose and Christ who calls us to serve him.

Rev'd Lisa Cornwell

Churchwardens' Report

Once in every two years one of our Church Wardens steps down to hand the responsibilities to a newly elected Church Warden, last year Laszlo Gyenes' completed his four years office with distinction. Our heartfelt thanks go to Laszlo for all that he has contributed, particularly in the areas such as:

- Re-roofing of the church (a mammoth task) which without all the hard work Laszlo put in, it would have been very difficult to get this project off the ground let alone complete it.
- Organising and seeing through the upgrade of the church heating system (another mammoth task).
- Organising additional burial plots in the churchyard.

These and many other projects were achieved throughout Laszlo's time as Church Warden.

Anne Mohan has now stepped up to the plate as Laszlo's replacement with David joining the team as a deputy so the church warden team now consists:

- Karl Simpson Church Warden
- Anne Mohan Church Warden
- David Rance Deputy Church Warden

The heating project was successfully completed during September and after a settling down period has provided us with comfortable temperatures in Church during the winter. We thank Mike Thackray for continually monitoring the system and for training some of the fabric team on the use of the computer control panel.

A previous concern that is now being addressed is the lack of space in our Churchyard for burying ashes; the current areas have reached their capacity. Last year the PCC approved a project to investigate the possibility of introducing a Garden of Remembrance within the Churchyard for the strewing of ashes.

Building and landscaping work on the Garden of Remembrance will be starting this spring (2013) and should be completed by early summer. It has been arranged that Bishop Andrew will visit to bless the new garden on Sunday 11th August at 3.30p.m. We will try to make this a community event with refreshments following the ceremony. There will be a presentation about this during the APCM. Our thanks go to Bracknell Housing Association for supplying the labour for this work, and to Ken Perrett who is managing the project for us.

An area of the Churchyard outside the Lady Chapel entrance was approved last year for a small number of plots for the interment of ashes and the ground is now ready for immediate use. This will allow us to carry out burial of ashes until the Garden of Remembrance is completed.

Thanks go to David Bainbridge and his team, who keep our Churchyard in immaculate condition, and to Mike and his Fabric team for all the hard work they put in keeping the building serviceable.

In respect of our repair and renovation projects it is thanks to your generous donations and to the hard work of the fund raisers, that we have managed to do as much of the needed refurbishment as has so far been accomplished. The challenge is on going and there are still further major projects such as the sound system and organ restoration to be tackled.

Finally our thanks go to the PCC, as a whole, for supporting the Vicar and Church Wardens in developing and maintaining God's work in this Parish.

Karl Simpson

Anne Mohan

David Rance

Befrienders/Baptismal Support

Baptisms normally take place on the second Sunday of the month. Sixteen baptisms took place at the 10 am service in 2012. This included three children in one family and two children in two families. Three baptisms have been arranged for April and two for May.

The baptism preparation evenings are held on the first Wednesday of the month. Parents are asked to choose a hymn to be used in the services.

The mothers are encouraged to come to Minus 5's and it has been good to see so many of them there.

I would like to thank those members of the congregation who have befriended the families. They are encouraged to keep the families up to date by delivering the St. Johns News each month.

Christine Rees

Book Club

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

In May 2012 we discussed "Simply Jesus" by Tom Wright. The book gives a very clear picture of the historical situation that Jesus was born into using the analogy of a perfect storm for the tensions at that time which we found both helpful and interesting. The book also has many Old Testament references as well as references to the New Testament. We found it a book that although challenging did help deepen our understanding of whom Jesus was and is. The book provoked a wide ranging discussion.

In October 2012 we discussed "Let Live" by John Madeley. 10 days before we met to discuss this book John Madeley had delivered the address at the Sunday Service. The book is a novel about a bike ride across various African countries. It has a very thin plot; the main purpose of the book is to deliver information about climate change and its effects on the people and land. The "hero" a journalist, meets people who have been driven off their land due to low or no rainfall and crop failures and abandoned villages for the same reason. He becomes the target of CIA plots to discredit or injure him. The consensus of the group was that we accept the damage that climate change is doing but the book didn't gel as a novel and belittled the message. The book led to a lively discussion.

In January 2013 we discussed "Dreaming of Home" by Michael Mitton. This is a book about the parable of the prodigal son. It has a factual element discussing various aspects of the parable. It also includes an autobiographical element about an important dream which the author had and alongside both of the above, a fictional story about a person called Reuben living at the time of Jesus and encountering him. Opinion was divided about this book and about Reuben's story. Some people really enjoyed Reuben's story but others didn't like it. Some of us found the book helpful. We had an interesting discussion about home, dreaming and parables.

If you would like to read any of the three books, there is a copy of each book in the Church library. The next book club is on May 14th to discuss "Testament of Mary" by Colm Toibin. This is a novel about Mary the Mother of Jesus. Please feel free to come and join us.

Anne Pelham

Choir

Choir membership –quality and quantity!

This year we have continued to be blessed with two choir directors in the persons of: David Crowe and Tom Shorter. And, the choir has enjoyed working with them both immensely and been glad of the further challenges available to them! Choir membership and quality is up again this year, which is very good news indeed.

Notable additions to the ranks of singers include: Angelina Arturi (Alto), and Richard Thomas and Mike Pearce (Tenors). Our younger singers continue to grow whilst our staunch regulars provide us with the necessary ballast of experience and commitment!

Our regular Choristers:

Sopranos: Anna, Berenice, Julie, Lia, Nadine, Polly, Sophie, Sylvie, Sue, Summer
Altos: Angelina, Jill, Maggie, Maggie, Liz
Tenors: Graeme, Jim, Mike, Richard
Basses: Bob, Colin, Peter

Achievements – *Singing in a choir is a collective responsibility!*

The choir reached new heights in June 2012 with an ebullient rendering of Stanford's *Te Deum* to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. On Palm Sunday in March 2013 the choir put on a splendid and inspiring performance of Jerusalem Joy!

