

THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY & ST. ETHELFLAEDA
with
ST. SWITHUN'S CRAMP MOOR

**The Annual Vestry Meeting for the Election of Churchwardens and The Annual Parochial Church Meeting
will be held in the Abbey on Wednesday 29th April 2015 at 7.30p.m.**

AGENDA

- 1) Opening prayers
- 2) Apologies for Absence

VESTRY MEETING

- 3) Minutes of the Vestry Meeting held on 27th April 2014
- 4) Election of Churchwardens

ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

- 5) Minutes of the APCM held on 27th April 2014 (*page 2 below*)
- 6) Election of 1 member to Deanery Synod and 5 members to the Parochial Church Council
- 7) Election of Sidesmen
- 8) Report from the Electoral Roll Officer
- 9) Election of Electoral Roll Officer
- 10) Treasurer's Report (Annual Report and Accounts of the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2014)
- 11) Election of Independent Examiner
- 12) To note the Reports submitted by PCC Committees (*page 5 below*):
 - a. Deanery Synod
 - b. Abbey Development Group
 - c. ARC
 - d. Church Rooms
 - e. Fabric Fellowship & Fundraising
 - f. Financial Resources
 - g. Health and Safety
 - h. Magazine
 - i. Mission and Education – Children and Young People, Discipleship, Evangelism and Nurture,
 - j. St. Swithun's
- 13) To note the Reports submitted by Groups associated with the PCC and other Organisations (*page 10 below*):

PCC Groups

 - i. Bellringers
 - ii. Christian Book Club
 - iii. Communion Assistants and Subdeacons
 - iv. Home groups
 - v. Infant Sunday School
 - vi. Junior Sunday School
 - vii. Ministers' Meeting
 - viii. Mothers' Union
 - ix. Parish Lunches
 - x. Romsey Abbey Choir
 - xi. Romsey Abbey Girls' Choir
 - xii. Romsey Abbey Men's Society
 - xiii. Romsey Abbey & St Swithun's Women's Group
 - xiv. Romsey Abbey School
 - xv. Romsey Abbey Technical Support Team
 - xvi. Romsey Abbey Youth Groups
 - xvii. Romsey Abbey Youth Orchestra
 - xviii. Servers

- xix. Sewing and Knitting
- xx. Stewards
- xxi. Toddler Fellowship
- xxii. Web Site
- xxiii. Meditation Group
- xxiv. Café Sunday

Associated organisations

- i. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
- ii. Friends of Romsey Abbey
- iii. Children's Society
- iv. Christian Aid
- v. George's Trust
- vi. Music in Romsey
- vii. Triangulate

- 14) Vicar's report (in two parts with a break for drinks after the first part)
- 15) Question Time
- 16) Closing prayers

NOTE – Questions relating to Agenda items 5, 12 and 13 or general questions for Item 15 must be submitted to the Nigel Herriott (Churchwarden) by e-mail to nigel@herriott.net in writing no later than 6pm on Monday 26th April 2015 or in writing to the Parish Office by 4:30pm on the same day.

AGENDA ITEM 5

THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. MARY & ST. ETHELFLAEDA WITH ST.SWITHUN'S CRAMPMOOR

Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held in Romsey Abbey at 7:30pm on Sunday 27th April 2014

1.OPENING PRAYERS

The Vicar, the Rev'd Tim Sledge, took the chair and opened the meeting.

2.APOLOGIES

There were 69 present and 15 apologies. Lists filed with these minutes.

Items 3 and 4 are recorded in the minutes of the **Annual Vestry Meeting**.

The Vicar reminded those present that while the Vestry Meeting was open to anyone living in the Parish, only those whose names were on the Electoral Roll were entitled to speak and vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on 23rd April 2013 were taken as read. Their adoption was proposed by Brian Drysdall, seconded by Brenda Tribe and agreed unanimously.

6. ELECTIONS

a) Deanery Synod

The Term of Office of all members of Deanery Synod ended in 2014 at the meeting. The size of Electoral Roll entitled the Parish 6 places on Deanery Synod. Nominations had been received before the meeting from Julie Carlton, Adrienne Mordan and Jane Thompson. John Grant was also nominated at the meeting proposed by Adrienne Mordan, seconded by Elizabeth Wagner and elected unanimously.

b) *Parochial Church Council*

By rotation 5 members' term of office had come to an end. Gareth Roberts was not standing for re-election and the Vicar thanked him for his valuable contribution over many years. David Bibby, Patricia Brown, Elizabeth Hallett, Margaret How and Andy Welch had been proposed and seconded before the meeting. As there were no other nominations they were elected unanimously. Following the election of Nigel Herriott as churchwarden there was also a vacancy for 1 year.

7. SIDESMEN

Mike Wallace reported on behalf of Diane Hargreaves. There had been no resignations and no additions. He proposed the current list was elected en-bloc, seconded by Pam Leech and carried unanimously. He expressed his thanks to all the Sidesmen for their valuable work. He requested that people let Mrs Hargreaves know if they were not able to a duty.

8. REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

The Electoral Roll Office, Ian Cox reported that the Electoral Roll had been placed in the Abbey & St. Swithun's to allow people to check their details and had subsequently been updated, along with any notifications received during the year. He said the roll now had 477 members, up 18 from last year, 400 of whom resided in the parish.

9. ELECTION OF ELECTORAL ROLL OFFICER

Ian Cox indicated his willingness to continue as Electoral Roll Officer. His reappointment was proposed by David Newman, seconded by Glynne Beasley and carried unanimously.

10. PARISH REPORTS – PCC committees

Reports received from the following committees which had been circulated before the meeting were taken as read, noted and received by the meeting. The Vicar thanked everyone who had submitted a report.

- a) ARC
- b) Church Rooms
- c) Deanery Synod
- d) Fabric and Health & Safety (sub-committee of Fabric) – Jane Arden asked about memorial plaques in church. The Vicar explained that the rules had been changed by the Diocesan Chancellor and instead of public engravings; gifts would be recorded in a "Book of Remembrance".
- e) Financial Resources
- f) Fellowship & Fundraising
- g) Magazine
- h) Mission and Education - Children and Young People, Discipleship, Evangelism and Nurture
- i) South Garth Development
- j) St. Swithun's

11. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements had been available before the meeting. The Vicar asked if there were any questions about the report, which there were not.

The Treasurer (Timothy Rogerson) then gave a report. He noted that being PCC Treasurer took about 4 hours per week plus 2 hours doing emails and at meetings. He thanked other members of the Treasurer team including Penny Simpson and the parish administrator, Debbie Parkes. He also observed that the Financial Resources committee was playing an increasingly important role in preparing the draft Budget, recommending the list of Charities to whom doantions were made and implementing the "Giving in Grace" campaigns. He reported that whilst the PCC had paid the Parish Share for 2013 in full and on time it had not been possible to make a transfer to the Capital Fund. He reminded the meeting of the difference between Restricted and Unrestricted funds, highlighting that the Corban Maintenance Fund which was used to pay the insurance for the Abbey School now covered only two thirds of the cost. He also referred to the Budget for 2014 which showed a small deficit and advised the meeting that the Parish Share for Romsey was the third largest in the Diocese.

Paul Ellis asked why there had been so great an increase in income from Church Services. The Treasurer replied that the Organist's Wedding Fees were now paid to the PCC and were then paid to him through the payroll. Pam Leech

enquired why Church Rooms income had decreased by £1,000 which the Treasurer explained as having been caused by a conscious decision to reduce slightly the number of lettings. Elizabeth Holloway asked whether the list of Charities supported could be included in the ARC Lent Ecumenical newsletter. Finally, Jane Arden asked if the PCC had plans to increase its charitable giving to which the Treasurer answered that the PCC had already committed to do this but that it would not be done in such a way as to put the PCC's own finances at risk. The Vicar thanked the Treasurer for his report.

12. ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Treasurer suggested that Richard Warwick of Langdowns DFK should be re-elected as Independent Examiner. This was formally proposed by Jane Horne, seconded by Elizabeth Holloway, and agreed unanimously.

13. GROUP REPORTS

Reports received from the following associated organisations which had been circulated before the meeting were taken as read, noted and received by the meeting. The Vicar thanked everyone who had submitted a report.

Abbey Groups

- i. Bellringers
- ii. Christian Book Club
- iii. Communion Assistants and Subdeacons.
- iv. First Sunday Breakfasts
- v. Home Groups
- vi. Infant Sunday School
- vii. Junior Sunday School
- viii. Ministers' meeting
- ix. Mothers' Union
- x. Parish Lunches
- xi. Romsey Abbey Choir
- xii. Romsey Abbey Girls' Choir
- xiii. Romsey Abbey Men's Society (no report received)
- xiv. Romsey Abbey and St. Swithun's Women's group
- xv. Romsey Abbey School (no report received) – Natalie Carr asked why there was no report. The PCC Secretary (Adrienne Mordan) reported that she had requested one but had received nothing. The Vicar confirmed that there was regular contact between the School and the Abbey which included School Eucharists each term. He also noted that there was a full complement of Governors and on-going assessment continued to show progress. Louise Newman (Chairman of the Governors of the Abbey School) advised that the School appreciated the Abbey's support.
- xvi. Romsey Abbey Technical Support Team (no report received)
- xvii. Romsey Abbey Youth Groups - Jane Thompson advised that there was now an 18+ group meeting.
- xviii. Romsey Abbey Youth Orchestra
- xix. Servers
- xx. Sewing and Knitting
- xxi. Stewards
- xxii. Toddler Fellowship
- xxiii. Web Site

Associated Organisations

- i. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund
- ii. Children's Society
- iii. Christian Aid (no report received)
- iv. George's Trust
- v. Music in Romsey
- vi. Triangulate
- vii. Friends of Romsey Abbey

There were requests from the floor that next year reports be requested from the Abbey Gift Stall and the Meditation Group. Fiona Jenvey observed that there was a huge amount going on and enquired how newcomers could find out about the activities. The Vicar replied that these reports and lots of other pieces of information were on the Website

and there were also many notice boards and the magazine. Mrs Jenvey added that it would be helpful if all the information were to be put in one booklet. The Vicar then thanked everyone who had made such a valuable contribution.

14. VICAR'S REPORT

The Vicar observed that all of the activity in 2013 had been reviewed earlier in the meeting and spoke briefly of plans for 2014 and beyond.

15. QUESTIONS

- Fiona Jenvey observed that, following the earlier discussion on the level of charitable giving, it was right to remember that money spent on the Abbey building itself was part of our charitable giving as it enabled the building to be used by the greater community.
- Louise Newman asked that thanks be recorded for the family worship provided by the Abbey.

There being no further questions the Vicar closed the meeting with prayers and the Grace at 1.20pm

AGENDA ITEM 12

PCC Committee Reports in respect of the year ended 31 December 2014

a. Deanery Synod

2014 saw the start of a new triennium for Synod and resulted in 13 representatives appointed by their parish APCMs in April joining the Synod for the first time. This year's focus has been very much on developing our understanding of the Diocese of Winchester's Strategic Priorities (adopted by the Diocesan Conference in September 2013) and developing the Deanery's Mission Action Plan (dMAP) in response to those. As a result, the Deanery Synod met only twice this year, instead of its usual three meetings, but it has nevertheless been a busy year. In February, Synod focussed on the Diocesan Strategic Priorities, and in particular "Reimagining Church", hearing about Messy Church in the Deanery and Sundays@4 in Romsey as one aspect of this. During May, representatives from each benefice met to collect information about the parishes, and initiatives already underway relating to the four Strategic Priorities.

The usual June meeting of Synod was replaced by a consultation session, with Synod representatives and additional invitees from all parishes attending to feed into the Deanery's Mission Action Plan, collecting many ideas for ways we could work together to develop our Mission in the Deanery. The meeting was attended by Canon Josephat and Rev'd Alice from South Rwenzori, who were visiting the Deanery. The ideas and information collected at the June meeting were then condensed into a Mission Action Plan, focussing initially on the first 18 months to 2 years, which was presented to the Deanery for discussion at the October meeting of Synod, before being presented at a Diocesan dMAP service at Winchester Cathedral in November. A re-structured Vision and Strategy Group will take forward the implementation and updating of the Action Plan. The Deanery Pre-Advent Course, "Lost for Words", to increase our confidence to talk naturally about our faith, was one of our Actions put into effect during 2014. A training day for lay worship leaders was also held. Look out for more events during 2015.

Julie Carlton

b. Abbey Development Group

Although things may have seemed quiet in recent months, there has been much activity behind the scenes.

Progress to date

- Further refinement of requirements from the many groups that use the Abbey both from within the abbey and also the wider communities;
- Consolidation of feedback from the PCC, Resources Study, Feasibility Study, requirements gathering and external consultations. This resulted in a review of the options and development of a Concept Plan and Design Brief. This moved the emphasis away from the redevelopment of the Church Rooms site to the possibility of developing the facilities within the church itself and the area of the South Garth, with the addition of a small development outside the North Wall; and

- Presentation of the Concept Plans to the Abbey congregation on 1st March 2015 supported by more information on the website. These have been received very enthusiastically.

Finance

There was very little expenditure on the Project in 2014 and we are extremely grateful to the many people who have generously given their time. We are still well within the £40k approved by the PCC for this phase of the project. Money for future commercial work will be raised through a fundraising campaign.

Next steps

- Further consultation with the DAC, Local Authority, English Heritage and Church Care;
- Development of a Business Plan to ensure that any development is financially sustainable;
- Establishment of a Fundraising Campaign;
- Investigation and research into the appointment of architects.