Thanks to...the usual (and unusual!) suspects...

Lisa and David R. for guiding us through the church year and our services. Once again, Jill and Maggie, have kept us on the right track from week-to-week. Peter has kindly printed out weekly music lists, and Jim has continued to issue the choir's sign-out sheets. Special thanks to David Crowe for his patience and persistence!

The Future

We look forward to improving and learning more, and putting on a superb Nine Lessons and Carols service this Christmas. Also we hope to increase our level of engagement with the congregation in our services.

Tom Shorter

Christian Discipleship

The planned post-Easter small study groups on prayer did not get off the ground in the end due to insufficient take up. It is hoped that we can multiply house groups in the future, so that there are pre-existing groups to study prayer and bible material.

In the Autumn, David Ramsbottom led a course which considered many different aspects of the doctrine of the Atonement. This was over 6 weeks and was very detailed. We felt it was an area about which we could and should know more. There was certainly a lot of 'food for thought' and discussion among the participants. We thank David for guiding us through it.

In January, Lisa and Hazel ran two evening sessions on Vocation, exploring vocation in general, the ordained ministry, licensed lay ministry and religious orders. In March, St John's also hosted two "Holy Listening" sessions, facilitated by members of the Spiritual Direction Network, for those interested in learning more about Spiritual Direction.

The Churches Together Study Groups this year have been based on the York Course entitled 'Glimpses of God- Hope for Today's World'. This has been an in depth study of 'The God who Hears Our Cry'; 'The Shepherd who Guards and Guides His People'; 'The Son who is the Way, the Truth and the Life'; 'The God who Shares Our Pain' and 'The God who Calms Our Fears.' Plenty of material here for thought and discussion. Also, there has been the opportunity to attend Lent lectures in Finchampstead and Sandhurst. These all end with an Agape in Holy Week open to all participants.

Our new Confirmation/discussion groups begin in mid April, based on Adult and Junior Emmaus. These cover the basics of our faith from belief in the Trinity as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to reading the Bible, Prayer, the Sacraments, being a Christian and being Church. We also look at the Eucharist in detail and at the sacrament of Confirmation in particular. There are lively discussions in both groups and opportunities for proactive learning. The groups continue through until June when the young people will take part in a workshop which includes an away day in Winchester. They will play an active role in the Family Eucharist next morning, as well. Our Confirmation this year will be at Wellington College at 3.00pm on Sunday July 14th by the Bishop of Oxford.

We have had several requests for more teaching and learning opportunities about the Church and our faith and all are very welcome to take part in all or any of our groups.

Gillian Gyenes and Lisa Cornwell

Church Cleaners

Thanks to every one of the volunteers who give up their time to maintain the appearance of our church.

There are currently 44 volunteers on the church cleaning rota. This continues to cause concern as it is still only slightly up on the number of volunteers we had last year despite repeated appeals for helpers. There continue to be some weeks when parts of the church are not being cleaned.

More volunteers are needed to ensure that all areas are cleaned every week. If you are able to help in any way even if only once or twice a year please contact me.

The annual 'Spring Clean' took place in March. A large team turned out to give the church, hall and kitchen a very thorough clean. Many thanks to everyone concerned.

Vanessa Burrell

775644

Churches Together in Crowthorne

Churches Together in Crowthorne are a friendly group who meet together four times a year. There are seven churches involved altogether: Ourselves, Crowthorne Methodists, Crowthorne Baptists, the Holy Ghost Church, St Sebastians, St James, Finchampstead and the Wokingham Vineyard Church who meet at Edgebarrow and have a church office in Wellington business park. The St John's representatives to CTC this year are Christine Rees, Anna Pearce and Jenny McKeever. Lisa is vice chair.

Mike Withers stood down as Chairman at the AGM in September 2012 and Marjorie Mitchell of the Methodist Church has taken on the role for a year. There have been strong hints that it is the turn of the Anglicans to provide a chair from September 2013 and as the most central of the Anglican churches it would be good if this challenge could be taken up by St John's. If you would be interested and would like to know more please speak to Lisa, Christine, Jenny or Anna.

A very few members of CTC took part in the Carnival parade. Our tent on the Carnival field was a welcome space to sit and relax with a cold drink. There were small gifts with a Christian message available for the children. Unfortunately a co-ordinator could not be found for the Darby & Joan tea-party which used to be a traditional part of carnival week.

The Summer activities were very successful last year but more help is needed to run them again every Friday during the school holidays this summer. If you are able to help in any way please let Christine, Jenny, Anna or Lisa know.

The Vineyard Church set up a local foodbank in Crowthorne High Street behind Edwards electrical shop as an offshoot of the Bracknell Food bank. This has been in operation since October and our donations now go to it.

Louise Truscott and the Hope Zone youngsters provided most of the manpower for the CTC bar-b-que at Crowthorne's Late Night Shopping Friday at the beginning of December. There was a good turn-out for the carol singing outside the Co-Op held last year on Saturday, 15th December.

The Lent groups have been well attended and we look forward to a good turnout for the "Walk of Witness" on Good Friday which this year starts from the Methodist Church after a short service and finishes with Hot Cross buns at St John's.

Christian Aid Week will run from 13th - 18th May. If you can help to collect even just on your own or a nearby road please contact Jim and Janet Sargent, 01344 780074. Last year the funds raised were substantially reduced due to a drop in the number of collectors.

The coffee mornings held at the Methodist Church on a Tuesday and at the Baptist Church on a Thursday allowed a total of £850 to be distributed to Chidamoyo Trust, Hope Zone, Crowthorne Foodbank, Corrymeela, Dayspring School, JAC and Yeldall Manor near Reading.

We are proud of our links with our fellow Christians in Crowthorne and would encourage you to join in the united services held throughout the year.