Nigel Herriott

c. ARC (Association of Romsey Churches)

ARC gives us the opportunity to worship, learn together and to witness to our Romsey neighbours as one church. The Ministers met together on a monthly basis. During the year we worshipped together during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, on Good Friday in the Corn Market and the Environment Service in September. In Lent study groups we explored the theme of Living the Mission of Jesus using material provided by Winchester Diocese. 7 people from the ARC Environment group visited a Composting Centre. We invited Bob Purser, Churches Officer for New Communities for the Diocese of Peterborough, to help us think how the churches can welcome and support people moving into Romsey. In July 2014 we invited Ann Davison from Palestine to speak on her work as a volunteer Ecumenical Accompanier in Palestine and Israel. The Ecumenical Accompaniers monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. They offer protection through non violent presence and support Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. We reached out to the Community by delivering the ARC Christmas cards. Over 700 people attended Woodley Fun Day in June. The ARC Choir, led by Jim Sampson, visited 9 Romsey Nursing Homes at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, singing hymns and chatting to residents. Elizabeth Robertson (from the Methodist Church) was Chair of ARC in 2014 and Margaret Miles has kindly become a second ARC representative for the Abbey.

Margaret How

d. Church Rooms

Five Committee Meetings were held during the year. Church Rooms Lettings are important to the financial status of the Church Rooms. Hire charges and conditions form the basis of hire agreements. Baptism families are offered the facilities in the Church Rooms and are invited to join us for Sunday Morning Coffee before their Baptism Service. The Committee is continuing to encourage more usage of the Church Rooms, allowing for the Parish needs. Opportunities for fund raising, such as Parish Lunches, Teas and providing coffee for events, have been taken. Income from the Parish Lunches has been divided between the General Fund and the Church Rooms. The new second hand blue chairs have been purchased with Parish Lunch Funds. The emergency exits locking mechanisms have been repaired or replaced. A Wi-Fi extension system has been set up. Audrey Johnson's piano has been installed. Discussions have been on going with the current cleaning contractor, which has resulted in some improvement. Ordering and storage of stock has been rationalised and stock levels set. Further work will take place in the New Year. Maintenance of essential appliances and electrical testing have taken place.

Jo Whitfield

e. Fabric

This Quinquennial Inspection will take place in June. The Fabric Committee is confident that it has addressed important items from the previous Quinquennial report. However, with a building the size of the Abbey there will always be work that needs addressing. The important factor here is to manage a schedule of works to the appropriate availability of our funds. In February we commissioned a survey of the window glazing from Salisbury Cathedral glass department. Although this reported that much of the glasswork in the Abbey windows is in a satisfactory condition it highlighted the need for some intervention works which will cost in the region of £20k. Faculties to carry out this work have been granted. The annotated plans from the survey will be retained to facilitate keeping abreast of any future deterioration. To ensure that the roofing areas remain sound a chemical treatment to the north tiled roof was applied in the spring of 2014. Similar treatment has been applied on the south side of the church to the areas of mixed brick and flint where weeds tend to grow (this does need to be repeated annually). All

downpipes have been checked and cleaned ensuring that no water ingress affects the building at times of substantial precipitation.

Our thanks must be recorded to Mike Hallett for his refurbishment of the external stainless steel notice boards. Efforts are being made to identify the reason for three substantial leaks in the lead work; one is at the west end, a second near the High Altar and a third is near the Vicar's vestry. In the SE corner of the Triforium a rotten, Victorian oak door has been replaced under a Schedule A (like for like) consent. St Anne's Chapel is in the process of being re-ordered with new furniture and the unique, Saxon rood has been enhanced by its new environment with the removal of the Victorian reredos. A new upgraded fire alarm system has been installed. The internal doors to the Abbey from the N porch have been cleaned and re-oiled and the wrought ironwork has been painted.

At St Swithun's on the west, gable end of the church a new external wooden cross has been fitted. This replaces one that was lost some years ago. Our thanks are due to Richard Pratt and his team for facilitating the erection of this. Other works of a minor nature have been carried out at St Swithun's. A structural engineer's report has been obtained on the condition of the roof trusses in the church and tenders are being obtained for the work recommended. I am grateful to the members of the Fabric Committee for their interest and commitment throughout the year.

David Johnson

f. Fellowship and Fund Raising

The Fellowship and Fund-raising committee has worked hard during the last year. Six talks with our trademark puddings served during the interval raised £724 and the talk by St John Ambulance led directly to the realisation of the need for a defibrillator in the Abbey, a need now kindly met by the Friends. Three pub quizzes were organised and two major events: Celebrating Community and an Open Morning. The Celebrating Community weekend in June saw some thirty local voluntary organisations displaying information about their work, the event being linked with the Civic Service. An Open Morning designed chiefly for children and young families was arranged in September and was once again a busy and enjoyable occasion, bringing many families into the Abbey for the first time. A new venture this year was the production of a recipe book of delicious desserts which has been selling outstandingly well, with many reprints needed. As always our parish Christmas card brought in the most income and this year sold out altogether. In total we are delighted that, as well as creating lots of opportunities for people to meet together socially, we have raised £2,443 for parish funds.

Liz Hallett

g. Financial Resources

The Financial Resources Committee met six times during 2014. Major activities during the year included:

- Organising the annual "Giving in Grace" stewardship campaign;
- Reviewing the PCC's bank accounts and consolidating of a number of accounts;
- Reviewing the 2015 budget in detail prior to it being presented to the PCC;
- Reviewing the new approach to Parish Share introduced by the Diocese which increases our Parish Share payment. This resulted in our agreeing with the Diocese a transitional arrangement so that the increase is phased in over two years;
- Investigating whether it might be possible to install Solar Panels on the Abbey (unfortunately, we are unlikely to get permission to do this);
- Running a survey of the Congregation on the Parish's Mission and Charitable Giving policy and making changes as a result of the feedback received;
- Introducing new approaches to encourage donations from visitors.

I would like to thank the members of the FRC who have put in a considerable amount of time in addition to the meetings in order to make progress on these activities.

Nigel Herriott

h. Health & Safety

The purpose of the sub-committee is to keep under review arrangements for health and safety at the Abbey and St Swithun's, to fulfil the PCC's statutory responsibilities towards those working, worshipping or volunteering in, or visiting the Abbey, St Swithun's, The Church Rooms, The Parish Office and the related grounds. The Committee has this year taken on additional responsibility for safe-guarding, with support from the PCC's Safeguarding Officer, Nigel

Herriott. A safety inspection is carried out by one or more members of the Committee, each month for public areas, and three-monthly for restricted access areas, to check for any risks to those working, visiting or volunteering in the Abbey. The monthly log is reviewed by the Committee so that any actions can be identified, allocated, and followed up at future meetings. In addition, we have a rolling programme to review and update the buildings risk assessments. Our insurers have given reassuring feedback on this documentation, which is encouraging, as failure to meet their standards could invalidate the Abbey's insurance in the event of an accident.

The Committee continues to develop and review risk assessments for various Abbey events and activities. The aim is to produce a selection of risk assessments covering a variety of risks which can be adapted to any event, reducing the paperwork to be produced each time. If you are holding an event, please ask a member of the Committee for advice. Only significant risks have to be recorded, but it is worth us noting those events where it is deemed no written assessment is necessary, so that we can demonstrate due consideration has been given.

Julie Carlton & Howard Brisland

i. Magazine

Open Door reports the parish news and articles of ecclesiastical interest that are unlikely to be reported in the local press. The magazine contains articles about many of the groups associated with the Abbey and St Swithins, and usually more copy is received than can be printed, for which the editor is grateful. The magazine usually runs to 20 pages increasing to 24 pages during Festivals. Liz Hallett remains editor, with Amanda Taylor shadowing, both of whom do an excellent job.

Our thanks go to Ken Gibson and Sam Martin who manage the printing of the magazine. We are grateful to our 35 Distributors and to Biddy Massey who manages the distribution to our 430 subscribers. We also thank Gareth Roberts for managing our accounts and most importantly, ensuring we have advertisers that contribute a third of our income. We have worked hard to keep the price at £1. In addition we thank Anita Wood for proofreading the magazine, and Mike Hallett for preparing the large print and audio copies. The monthly print run is 520 copies.

John Williams

j. Mission and Education

Children and Young People Committee

The C&YP Committee met four times during 2014. Major activities during the year included:

- Planning a programme of workshops and events;
- Making several small changes designed to make the Abbey more "friendly" to families (including Baptism families) who are new to the Parish;
- Introducing a new service for teenagers and young adults, OneFifty;
- Developing a job description for the proposed new role of Children and Families Worker.

I thank the members of the C&YP committee who have worked hard in planning and do a great deal of work to carry out the plans and lead to much of our work with Children and Young People.

Tim Sledge

Mission – Discipleship Group

The aim and purpose of the Discipleship Group is to encourage all members of our congregations to grow in depth and understanding of God in our lives and in the world. According to a recent Church of England report we are all called to a life of learning and formation in the likeness of Christ and to live a life of distinctive witness and service. While acknowledging that discipleship is costly, it says that discipleship is an invitation to "the strongest hope, the deepest joy, the greatest fulfilment, the most authentic pattern of living.

Well, that all seems pretty challenging, doesn't it? Of course, all of us who gather Sunday by Sunday are opening ourselves up to grow in our faith as we listen to the word of God in prayers and preaching, and celebrate the liturgy together. However, it is all too easy to get stuck in that "comfortable pew", to resist any challenges that may emerge and to feel we do not need to grow at all in our faith and practice. The committee meets three or four times a year to receive reports from the House Groups and the Book Club, and to plan the programme that we offer to the congregation. We aim to make the events appealing to a wide variety of people which involves trying to find a time when you will want to come.

Since Advent this year we have already had Tim Edmonds leading a discussion on his book and between Epiphany and Lent the Rev'd Brian Pickett and Sarah Hargreaves have devised and led a course on the Creed. This proved very popular and they had to move from the Church Office into the Church Rooms! After the success of the Ageing and Spirituality sessions on Sunday afternoons last year we are realising that that is a time when some people can be rather lonely so we plan to put more courses in that slot. We plan the Abbey's programme for Lent Groups and this year we follow the Diocesan course for following St Benedict's Rule and looking a Rule of Life for ourselves. The Ethelflaeda festival in the autumn has opportunities for learning more about discipleship in the past and for today. A new venture of the Vicar's is Spirituality Sunday which is gaining acceptance as a time when we take the opportunity to join different groups during the sermon slot in the Sunday Eucharist. A Benedictine way of engaging with Scripture is the weekly Lectio Divina when a good group of people meet in church led by a facilitator.

A Parish Retreat at Hilfield Friary in Dorset is planned for the early summer; this will also be open to families and people who want to come for the day on the Saturday. We can all be disciples in our own way and at our own level, so do let us know of any ideas you may have for future opportunities for learning, fellowship and study.

Susan Halliwell

Evangelism and Nurture

The reader is directed to the information about *Home groups* below

k. St. Swithun's

St Swithun's had, on average, a congregation of 34 on ordinary Sundays. 70 people attended the carol service, 50 attended on Christmas Day and 52 people on Easter day. During the year there were one funeral, one baptism and one service of thanksgiving for the birth of a child. Sundays@7 meets at St Swithun's once a month. The meditation group has also met at St Swithun's when the Abbey was not available to them. Romsey Abbey Youth Orchestra rehearses at the Church once a month. Woodley Friendship Club uses the vestry for committee meetings. The Mother's Union had a service at the Church. John Swinstead made a splendid new cross which is now on the west wall.

Maintenance of the Church building is progressing, but much remains to be done. The windows were repaired and redecorated in the summer. The window opening mechanisms were repaired. A new outside light was installed by the main door, replacing the old light which failed a safety test. Fund raising events included the ever popular cottage pie and cava lunch, a cream tea, and a songs of praise service at which donors sponsored hymns. Harvest festival gifts were sold and the £117 raised given to a Romsey Good Neighbours. We raised £1,000 for Parish Funds and £45 for Christian Aid. Members of the congregation and other supporters cut the grass, maintain the garden and clean the Church. Members of the congregation provide flowers, act as communion assistants, act as sidesmen and read the lessons.

Richard Pratt

AGENDA ITEM 13

Reports from PCC Groups and Associated Organisations for the year ended 31 December 2014

PCC GROUPS

i. Bell Ringers

The Bellringers ring the Abbey's 8 bells before Sunday services, for other services (by arrangement) and before and after weddings (by arrangement). The group meets regularly on a Wednesday evening to practice apart from Holy Week when it is traditional that church bells are not rung. The group trains new ringers; all training is done on a voluntary basis. A small number of the group volunteer to be steeplekeepers, who undertake a monthly inspection of the ropes, bells and fittings, a process that takes between 1.5 and 3 hours each month.

During 2014 the bells were rung for all Sunday morning Eucharist services, most Sunday evening services, 29 weddings, school carol services, on New Years' Eve and for 4 memorial or funeral services. Tower tours remained popular and 3 groups were escorted up the tower on the Open Morning in September. No new ringers were trained. The peal board commemorating the peal rung for the Diamond Jubilee has been installed in the ringing chamber. The board was hand painted by artist Maggie Willans who also created the 2008 peal board. The Risk Assessment has made some progress but is not yet completed. The Fire and Evacuation plan was revisited but has not yet been agreed with the Health & Safety committee.

Caroline Daniels

ii. Christian Book Club

The Book club has not met this year.

iii. Communion Assistants and Sub-deacons

Some people have queried why there are so many people licensed to assist with the administration of communion in the Parish. With two churches, and a hospital rota required each Sunday, together with Care and Nursing Home visits and individual visits to housebound parishioners during the week, the large numbers of volunteers are needed to assist the clergy to ensure communion is available to as many parishioners as possible. A sub-deacon and four assistants are required each Sunday in the Abbey and help is also required at services in Holy Week and around Christmas. There are 21 Assistants and 7 Sub-deacons on the Abbey rota which covers 3 months at a time. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the names published in the weekly Bulletin are those actually assisting, there are occasions when late changes have to be made. I am very grateful to those upon whom I have called at the last minute (sometimes even after the service has started) who willingly step forward to help ensure communion is administered in a reverent and smooth manner.