Jenny McKeever

Church Flowers

The Church Flower arrangers continue to arrange flowers for the Sunday services, except during Lent and Advent. The whole Church is decorated for the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas, with special arrangements for the Patronal Festival, the Confirmation and Remembrance Sunday.

With regard to our team of 19 Flower Arrangers we have sadly said goodbye, hopefully temporarily, to Sharon Gibson and Wendy Allerton this year. They are taking a 'year out' due to family and work commitments. We very much hope they return next year as they have done so well since they have joined us and have been valued members of our team. We are a happy bunch of colleagues who work together well and support each other when necessary. For example, it can be quite a daunting prospect doing a special arrangement for a wedding! We are very fortunate to have so many talented flower arrangers in our church family. If any new members of the congregation would like to join us you would be most welcome. Most of us are self taught and there are plenty of us to help if you have no experience but would like to give flower arranging a try?

Looking back over the year I feel we have had a bumper year of fantastic flower arranging! We have had two beautiful weddings and some stunning arrangements at the various festivals. I would particularly like to thank all the people who gave up hours of their time creating the arrangements for the weddings. These were particularly satisfying events as they were for members of our church family.

Last July of course we enjoyed a magnificent Flower Festival entitled 'The Best of British'. As usual this attracted hundreds of visitors to the church to enjoy the flowers, musical interludes, refreshments and craft displays. We raised nearly £2,700 which was split between our two local charities, C.O.A.T.S and HOPE ZONE. In addition to this we raised £1100 from the refreshments, for the Church Repair and Renovation fund. Although the Flower Festival is a community event its organisation and success is very much down to the hard work of the Flower Festival Committee and other church members who plan and organise the event. A huge thank you goes to all those people for their help and cooperation.

The Mothers' Union continue to donate money for the Lady Chapel flowers, Julia Warnes organises the rota for the Lady Chapel and the flowers are arranged by Mothers' Union members. I would like to thank Mothers' Union and all the church Flowers Arrangers, for their time and talents, in producing such beautiful arrangements throughout the year, for us all to enjoy and enhance our worship.

If you would like to remember a loved one on their anniversary, birthday or other special date by having flowers arranged either at the Remembrance Table or Altar please contact me (01344 776738) or Doreen Norfield (01344 774801).

We have found that the increase in the price of flowers this year has been causing us a problem and some discussion has taken place about reducing the amount of flowers we have in church. A few more donations would be very welcome in an attempt to avoid this situation. I would very much like to thank those people who have made a donation this year particularly the flower arrangers, who I know often give generously with extra flowers. We were particularly grateful for some very generous donations for our Christmas flowers this year, a big thank you to those people.

Carol Cain

Church Office

The office is open from 9:30am until 12:30 each Wednesday. We undertake a variety of tasks, such as copying orders of service, St Johns News, and "Praying for Streets" leaflets. We deal with any incoming post, emails and phone messages, and update the automatic door settings.

We have a team of four volunteers who each staff the office once a month – Caroline Grist, Doreen Norfield, Sue Robertson and myself. However, more people often turn up and Shirley Mather comes in to help us most weeks. Thanks to such a willing and able team.

The work on documenting the memorials in the Churchyard is now complete and the Office has now taken over our own Churchyard database from David Bainbridge, so we are able to offer families more assistance in locating family graves – this is an increasing part of our role.

The colour function on the Photocopier failed in the summer, and the contract ran out in September, so we have needed to replace it. Beccy Al-Jadir's brother-in-law has arranged for us to be given a replacement machine that is relatively new. This was delivered in February 2013 and we now have a three-year contract. The new machine copies in black and white and colour. It also collates, folds and staples the documents – fantastic.

We are in the process of sorting out older Church documents and sending them to the Berkshire Archives. This is proving to be quite an exercise, but you may notice that the Choir Vestry is looking a bit tidier without all the boxes of records going back to 1938!

If you are interested in seeing what we do (or even helping), pop in any Wednesday morning for a coffee and a chat.

Ken Perrett

Churchyard

The churchyard and surrounding areas continue to present a major challenge to maintain the appearance and to keep the grass and weeds under control.

The team of Jean Butler, Jill Pope, Andrew King, and Pam Bainbridge meet most weeks throughout the year. Progress during 2012 and through this winter has been excellent and at present the team has the churchyard reasonably under control. This might change in May and through the summer when the grass and weeds are at their most active.

The annual hedge trimming activity in October involved many volunteers who did a great job. Thank you for all your efforts which contributed hugely to the appearance of the churchyard.

A special thank you to the team named above for their ever present enthusiasm and energy.

David Bainbridge

Communications Group

Brian Turner (Chair), Sylvie Pedersen (Support), Louise Lobley (Newsletter), Ken Perrett (Website), Rev. Lisa Cornwell, Lenka Butterworth (Support, Posters), Richard Ireson (SJN)

The Communication's group is a new group to St John's and has set its remit "to support communications where necessary". Committees in the church are very welcome to approach the team (Contact Brian Turner mrbgturner@yahoo.co.uk) with their needs should they want support in communicating effectively within the church and outside it. The group has begun to successfully highlight major campaigns such as

the May Fair across the web, St John's News, the newsletter and posters in a synchronised manner with consistent messages. For example March's message was "Help Needed" and in April we will change the message to "Come to the May Fair". This is progress and the May Fair committee have been very grateful for its support. The C of E school has a new web site located at <http://www.crowthornecofe.co.uk> and at our request has linked their web site with the church's web site so we can start supporting each other's messages. We will continue to support other groups and campaigns.

The Comm's Group is co-ordinating messages across the following media.

Communications Calendar

A Church Comms calendar has been created with draft primary and secondary messages.

Blog site : <http://crowthorneparishchurch.blogspot.co.uk>

Ken Perrett has set-up a blog site that can be accessed from the web site. Readers can leave comments on the articles created on the site if they wish.

Website : <http://crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk>

Check out the website.