Brian Drysdall

iv. Home Groups

Jean and Barbie Evans report:

We have continued our journey through the eyes of John. We are reaching the climax of the resurrection very soon, having taken a break to work together on the Diocesan Lent Course, meeting weekly to keep up with the programme! We plan to continue our journey and look forward to a fresh understanding of the Good News. We shall enjoy a home communion on June 11th and a gathering together of all the home groups at Wisdom House on July 2nd. We are always pleased to welcome new members.

Jan & Howard Green and Annie Templeton report:

We have had about twelve regular attendees at our home group during 2014 and everyone is involved in planning the programme. During the year we have studied a series of Old Testament characters and Mark's Gospel. Visiting speakers have included Tim Sledge on 'Music for the Soul', Peter Speck on 'Healing' and Brian Draper on 'Labyrinths'. We attended a talk at Winchester Cathedral on 'Great Illuminated Manuscripts', joined in with the Diocese of Winchester's Lent Series, 'Living the Mission of Jesus', and enjoyed the Romsey Deanery's Pre-Advent Series, 'Lost for Words'. So, it has been a full and varied year enriched by a few delightful meals together. The report ends with two comments from members: "Home group helps me on the journey of faith in a friendly, relaxed and supportive manner" and "WonderfullyWelcoming Worshipful Wednesdays".

Margaret How reports:

During Lent we followed the Diocesan Lent Course, 'The Mission of Jesus'. We then studied some more of the Gospel of John using the Bible Study Guide by John Wright. In the Summer we studied the Lord's Prayer. On 24th July the Vicar came and discussed difficult questions with us and led us in a beautiful house communion. Before the summer holidays we decided we would like to start meeting weekly rather than fortnightly and see how it went. We have been meeting weekly ever since except for holidays. Occasionally we meet with the other house groups for a social get together. In September we started looking at Proverbs in the life building Bible study series. Margaret How was away for 6 weeks from the middle of September and members of the group took it in turns to lead or host. We sadly lost Bishop Donald Arden in the summer. He had been a very supportive member of our group and even when he was no longer able to attend we still felt he was part of the group. He is very much missed. We have welcomed three new members during this past year so we are now around the 14 mark. Others are very welcome to join us on a Thursday evening. We can always start another group!

v. Infant Sunday School

We've had another very enjoyable year in Infant Sunday School, both in our Sunday morning sessions and in our special events. Our average Sunday attendance is about 6 to 10 children most of whom come very regularly and whose parents are in the Eucharist service. At Way-In our numbers are swelled by some younger children and their parents but we still have far fewer attending on a first Sunday. This year for Harvest we talked about the importance of bees and how we all, big and small fit into God's plan. The children made a magnificent flower meadow to decorate our pillar in the Abbey, complete with bee hive and honey comb; not to mention the balloon bees which festooned the Abbey. We made up little packets of wild flower seeds to encourage everyone to make their garden a bit more enticing to our buzzy friends.

We try and teach using a variety of styles, so this year we've dressed up, used Godly play and our story box, acted as well as told stories and generally had a lot of fun. The Good Friday workshop was well attended and we were able to explore the story of Holy Week and Good Friday in craft, cooking, gardening and chat. We held an Advent Workshop again, and had a small number of children busily learning about the true meaning of Advent through baking, card and model making etc Talking with children whilst they are making something is such a wonderful way to teach and learn, for both adult and child. The glittery stars made at the workshop were used to decorate behind the altar on Christmas day. I end with many "thankyous": to Anne and Grace who are so great to work with; to the parents for bringing their children and encouraging them; to our Abbey family for the interest and support; and to the children for making it all worthwhile.

Louise Newman

vi. Junior Sunday School

No report received.

vii. Ministers' Meeting

No report received.

viii. Mothers' Union

With our core commitment to the support of marriage and family life, the group has arranged and raised funding for a local family to have a much-needed holiday. We were delighted to hear directly how successful that had proved. We were represented at the Abbey's Wedding Fair in February, talking to couples preparing for marriage and offering prayer for them. Our catering group has been in action for some visiting groups, for weddings, and for funerals. This is both practical help, and a fund-raiser for the branch and we are very grateful to those who cook, and those who serve. Members also offer a wide range of support for Abbey activities.

A reflective Quiet Morning at St.Swithun's was led by Canon John Reynolds, and our Lent Service and September service of prayer for children were led by the Vicar. Meetings ranged from patchwork to poetry, from flower-arranging to a rummage through old branch photos, reviving memories in those of our branch who have many years' membership. As part of the worldwide fellowship of Mothers' Union, we seek to provide resources for members whose lives are very different from our own to improve literacy and numeracy, especially among women supporting families in the poorest communities. To sustain further our branch's spiritual life, each month on first Thursday we

have a time of prayer led by individual members. Challenges for 2015? We need to strengthen the group of those who plan what we do and implement those plans.

Averil Bamber

ix. Parish Lunches

Twelve lunches were held during 2014, each on the second Thursday of the month in the Church Rooms. Over the year 637 two-course meals were served at £4 each. Adrienne Mordan continues to lead the team of caterers and helpers, some of whom sit down to eat with the customers. The customers' raffle, managed by Liz Holloway and helpers, added £556 to the funds. £16 was spent on equipment and at the beginning of the year £500 was forwarded to the PCC General Fund.

Barbara Knight

x. Romsey Abbey Choir

The year began with our Epiphany Supper and a visit to the Pantomime at the Plaza, generously paid for by the PCC. Both events were very much enjoyed and many thanks to those who attended the supper and who worked hard to produce a very good meal and entertainment. Do you remember that extremely long motet during Communion on the 19th January? That was 'Christus' by Mendelssohn, one of three new pieces we learned, the others being 'Ave Verum' by Mawby and the 'Jubilate in C' by Britten. Songs of Praise on 16th March was a great experience and I took every opportunity to chivvy the congregational singing from the pulpit. In May we travelled to Sherborne Abbey for our annual visit and enjoyed Dyson in D and Haydn's great anthem 'Insanae et vanae curae'.

'I was glad' by Parry rang out from both choirs for the Romsey Festival service with Keith Tomkinson standing in for Adrian Taylor who was not well for a short period. He was however in great form for our Summer Trip to Hereford Cathedral. The choir performed brilliantly with highlights from our repertoire and a lot of psalm singing. Ethelflaeda appeared once again in October when we sang a Sanctus by Ethyl Smythe. We have not attempted it since! A new set of 100 Carols for Choirs was kindly bought with a donation in memory of Marie Perfect. These enabled us to learn some new carols and give us a great wealth of material all in one book. Many grateful thanks to our Assistant Organist Adrian Taylor, Keith Tomkinson for deputising, Rob Gower for keeping the library all correct, our fantastic back rows of Gentlemen, our superb choir parents, FORAC and the committee and last but certainly not least, the Choristers!

Robert Fielding

xi. Romsey Abbey Girls' Choir

This year has seen the Girls' Choir grow in confidence and in numbers, enjoying services on their own, joint services with the men from the Abbey Choir, joint services with the whole Abbey Choir and services with Christchurch Priory Girls Choir. We said goodbye to Grace Ibbott who went on her gap year, Chloe Bourner and, on Easter Day, Emily Garland. All the girls have given faithful service to the choir over the years. Recruitment has been good and we now have 22 girls on the books having welcomed Joanne Malone-Crossman, Lily Jenvey, Cecily Roberts and Susannah Hill into our choir family. Two more are waiting in the wings but unfortunately we've now run out of cassocks of the correct size! During the year three choristers gained their RSCM Silver awards and four their RSCM Bronze awards which is very encouraging. More choristers will be encouraged to do these awards. Highlights this year have been our joint Evensong with Christchurch Priory Girls' Choir in July at Christchurch and for Candlemas here in the Abbey in February. At the St. Ethelflaeda Choral Evensong the girls were privileged to be conducted by Dr. June Boyce-Tilman as they sang "Dark", one of her introits. We are looking forward to our visit to Portsmouth Cathedral to sing with Cantate on May 3rd.

Everything is also taking shape for our trip to Treviglio in July with two prospective services and two concerts in the planning. We are continuing to raise funds for this trip having already undertaken a sponsored sleepover in the Abbey (with Compline), car-washing, selling cakes, raffling hampers and carol singing at Hilliers and The Pig in the Forest which have all raised around £2,000. We thank the PCC for its contribution too. We are still applying for grants and trying to get sponsorship from other sources locally. It is such a privilege for the girls and me to be a part of the worship here in the Abbey. Thanks must go to the parents of the girls, Robert Fielding, Adrian Taylor, Jeffrey Williams, Rev Canon Tim Sledge, the PCC and the congregation of the Abbey for their continued support.

Diane Williams

xii. Romsey Abbey Men's Society (RAMS)

It was a relatively quiet year again for RAMS with the highlight being our annual retreat to Downside Abbey in Lent and a curry night of fellowship. We again ran the bookstall at the Abbey Fair.

David Newman

xiii. Romsey Abbey & St. Swithun's Women's group

We are a group of women, of all ages, who enjoy learning, living, and each other's company. We meet twice a month in the Abbey Church rooms and have a diverse programme which includes talks, travelogues, craft demonstrations, outings and parties. We think of ourselves as a friendly group affiliated to the Abbey but offering a non church social experience that everyone can enjoy. We hope newcomers will make friends and maybe even join the Abbey congregation.

Carole Allen-Morley

xiv. Romsey Abbey School

No report received.

xv. Romsey Abbey Technical Support (RATS)

2014 was been a busy year with the team continuing to support numerous services, talks, lectures and concerts with screens in the side aisles chapels and nave. We have also been to Salisbury Cathedral providing live screens; once for an organ workshop and once for an organ recital. We also filmed two concerts by the Royal Marines Association Concert Band in Hedge End and Hayling Island to produce a promotional DVD for them. These additional external activities have allowed us to upgrade some of our equipment including two new rear/front projection screens and 4 remote controlled cameras. The team also continues to tweak the sound system look after the lights, the CCTV, the WiFi and the roof alarm!

David Newman

xvi. Romsey Abbey Youth Groups

Youth 11+

The current cohort has decided to drop the original name "Unchained", preferring simply Youth Group; we have an extended meeting time 6.45-8.30pm Tuesday evenings and are growing both in numbers but also, most excitingly, in spiritual depth. In spring we remained a united 11-18 group to conclude Youth Alpha, which had started in autumn 2013. Discussions were very thought provoking. Shrove Tuesday 2014 had a special poignancy: the "Living the Mission of Jesus" Lent Course challenged us to identify with those that don't have the basic necessities for life, by fasting for 24 hours. With relish we finished our fast by making and devouring pancakes! The new extended meeting time, enabled us to enjoy the long summer evenings at the Memorial Park. The discussions were on Hot Topics! We said our thanks and farewells to Jax, at our especially themed penguin party and were enormously privileged that Alice Nabirye and Josephat Bwalhuma were able to share an evening with us. In September, on our annual weekend at Avon Tyrell, thirty 11-18's, plus emerging-leaders, were led by Steve Pittis on the Holy Spirit. On return Andy Welch stepped-up onto a very fast learning curve, increasingly starting to lead on Tuesdays when we studied Ephesians. In December enormous fun was had making lanterns ready for the parade at Late Night Shopping; for our Christmas celebration Youth, Reloaded and 18+ were at Mega-Bowl! Finally a really massive "thank you" to Andy for being so ready and willing to take on an increasing leadership role.

Reloaded

In the spring term Reloaded combined with the main youth group for Youth Alpha and then the Diocesan Lent course "Living the Mission of Jesus". Rhiannon and Rhys had joined us for confirmation preparation and in February we celebrated their confirmation at Lyndhurst. In June a new look Reloaded started: members come to youth group at 6.45pm but following straight-on from Youth Group, stay in the Church rooms until 9.15pm for 45 minutes of deeper, extended discussions. When Alice and Josephat stayed to spend time with Reloaded – it was inspirational. In late August twelve of Reloaded and some of the older youth spent six awesome days at Soul Survivor, a Christian festival with worship, teaching, camping and fun. In the Autumn on return from the weekend away, we looked at relationships, using new online Soul Survivor material. Congratulations to all those confirmed in November: Youth, Reloaded, 18+ and from the wider church. A big thank you too to Fiona and Mich who have taken over second Sunday 11-18's café church, which under their leadership is mushrooming both in numbers and depth. Also many thanks to Mich for restarting the discussion group for the youth at "Way In".

18+

Our 18+ group started in autumn 2013 in response to the growing number of former members of Reloaded that were around and keen to keep in touch. We were studying key characters in the Old Testament, either in homes or at the pub! From March, once the 18 and 19 year olds left on gap year projects, we met less regularly. However, in June, as people returned from projects and university, regular meetings picked up and the summer was busy. Over the August Bank Holiday weekend some spent six days at Momentum. Momentum is a worship and teaching weekend for the 19-30's; it follows on from Soul Survivor but has a much more relaxed and very chilled style. The 18+ group met through September, but struggled in October when last year's "gapers" and our older students disappeared again. However, December saw the first "Onefifty", our new services aimed at the 15-35's, born from a vision to reach the "missing generation" we are hoping that, in time Onefifty will grow to be owned and lead by this age group.

Jane Thompson

xvii. Romsey Abbey Youth Orchestra

RAYO has enjoyed playing for the first Sunday services. We are pleased to have some new members as well as keeping our local university students. It is particularly nice when the students who live away rejoin us when they can. Over the last year we have been invited to lead the music for a number of ecumenical and community-linked services such as "The Samaritans Purse" in the Abbey, and the ARC Environmental service in the URC, and we look forward to playing for the St. George's Day Service in the Abbey in April. We hope to maintain the Abbey link with Kasese, Uganda and support any future music endeavours. Unfortunately it was not viable for us to visit Kasese in 2015. We had our annual Pizza night in July. We welcome new players who are Grade 5 standard or above.