Twitter : "follow" @crowthornefair

Facebook : <http://www.facebook.com/crowthornemayfair>

Brian Turner

Deanery Synod

There were five Deanery Synods held in the year since April 2012. Unfortunately two of the Synods did not have a quorum of the clergy so no votes could be taken on general Synod business. The Area Dean and Standing Committee are addressing this problem by circulating the dates for the next 12 months meetings before parishes settle the dates for their PCC meetings.

Hazel Berry has completed her first year as Deanery Co-ordinator. Her aim is to create a feeling of community within the Sonning Deanery by keeping everyone informed on the activities, events, training courses and information arising and taking place in the Deanery. This is already bearing fruit with many members from other parishes joining a recent safe-guarding course held within the Deanery.

The Deanery Mission Action Plan and the Parish/Deanery share have been the main topics of discussion at most of the Synods this year. While each parish has been encouraged to have their own development and outreach action plans (St John's have had a Vision plan in place since 2008) the Deanery is aware that it needs to be pro-active in providing a Christian presence within the new communities which will occupy the large scale housing developments being planned within its boundaries.

The Deanery voted not to "top up" the shortfall in its Diocesan share arising as several parishes were not able or chose not to meet their parish share for 2012 thus foregoing the rebate payable by the Diocese if full payment is met on time. The Diocese of Oxford representatives reported back to the Deanery, that, as a direct result of reduced income, the budgeted increase of 2% in the clergy stipends this year would have to be staggered with 1% payable from April and the remaining 1% payable later in the year *if possible*.

The November Synod which was held the day after the defeat by General Synod of the proposal to allow women to be ordained as bishops, overwhelmingly lamented the defeat. Hope was raised, however, that the Church of England would perhaps be able to introduce a more sustainable solution which would accommodate all its members.

Jenny McKeever

Fabric Committee

Main fabric issue was the complete replacement and renewal of the previous Victorian radiator and outdated boiler heating system to the main interior of the church and vestry areas.

This year's challenges:

- Pre-tender information gathering for the project to cover all and every type of fuel or heating currently available and viable
- Approving the contractor to carry out the project
- Raising funds and awareness to complete the works
- Overcoming possible Listed Building issues
- Faculty application to the Diocese
- Lead and a section of the lightning conductor thefts

Successes

- Appointment of CBS Ltd to work with us to successfully deliver, install and maintain for the future the new church heating system
- Introduction of a maintenance log in the church diary for access by everyone and for continual noting of minor/major building related niggles as and when they happen
- Ken's faculty application and work related to bringing in the successful acceptance and future delivery of the 'Garden of Remembrance'
- Sharing of the heating programming between key members of the Fabric Team – to allow shared knowledge and the burden of delivering heat to the congregational use of the Church Building (anyone interested in joining this team – would be **very** gladly welcomed!
- We now have 2 stand alone heating systems one for the Vestry areas and the other for the main church interior. Both are now controlled by state of the art IT technology with the future ability to allow them to be wirelessly and independently controlled by members of the Fabric committee (anyone wanting to donate £1,000 - £1,500 to make that happen would be gladly welcomed – especially by Mike over the recent busy church heating schedule over the Christmas period)!
- In very cold weather the interior areas will not drop below 10°C so heating take up delivery is vastly improved and Colin tells us that the organ is also benefitting from a more stable temperature environment!
- Heating requests for both the Hall and the Church **MUST** be entered and then confirmed by e-mail with Christine Rees in the Church dairy kept in the Hall Kitchen. If it's not in there you may not get any heating for your event!!

Future

- Maintenance contract to be negotiated and secured with CBS Ltd to oversee the whole building – Church and Hall heating systems combined under one professional and modern maintenance standard agreement
- Likewise Mike and the committee will be looking into negotiating and securing an electrical maintenance contract with a local company (names of any reputable local electrical companies would be welcomed – it would be good to have this in position by the end of summer 2013 – contact Mike on Mikethackers2@aol.com)
- The FC are there to be supporting and to help where needed the separate committee created by Ken and his team on the proposed work/planning to help to implement the next major project to deliver the Audio Visual System upgrade within the building
- Overseeing, implementing and safely delivering the next Quinquennial inspection due Summer 2013
- Thinking and agreeing future strategy / budgeting for internal upgrade of fixtures, fittings and wall decoration to all areas of the church, vestries and hall areas
- Lots of prayer needed to deliver this successfully!!

Mike Thackray

Fairs

May Fair

Main Issue: Parish reliant on the huge fundraising this event procures. The committee find it challenging to deliver each year. The responsibility on the committee to produce the fair is immense and finding any other way to raise such a significant amount each year is fairly daunting.

Challenges

- No alternative main fund raising event to replace this one that delivers the amount of money that the May Fair delivers
- Bouncy castles ate into our profit and we will try to tackle this next year by reducing the amount of inflatables on site and attempt to get a higher through-put of people on and off them through the afternoon.
- Repeating the process required to bring this event in each year is extremely demanding and time consuming
- Pressure on the committee to remain each year brings a high expectation

Successes

- Tried and tested streamlined committee to procure the event works well
- Clear roles defined for committee members to split up responsibilities
- Superb outreach to the local community delivered every year
- Incredible amount of money secured each year through innovative and simple fundraising methods both before the event and on the day

Future

- Is there another way that we can bring the same amount of money in each year?
- The event is a great spectacle for the village but the pressure annually on the committee is proving to be increasingly stressful to deliver.
- Congregational support and togetherness on the day is well worth the heartache and stress in bringing this event together and many thanks must be given to each and everyone that attends and mucks in on behalf of St. Johns every year.

Mike Thackray

Mini Advent Fair

We held our mini Advent Fair, as in past years, on Advent Sunday, directly after the 10.00am service. Our thanks are due to all who supported us and helped us to raise c.£700 overall, most of it in less than an hour! There was good atmosphere in the Hall and it proved to be an enjoyable as well as a profitable event.

Gillian Gyenes

Fair Trade

I would like to thank all of you who buy the goods from our Fair trade stall; you bought around £900.00 worth of food goods in the last year. We try to hold a stall twice a month but with so many events at Church we are not able to hold the stall on regular Sundays each month.

We buy the goods from Traidcraft who this spring are having to increase some of the grocery prices due to increases in the world commodity prices particularly of cocoa, sugar and tea over the last 6 months. Traidcraft try to match prices against what is happening out in the market. Whereas for supermarkets fair trade is just part of their business for Traidcraft it is all of their business.

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Traidcraft are part of Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign. To find out more take a look at the Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign website: <http://enoughfoodif.org>.

We only sell food items but if you would like to buy any craft/clothing items advertised in the Traidcraft brochure please let us know and we can order it for you.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who helps on the Fair trade stall after the services.

Anne Pelham

GLorEE

We have just entered our third year together with plenty of momentum, driven by the unrelenting enthusiasm and imagination of the group to “GLorEE-fy” songs!

We thoroughly enjoy putting our own stamp on the songs we sing, but we continue to be motivated by a desire to make people listen to the lyrics in a way they may not have before, maintaining our goal of worship and spreading The Word.

It has been an action packed year! We have been busy singing not only at special services at St John's, Mothers Union events, the May Fair, and Holme Grange Craft Village events, but also within residential homes in Crowthorne, at our first Baptism, and at the Flower Festival - with our very own display too!

We are eager to continue to spread our wings and take our message further out into the community.

Our group is evolving constantly - we are keen to add to our numbers and are currently recruiting.

There are also plans afoot to record a CD to help towards funds for the new AV system in the church.

Thank you once again to all the support we have received and for all those in the group who have continued to work so hard.

Zellah Barrett

Library

I am pleased to say that we have an ever growing number of books in the library. We have books on a variety of subjects and levels, some of which are aimed at specific age groups. Please do browse and borrow a book. To borrow a book all you need to do is sign it out and then sign it back in when you return the book. We even have some very nice bookmarks; please help yourself to a bookmark when you borrow a book.

Many thanks to all those who have donated books to the library.

Anne Pelham

Minus Fives

There has been little change to the format of Minus Fives over the year. Start and finish times are great and we have attracted many new people. Attendance is averaging at 22 children each week. We have moved back into the church for our story and singing. The church is now warm and dry and as we attract more children we can make more use of the space.

Christmas was a busy time with all the extra excitement. We have sadly said goodbye to Karen Billyard (who has run the group for many years) and to Marjorie (who has played the piano for services).

Many of these new children are pre walkers, and new equipment has been purchased with them in mind. This was aided by the generous donations of the 10:00 a.m. Wednesday service through the coffee money.

The story rota keeps us on track throughout the year, giving a theme to each session. The craft activities are funded through the voluntary donation of £1 per family (£100 donated so far this year). We are working hard to keep activities varied and age appropriate.

There are many volunteers that help each week to make Minus Fives even better. There has been lots of positive feedback from new mums who have felt so welcomed on their first visit. Jean Butler and Tracy Perrett are amazing, providing refreshments and friendly chat. Ken Perrett is invaluable in the office and helping to set up in the morning. As well as me, Samantha Hammersley is helping with the organisation and planning each week. There are many hands at the end of the session to help tidy away, and recruitment for the story and piano rotas is continuing.

Reverend Lisa and Christine Rees have been very generous with their support of me during the transition from Karen. I hope to continue the group's growth with a revised poster to include the caption "Messy play at St John's". I also hope to provide a welcome letter to all new comers to explain about our group and encourage their return.

Maggie Woodage.

Missions Committee

The Missions Committee has the responsibility of co-ordinating our direct support for the seven Christian missions, which we support on a regular basis. These missions and their representatives for the past year have been, Church Mission Society (CMS) – Claire Taylor, The Leprosy Mission - Wendy Allerton; Missions to Seafarers - Brian Hooper; The Corrymeela Community – Diana Gray; Church Army - Gini Cope; the Bible Society - Jenny Sanders and Hopezone – Maureen Raybould. In 2011, St. John's donated £1,541,73 representing 12½ % of planned giving to each of the 7 missions.

Sheila Clapham looks after activities for The Helen and Douglas Houses in Oxford.

Molly Papworth keeps us up-to-date with activities at the Dayspring Elementary School at Jinja, Uganda.

While it does not receive a direct donation from the Church, Tracy Perrett represents the Children's Society on our committee. A total of £1,103.25 has been donated from various sources in the past year.

We have Missions preachers at the 10am and sometimes the 8am services on a rolling programme from all the Missions we support. The speakers in the past year have been Heather Clements from the Bible Society, Ian Gilchrist from Corrymeela. On Christ the King Sunday, Chris Rose talked to us about the work of the Amos Trust in Gaza and the West Bank and the bucket collection on that day raised £347.00. We also had our usual Missions display with a very successful quiz.

The committee contributes regular articles to St John's news and more information about the missions we support can be found on the website.

We had a Christmas Giving Tree, which raised £428.40 towards the cost of presents for the children supported by the Church Army in Kidbrooke South East London. This is one of the most deprived areas in the EEC.

We had our annual Lent Lunch on Sunday 3rd March, this year to raise funds for a summer outing for the children from Kidbrooke. The members of the committee donate all the food and so every penny of the total raised, an amazing £617.50 went to Kidbrooke. The Lent Lunch is now established as a regular event in our church calendar and seems very popular with the congregation. As last year we were grateful to the GlorEE who entertained during the gap between the end of coffee and the start of the lunch.

This year we set up Prayer Stations on Saturday 16th March as part of the Day of Prayer and Fasting and to raise awareness among the congregation of the need for additional giving so that we can continue our giving at the present level.