Caroline Willshire

xviii. Servers

During the course of the year we have lost one server. We were still able to cover all services. However we need more servers urgently and would welcome new offers of help.

Chris Harpham

xix. Sewing & Knitting – St. Swithun's & Romsey Abbey

Our group has continued to thrive and as usual our knitters have been very industrious. Our main contributions have been to 'The Trussell Trust' and 'Samaritans Purse'. We provided baby blankets and matinee sets to Princess Anne Hospital for their Premature Baby Unit and knitting squares to make into blankets for the residents of Nursing Homes. We knitted balaclavas, hats, mittens and scarves for the 'Mission to Seafarers' and were able to give them a donation. We continued to purchase wool with the money we received in 2013 from the estate of the late Captain Stead. For the War Horse Project we supplied over 50 pennants and rectangles to support Dorothy Baverstock's appeal to decorate the trees and bandstand in the park. When Alice and Josaphat visited the Parish in the summer they very kindly took several garments for Uganda. We also gave them a donation from our funds.

Maureen Batten and Anne Hewett

xx. Stewards

I took over the role of maintaining the rota of stewards in May 2014. Stewards are present in the Abbey from at least 10.30am till 4.30pm each day of the week. Their primary role is to welcome every visitor to the Abbey, for whatever reason they are there. Stewards also answer questions where they can, and point visitors in the direction of further information. They usually work in a team of two, for two hours every fortnight, and training is provided. We currently have 80 permanent stewards, with 15 additional stewards who stand in for absences. Stewards welcomed over 41,500 visitors to the Abbey during 2014 (7,500 more than in 2013) including over 5,000 during the 2 weeks of Romsey Festival. We have maintained the rota during 2014, including Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Six stewards have resigned during the year, almost entirely due to decreasing health. Many stewards are retired and have stewarded for many years. Efforts to recruit new stewards have been made via articles in newsletters including the U3A, Romsey and District Society, Friends of the Abbey and Open Door. An informal meeting was held in June 2014, which the Vicar addressed, to thank the stewards for their work, and to provide an opportunity for the stewards to meet their counterparts. Updated Information Sheets for stewards have been provided covering issues such as health and safety, and requests including a lockable cupboard, and coat rack, have been addressed.

Sheila Latimer

xxi. Toddler Fellowship

Romsey Abbey Toddler Fellowship meets in the Church Rooms between 9:30am and 11am on Wednesday mornings during term time. During 2014 around 25 families accessed the group with about 12 families present on any one morning. Children attend Toddler Fellowship with their parents, grandparents or child-minders. The Fellowship offers an opportunity for families in Romsey to come together mid-week so that children can enjoy engaging and stimulating activities together and adults can socialise. For the vast majority of families in attendance, Toddler Fellowship is the only contact they have with a Church community. On 6 occasions during the year we went into the Abbey for a short act of worship which was led by a member of the clergy team. Members of the Mothers Union continue to serve tea and coffee to the group.

Helen Normington

xxii. Website and Social Media

The Abbey website at www.romseyabbey.org.uk recorded a further growth in visitors in 2014 of 14% (2013: 9%). There were small spikes in traffic being driven by Easter and the Ethelflaeda Festival before the end of year surge in traffic, arising from pre-Christmas visitors. The most popular pages beneath the home page (17,774 visitors) are *Concerts* (4,617, up 16% on 2013), *Visiting Romsey Abbey* (3,707, down 9%), the online calendar (3,201, up 55%), *Travel directions* (3,120, up 21%) and *Contact us* (2,895, up 12%). The Bulletin was downloaded over 2,475 times (2012: 2,302). The shift in devices used to visit the site continues. Tablets now account for 23% of traffic to the website (2013: 16%); mobile phones 18% (2013: 13%) and desktops and laptop computers 58% (2013: 69%).

As during last year, over 260 people visited romseyabbey.podbean.com, where David Newman kindly posts audio recordings of sermons. I pay tribute also to Debbie, who ensures that notices and the bulletin are published online efficiently every week. On Facebook our following rose from 214 “likes” to 266, whilst on Twitter it grew by nearly 50% to 560. Social media channels, then, continue to grow in importance as a virtual congregation. You will find their web addresses in the weekly parish bulletin; I encourage you to “like” or “follow” us online and share content we post with your friends and followers.

Dominic Brenton

xxiii. Meditation Group

The weekly Meditation Group is an adult gathering of between 16 and 26 people seeking a contemplative prayer life. The group often attracts those who feel called to reflect on life changing events, or those suffering from stress and anxiety arising from changes at home or work. Our practice is the Benedictine 'Prayer of the heart,' the practice of silent meditation. Additionally we include readings attributed to Christian Saints, Mystics and Church Fathers along with those from non Christian traditions. The group actively welcomes and includes those of all faiths and none; many of our members also attend Buddhist and mindfulness meditation. The group reaches out into the community and has strong links with Wisdom House and other meditation groups in the area. If you are reading this report and know someone who you think may benefit from it do please contact me (fiona@jenvey.info or 07983 502120). The group meets in the Abbey every Tuesday.

Fiona Jenvey

xxiv. Café Sunday

Cafe Sunday is a youth discussion group which meets monthly at Sundaes Child ice-cream parlour. We aim to provide 11 to 18 year olds with a safe place to discuss their faith, or lack of it. Meetings started earlier this year with the aim of re-starting Sundays@Nero, but in a cooler environment. Mich Lajeunesse came up with the idea of forming the group in Sundaes Child and the owner kindly agreed to open a bit earlier for us. In recent months we have been studying the Lord's Prayer using “The Pilgrim Course” from Church House Publishing. For Lent we made prayer beads. The group started off with about 8 participants and now has around 16 young people. The more secluded upper room in Sundaes Child is ideal for group work. We have a couple of young people with special needs and being away from the constant distraction of a busy public coffee shop has proven to be more positive environment for everyone.

Fiona Jenvey

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

i. Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund

The Trustees of the Romsey Abbey Appeal Fund are very pleased to have been able to support the continuing maintenance of the Abbey during the year ending 31 December 2014. We have made grants for further repairs to the North Porch and North side of the Abbey, a new fire alarm system and repairs to South turret spiral staircase treads. These amounted to around £40,000. We have been blessed by a most generous legacy of £110,000 from the estate of Eunice Hutchison who will have been known to many readers of this report.

The Abbey Appeal Fund stands at approximately £570,000. This sounds like a large sum but funds can soon be depleted with major works of maintenance and repair. It is important for the Trustees to maintain the fund at a reasonable level with this in mind. We rely almost entirely on lifetime gifts and legacies. Please support us in our work if we can. Should you wish to consider a gift, perhaps using Gift Aid, or a provision in your will to this charitable trust, I, as Treasurer, will be very pleased to assist. You can contact me by post at Campsie Glen, Sandy Lane, Romsey, SO51 0PD, or by phone (01794 367116) or e-mail (edwards.proudreed@btconnect.com).