The committee are a wonderful, hard working group and I would like to thank them for all they have done in this past year to support their own and the other projects mentioned in this report. They will always be very pleased to tell you more about the societies we support, so please ask them.

Hazel Berry

Children's Society

In hard times, children are among the hardest hit. The most disadvantaged children rarely suffer on just one front. The Children's Society work with these children to ensure that they are loved, valued and listened to.

They transform the lives of around 45,000 children and young people each year by supporting children in care and young runaways, giving a voice to disabled children, helping young refugees to rebuild their lives and providing relief for young carers. With over 75 programmes and children's centres throughout England, they offer care, respite, legal support and mentoring schemes that help turn lives around.

Through their campaigns and research, The Children's Society seeks to influence policy and perceptions so that young people have a better chance in life.

Once again this year, St John's and the local community has supported this vital work through its fundraising activities:

Box collections	£478.65
Christingle service	£229.77 (including £31.65 Gift Aid)
Donations	£ 94.15
Coffee Morning Donations	£ 30.00
Christmas card sales profit	£186.00 (see below)
Community Boxes	£ 84.68
Total raised	<u>£1,103.25</u>

The reported profit on the Christmas card sales is based on 30% of £620.15, being the total cost of the cards sold. This figure has not yet been confirmed by the Children's Society but is indicative of the profit margin in previous years.

The total amount raised through our work here at St John's in the past year is up by almost £400 on the previous year. Many thanks to everyone who give so generously of their time and money in supporting the Children's Society and its invaluable work.

Tracy Perrett

Mothers' Union

Crowthorne Mothers' Union continues to meet twice a month, on the first Tuesday evening at 8pm and on the second Wednesday at 2.15pm. This past year we have had a wide selection of meetings and speakers, and we have been able to use some of our own members to lead events. We are so very fortunate to have so many talented members in our branch.

This year our Diocese has a new President – Gillian Johnson, and we remember Gillian in our prayers. We also have a new Worldwide President – Lynne Tembey who was commissioned on December 3rd 2012 by Archbishop Rowan Williams, we also remember Lynne in our prayers.

On April 8th our Lady Day service will be held at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. Christ Church Cathedral is a special place, and we are looking forward to having the service there.

Our Diocesan Summer Meetings will be held locally around the diocese during July and our Diocesan Winter meeting will be held at Benson on November 19th. Our national AGM will be held in Bath on June 12th.

Our Branch here in Crowthorne is very fortunate, as we have a good membership, and we are able to be very active within our church, helping with the Mother and Toddler service, the Sunday crèche, Mothering Sunday and the May Fair and Advent Fair, as well as providing flowers in the Lady Chapel every week. We still help out fortnightly at Woodmancote, our village Daycentre, which is a valuable part of our work. We have managed to raise £365 this year for our overseas fund, £100 for our 'Wheels Appeal' and £600 for AFIA (Away From It All), our holiday scheme for disadvantaged families.

Our Branch outing last June, a barge trip on the Basingstoke canal, was very popular and enjoyed by all who came along, also later in June we enjoyed sharing Afternoon Tea in the church hall. The fun and fellowship we share, and the support we give each other is very special, and we would welcome any new members from our congregation to join us, and work through the aims and objectives of our great UNION. The committee works very hard which makes my job so much easier, and I am most grateful to them.

Please come and learn more about the Mothers' Union which is a truly international organisation with branches in 78 countries, I would be more than happy to tell you all about us. The Mothers' Union doesn't just offer monthly meetings with friends; it changes lives, bringing love and justice to families wherever it reaches.

Prayers and Blessings

Carol Frost
Branch Leader, Crowthorne

I would like to share with you the Mothers' Union Prayer:

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.
We pray for families around the world.
Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share you love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.
Empowered by your spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.
In Jesus' name.
Amen

Carol Frost

Outreach

We looked at the Parish Vision Questions and discussed each one. We analysed our involvement in all aspects of our church activities and celebrations.

Our current status is that we would like to co-opt another member to the committee if felt appropriate at the next PCC meeting, possibly from the wider body of the church.

St John the Baptist Church – Parish Report 2013

Our Progress: We investigated how we could be resourceful and enabling for future events.

New Ideas; Activities for the Blessing and Celebration Opening of the Garden of Remembrance in union with other groups.

Action for the Future; We discussed the importance of close communication with other subcommittees and groups within the church community.

Our vision plan is to combine forces and enable all with help spiritually and physically in all we do at St Johns Church.

In addition we explored ideas for future:

Pancake making for Shrove Tuesday.

Pudding evening for Pathfinders and age appropriate entertainment.

Support for Hopezone.

Music Workshop to encourage more choir members particularly younger boys and girls from local schools.

JAC; Just Around the Corner current status and links to investigate.

Tea and Favourite Hymns. Provide wider range tea and investigate Songs of Praise Service with all music groups, instrument players and Organ in church as well as original version of T&FH. Possibly to link with Back to Church Sunday.

Sylvie Pedersen

Pastoral Group

We continue to act as the support group for those already in a caring role in the various committees, organisations and groups at St. Johns. We try to meet every other month at the home of Maggie Wade having representatives from Baptism Befrienders, the choir, Minus 5's, Mothers Union, Pastoral visiting, Pathfinders and Sunday school.

Minus 5's continue to be very well attended. Karen Billyard finished running this group at Christmas after many years. We are very fortunate that Maggie Woodage has taken this over assisted by Sam Hammersley whose children were baptised last year. Jean Butler continues to organise the refreshments and has a number of assistants she can call on to help her. The people who attend the 10 am communion service really appreciate the coffee that is provided by them.

The Pastoral Visiting group also meets every other month and the Welcome Table works well.

Christine Rees

Pathfinders

During the past year, our Pathfinders have continued to meet regularly to discuss current events and issues of justice, and how our faith in God affects how we view these things and our involvement in them. Issues that have been considered in the past year include, amongst other things, Israel and Palestine, Climate Change, Fairtrade, Jesus' incarnation, resurrection and ascension.

The Pathfinders have contributed to the worship at St John's through their participation in Harvest Festival, the Crib Service, Fathers' Day and Mothering Sunday services, Tea and Favourite Hymns and the CTC Christmas service at Pinehurst.

A highlight of the past year was the special service led by the Pathfinders which focussed on God's desire for justice and mercy in our world and especially in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The

Pathfinders shared what they had learnt about Israel and Palestine through images, music, acting and dialogue with a congregation of over 80 people.

In June a number of us went to the Big Church Day Out at Wiston House in West Sussex where music and worship form the basis of a fantastic day out. Other social events have included the annual Bonfire Party and the Pathfinders Christmas Party as well as a trip to Oakwood Youth Challenge.

We are sad to have lost Claire Rutter from our Pathfinder leadership team following the family's recent move, and are incredibly grateful to Claire for all she has done for Pathfinders over the past few years.

With Claire's departure, we are more keen than ever to enlist extra support to continue this work with our young people at St John's. Any involvement - whether it be supporting occasional social activities, weekly meetings or taking a more active role – would be welcomed. So please do contact either David Rance or Tracy Perrett if you would like to find out more.

Tracy Perrett

Prayer Groups

Mothers Union Prayer Group

The Mothers' Union (MU) prayer group continues to meet on the third Monday of each month from 9.30am - 10am in the Lady Chapel (or in the vestry if it is very cold). Any MU and church members are very welcome. We divide our time praying for our overseas link diocese, and Provinces abroad. All our members receive a prayer diary (there is usually a copy kept in the foyer), guiding us in our daily prayers, and keeping us informed of the Mothers' Union worldwide. We pray for the sick, remembering those on our prayer board, and we pray for our meetings and seasonal events. We finish our time as the siren at Broadmoor echoes round the village, reminding us that all the staff and inmates there need our prayers.

Prayers and Blessings

Carol Frost

Prayers for Healing and the Sick

We meet each Friday at 6.15pm, for about 30 minutes, to pray for the sick, using the prayer requests on the prayer board in the Lady Chapel. We know that these prayers are appreciated by those who request them and we welcome anyone who would like to join us, whether occasionally or more regularly, to help to further the Church's healing ministry.

Gillian Gyenes

Praying for Streets

The background, for those who don't know about Praying for Streets and just hear about it in the prayer intercessions on a Sunday, is that we endeavour to leaflet a particular street and then pray for that street the week after. It takes just over a year to cover all the streets in the Parish.

We recently received a note which reads:

"Dear fellow Christians, I would like to thank you and your prayers for praying for selected roads in the Parish. This morning the Lord reminded me that you were doing this and I felt strengthened. My prayer is that all will feel His love, care and protection as each road has its turn. It must be a powerful way for God's love to reach us all."

I want to thank all those who kindly deliver the leaflets. If there is anyone else who would like to assist with delivering the leaflets then please do speak to us.

Servers

As ever the chance to look back over the last year and express a heartfelt thanks to our small but dedicated band of servers. Recruitment relies upon new blood coming in via the Junior Confirmation Group and of the eight candidates in 2012, two are committed members of the choir, we lost four to other activities leaving just two to join our teams.

Looking forward I feel constrained to ask whether we feel the altar servers add to our worship, if so I am sure we could add to our adult numbers and not just rely upon the youngsters becoming servers. Everyone is welcome to join us whether at our 8 o'clock said services, occasional weekday celebrations or, of course, the weekly 10 o'clock Eucharist.

If you feel this might be a worship role for you (after all most people who read this regularly attend our services anyway), please speak to Lisa or myself.

Chris Williams

Social Committee

The Patronal festival barbecue was the first event of the year and contrary to the general weather last summer it was dry and sunny.

At the Harvest supper music from John Burns on his clarinet was enjoyed by an audience of about 60 people followed by the traditional selection of hot dishes and apple pies and crumbles.

About 40 people were served breakfast at the 8 meets 10 at 9 event in October 2012 and the general hubbub of conversation was a cheerful antidote to the return of dark evenings as the clocks changed.

Roland Fruin compèred a Quiz evening in November with many questions reflecting on a fantastic year with the Olympics and Golden Jubilee. Entitled a "Wine and Wisdom evening" there may have been a shortage of wisdom in some quarters but plenty of wine accompanied by a selection of cheeses.

The Family Fun Afternoon took on another format this year as a Children's Chocolate Bingo and was enjoyed by about 30 children in February 2013.

Other than the particular events described the Social Committee also provide their support to a number of annual events such as the refreshments at the Crowthorne Orchestra Christmas concert and Nine Lessons and Carols parish service. Support from the Social Committee and St Johns' congregation was also provided to the Flower Festival raising about £1200 for the R&R fund from the sales of lunches and light refreshments.

The aim of the events is to bring together the St Johns' congregation and wider Crowthorne community. Ideas for future events are always welcome.

Thank-you to the committee for their untiring support, to the many others who also helped at events and to the participants for their cheerful attendance.

Kay Martin

Stewardship

As you read this you will have had a taste of the fruits of the Stewardship committee's labours. Ian and Colin will have delivered the message, Anne and Anna will have composed the literature and the rest of us will have helped distribute and broadcast the word.

The outcome by now will have become clear and hopefully through the continuing generosity of the members of this church our financial goals will have been attained. One final thought, if you are a tax payer and you do not already Gift Aid your contributions, please do so. The church will benefit and it will have a positive effect on your tax code.

Special thanks go to Ken Perrett and the office staff for all their hard work in collating, stuffing and labelling the envelopes you all received.