Rachel Edwards

ii. Romsey Abbey- Friends of Romsey Abbey

Social and Fellowship Activity

A full programme of visits to places of interest and events within the Abbey was organised during the year. The Coffee Mornings, in Romsey Town Hall, continue to run bi-monthly throughout the year. As well as excellent freshly brewed coffee and home-made biscuits (only £2 for all the coffee and biscuits you can consume), there is also a friendly, welcoming atmosphere which has encouraged a few more people to join as 'Friends'. Friendship is indeed the main aim of these mornings – the new members and the steady income we achieve are an added bonus. Last year, the coffee mornings raised £930 for the Friends.

Projects

In the last 18 months we have continued our programme of "Improving the Visitor Experience" at the Abbey. We funded the printing of Visitor Leaflets in 4 languages (French, Spanish, Italian and German). We installed bicycle racks for the more energetic users, and sited 'A' boards for the display of information. We ensured provision of up-to-date internet access for future use with electronic tablets, sponsored and supported the Ethelflaeda Festival including the talk by Kate Adie, and funded some improvements to the Children's Corner. The latest donation was to purchase a defibrillator which is located just inside the North Door. For the future we have committed funding for the planned improvements to St Anne's Chapel and we have also made provision for the support of educational work within the parish.

Membership and Finance

We have grown steadily through our membership year which ends on 31st March. We began the year at 310 members and membership now stands at 340. Funds available as at 2nd January 2014 were £18,722 and by 27th December were £20,916

John Twigg

iii. Children's Society

The Children's Society committee is the local fund-raising group of the national charity associated with the Church of England, which helps make childhood better for disadvantaged and vulnerable children throughout the UK. We hold local events, organise an annual street and house-to-house collection in Romsey, co-ordinate the Abbey Christingle service and distribute the gifts from the Epiphany gift service. A large part of the income comes from generous parish home and business box-holders.

This year, we took things a little easier following last year's 60th Anniversary events. One of our fund-raising highlights was the Autumn Bazaar in the Townhall. The Town Crier did a fantastic job pulling in passers-by, who took advantage to shelter from the rain to enjoy refreshments and the various attractive stalls. Other events included a coffee morning, the annual street collection and the Christingle service. As always there were many lovely epiphany gifts which were gratefully received by Romsey Family Support Group, Romsey Young Carers, Allsorts Disability Group and Youth in Romsey.

So far, we have raised over £8,000. Sadly, we have lost one committee member and a number of loyal supporters and the fundraising total is boosted by their gifts in memoriam. We thank the congregation and our wonderful box-holders for their generous support. The committee is also looking for new members to join and help our fund-raising efforts. Please let one of us or the Vicar know if you are interested.

Angela Howes

iv. Christian Aid

The Abbey continues to support Christian Aid and several members of the congregation help with the street collection during the Christian Aid week but unfortunately no one came forward to be the representative for the Abbey and St. Swithun's on the committee.

Adrienne Mordan

v. George's Trust

George's Trust has had another busy year and has raised funds for all its objectives. The thing that most stands out for us during this year, is that George's Trust is not only still receiving great support within the Romsey Community, but is also being supported in the wider area. George's Trust is being considered as a 'serious charity', by people and organisations with whom we have had no previous connection, but who feel they want to raise funds for our Charity. This is wonderful and it never ceases to amaze us what people get up to, from swimming the length of the English Channel in a Swimming Pool in Southampton to Running with paint being thrown at them! We are very grateful to them all. This year as always we have supported Teenage projects in the area for Sport, Music etc. The Teenagers on the back row of the Choir continue to be helped by George's Trust and it is a pleasure to be able to do so.

The main objective though continues to be raising funds for Teenagers with Cancer and of the £100,000 pledged to the new Teenage Cancer Unit in Southampton General Hospital, in just over five and half years, George's Trust has contributed £75,000. We are well on the way to reaching our original target now, it is in sight! The Teenage Cancer Unit is an amazing Unit and is helping many young people suffering from cancer. Since it opened, it has treated 75 young people. One patient recently told us "the Unit is like home from home and has helped me a great deal. To be treated in a place like this, with young people my own age, going through similar treatments, has meant so much". It certainly is a special place and George's Trust feels privileged to be able to help in some way.

George's Trust, as well as holding its own events, attended and catered for many other events in the area. This finished in December with our very special Christmas Concert in our lovely Romsey Abbey, always the highlight. We continue to be very grateful to the Romsey Abbey Community and in particular to the Vicar and his team for all the support we receive throughout the year,

Jane O'Brien

vi. Music in Romsey

The 2014 season proved to be another very busy one with a total of seventeen contrasting concerts between March and December including five events during the Triannual Romsey Festival fortnight. As well as our regular local choirs and orchestral concerts this year, the final concert, within the Festival, involved Claire Jones who was a former Royal Harpist. In the Autumn there were two particular highlights, the first being the first performance of a new work "The Birth of Christ" by Roger Hewitson which was extremely well received, and in December the first concert in Romsey Abbey organised to raise money for the Gift of Sight Charity. Again this year Music in Romsey organised six lunch-time recitals on specific Wednesdays. There is no fee to attend these but a retiring collection is taken for local charities which this year included Romsey Family Support Group and Jane Scarth House. Three organ recitals were also supported during the year. A new brochure of concerts and recitals is available each February giving full details of planned events which are also listed on the Music in Romsey board in the Abbey. Tickets are now available to purchase direct via the website as well as from the Tourist Information Centre. If you wish to help Music in Romsey in any way to ensure these concerts continue please make contact Edna Rowland, Concert Organiser and Secretary, on 01794 512502 or via e-mail (msronthenet@ntlworld.com)

Edna Rowland

vii. Triangulate

Mental Health Sunday, at which Rev'd Vanessa Lawrence preached, was followed by the Festival of Wellbeing. During this event, organised by Southern Health Foundation Trust in partnership with the Abbey and Triangulate, we welcomed 250 people to the Abbey for a variety of activities all aimed at promoting and supporting our mental wellbeing. All three organisations also signed Time to Change pledges, committing each to speaking out against stigma and discrimination. During the year we have spoken at a number of events – some local and some further afield. We started the year with a talk at the AGM of the Association of Romsey Churches (ARC), spoke again in Romsey at the local Chamber of Commerce AGM, presented at a conference for students at the University of Southampton and also led a workshop at the 10th Anniversary Conference for Mindful Employer in Devon. We were delighted to be nominated as the Chamber of Commerce's charity this year and have enjoyed taking part in a number of Chamber activities, as well as receiving the proceeds from the raffle at the summer reception for our funds. We also received funds from a young people's fair, organised by young people on the National Citizen Scheme. We enjoyed taking part again in the Romsey Rotary Marathon, entering a joint Triangulate and Abbey team.
Bridget Brook

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