Steve Pope

St John's News

Again SJN was produced for 11 months of the year (except August). The Parish has been wonderfully supportive in providing copy and the editor tries to ensure that all in the Parish who wish to use its pages are given ready access. Each main edition tends to run to 8-10 pages. New features in the last year have been interviews by Maureen Raybould and a 'situations vacant' column. A more coordinated approach to planning its contents and presentation has been taken by the work of the Communications Group and this has served to enhance the production and consistent presentation of the News. The editor also coordinates with Louise Lobbley who produces the weekly news sheet and hopefully between them the two publications provide most of the information that the Parish need. The content is also helpfully repackaged by Ken Perrett to support the information on the website and there is a growing electronic distribution. It is also distributed via the C of E School.

Again we are grateful to Irene Simmons for her tireless work in producing an extra 4 pages for the **Prayer Diary**. This contains thoughtful and relevant material for the whole of the month and provides an excellent basis for thinking about a relevant prayerful approach within the Parish.

The volunteers in the Parish Office have worked hard to print SJN and their efforts are greatly appreciated. Recently a new photocopier has been used and this has served to maintain the quality of the printing. About 250 paper copies are usually produced. Printing has been in monochrome as colour, whilst available, would be prohibitively expensive for regular use (though it might be considered for use for special occasions).

Richard Ireson
Editor

Sunday School

The last year has continued to be busy at Sunday School. We now have 84 children on the register with 30-50 children joining us most weeks – an increase on 2012. The younger years still like to add a sticker to mark themselves off on the register every week.

Years 4,5 and 6 still have three teachers, Laura Myers, Sarah Dewson and Zella Barrett. Pre School, Reception and Year 1 are still led by Jayne Clark and Danzi Castle with Lorraine Muirhead this year acting as assistant. Years 2 and 3 are led by Sharon Gibson, Clare Demblon and new teacher Natasha Evan-Hart. All the Sunday School teachers take a role in welcoming new children and families into the Sunday School. Sarah Dewson organises the main rota from which the other groups will organise their own rota for their specific group.

The Leader sessions are currently being shared amongst the teachers with the occasional guest leader e.g. Ken Perret did a 'Godly Play' for the Ruth and Naomi lesson in January. This year we look forward pathfinders performing David and Goliath. All groups still do the same subject/story each week hence following the leader session the theme is continued when the children split out into their specific age groups.

Children from the choir join us each week for part of our sessions. Tom Burrell has been coming into Sunday School occasionally and preparing the children with actions and instruments ready for the last hymn so Sunday School can put on a performance in front of the congregation- this has been wonderful and we have been very grateful. Tom has actually been requested to perform this with the children for a baptism recently.

The nativity play went well on Christmas Eve. Nearly all of the Sunday School teachers were involved with a wonderful script organised by David Ramsbottom our curate. Sunday School now join the congregation at all-age services e.g. Harvest, Mothering Sunday and Father's Day sitting together and singing a prepared song. This has raised the number of children at these events.

We were very fortunate to have beautiful sunshine on one Sunday in July when we all, children and teachers alike, enjoyed the Sunday School picnic. Many thanks to Anna and Richard Forbes for, once again, giving us an opportunity to share fun, food and laughter in the safety and security of their lovely garden.

We continue to hold parties at Christmas and Easter. We bring all the children together to retell the relevant stories and then continue with a wide range of craft activities for the children to choose from before sharing party food together. The atmosphere at these events continues to be very special.

We have been quite successful in using the material from 'Danielle's Place', a Christian web site and now have no need to spend extra money on the scripture Union books. Some teachers may occasionally use materials from similar websites, and ideas are regularly shared.

We hope to sustain the enthusiasm of the children and teachers to promote an atmosphere of sharing and learning together. We would welcome anyone who would like to join us, whether as a helper, teacher, regular or one-time leader. Contact details are on the web site and a job description can be provided.

Jayne Clark

Welcome Team

8.00a.m.

Andrew King, Sally King, Bob Ebdon, Alan Jackson,
Willoughby Jones, Rosemary Jones, Kath Coutts,
Mary Clark, Barry Brewster, Richard Ireson.

10a.m. and extra services as required

David Chater-Lea, Doreen Norfield, Sheila Stickland, Guy Sutherland, Penny Rickards, David Rance, Ann Cottrell, Ken Perrett, Ian Lobley, Carol Frost, Carol Cain, Jill Pope, Mike Thackray, Julie Sharpe, Philip Rutter, Keith Wilkinson, Grant Robertson, Susan Robertson, Tom Lewis, Joan Colyer, Bruce McKenzie-Boyle, Marjorie Watson, Brian Turner, Kathy Beard, Peter Wright, Adrienne Wright, Shirley Mather, Brian Hooper, Audrey Hooper, Tom Jasper, Lorraine Jasper, Simon Butterworth.

This year several Team members are standing down for various reasons, they are Ian Lobley, Philip Rutter, Joan Colyer, Audrey and Brian Hooper. We thank them all for their commitment during their time in the various teams.

Thank you to all Welcome Team members for their commitment during the year. The Welcome Teams continue to play an important part in Church life in helping to make the services run smoothly and particularly in welcoming people who are new to the Church.

Doreen Norfield

Website

During the past year, we have refocused the website to give more help to new users. The front page is kept up to date with all the forthcoming events, while the individual pages provide more detail of the various Church activities. There is a link on the front page to the Anglican offices of Morning and Evening Prayer.

There are special pages for newcomers. Recent newcomers to the Church tell us that they have checked out the times of services before coming, so hopefully people can find this information easily. The site is kept up to date with information on the services and activities of the Church. There are lots of files for downloading if people miss coming to Church, for example, the Weekly Newsheet, St John's News (in colour) and the sermon.

We have had enquiries from all over the world, particularly in respect of relatives who might be buried in our Churchyard.

The Church website is www.crowthorneparishchurch.org.uk

There is also link to our website on "A Church near you" (www.achurchnearyou.com).

The website is hosted by the Diocese, but requires a fair amount of maintenance and tuning. Thank you to Brian Turner for this valuable expert assistance throughout the past year.

Ken Perrett