

Area of Activity	Report on Ecumenism for Parish Council Jan 2020 – Mike Edwards
	<p>Some recent activities of the CTH as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith and Learning – 11 Lent groups met in a 5 week course entitled ‘At the Cross’ by Abby Guinness. Good Friday Walk of Witness was well attended Donald Smith, Chair of CTH, led the service, Jane Robson preached, the Zeo Church provided the music and we provided the Hot Cross Buns! • Mission and Outreach – the Food Rescue Hub and Feed Up Warm Up are both working well • Local Community – more than 350 people receive support from the Foodbank each month. We supported the collection of items for the Christmas Hampers organised by the Zeo Church. Hitchin Street Angels continue to do their work on Sat nights helping youngsters in town. Recycling is going on apace at Our Lady’s. • Justice and Peace – Efforts are being made to educate our local PM about our CTH supported activities by inviting him to visit the Foodbank, the Sanctuary and Feed Up Warm Up etc. • Christian Aid – Last year this raised £13,618 but this has been going down in recent years so it has been decided not to do it next time. Instead it has been suggested told that several churches could Big Brekkes to raise money. • Publicity – a worthwhile meeting of church newsletter editors has been held on 16th Nov. Partly because of Publicity several Churches not in the CTH are considering joining. • CTH Website – this area is developing well. Particular attention is being paid to GDPR and the safety of passwords. • Twitter – this developing rapidly. PHASE has currently 1153 followers and the new minister at St Mary’s Rev Chris Bunce has already 271! • Prayer Link – this is developing quite well so people can share concerns, prayers etc and is produced 4 times a year. • PHASE – over 150 children attended a one day holiday club Time Trek. Two new programs have been started Let’s Talk Emotions and a Self- Esteem group. • Interfaith Forum – the local Buddhist community have become involved. Collaborative projects such as the Peace Garden in the Quaker Meeting House • Christians against poverty/Job Club – this has been working well for the past 4 years and has helped over 100 people. At least 2 or 3 people have found work after attending each 8 week course. • Ministers’ Meetings – the ministers have these occasions a great source of food, conversation, and laughter and a good deal of planning and reflecting also takes place. They are able to consider such substantial topics as gender identity and the climate emergency. They were considerably saddened by the death of Father Michael but knew that he would have been greatly supportive of them continuing their good work and fellowship.
Activity since last PPC meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments made at the AGM <p>Chair – Rev Jane Robson (Tilehouse Street) Vice-Chair – Liz Wills (Our Lady’s) Secretary – John Richardson (St Mark’s) Treasurer – John Skeeles (St Mark’s) Independent Examiner – Paul Smith (Letchworth Roman Catholic Church) Faith and Learning Officer – Helen Richardson (St Mark’s) Mission and Outreach Officer – Kathy Jones (New Testament Church of God) Local Community Officer – Trish Bonnet (Our Lady’s) Justice and Peace Officer – Kathleen Tuck(Christchurch) Publicity Officers – Rev Donald and Leigh Smith(Built on Faith Apostolic Church)</p>

- General Election Hustings were held at Christchurch on Tues 26th Nov
- Joint Foundation Celebration Tilehouse Street/Walsworth Road/Christchurch/St Faith's was held at St Mary's on 30th Nov
- Nativity Crib Festival was St Ippolyts Church on 30th Nov and 1st Dec
- Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Saviour on 7th/8th Dec
- Carols in the Market on 15th Dec

Forthcoming Events

- 18th to 25th Jan Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Sunday 12th & 19th Jan Morning Pulpit Exchanges
Prayers in different churches on each day of the week
Sunday 19th Jan 6.30 pm United Service at Holy Saviour including the induction of the Rev Jane Robson as the new Chair of Churches Together in Hitchin
Sun 26th Jan 4pm Ecumenical Taize service at St Mark's
- Fri 6th March at 1.30 pm World Day of Prayer Service at Walsworth Road Baptist Church
- Ash Wed 26th Feb at 12.30 pm Christian Aid lunch organised by St Mark's
- 2nd Mar onwards Lent House Groups
- Good Friday 10th April 10.30 am United Walk of Witness from Bancroft Gardens and act of worship at 11.00 am in Hitchin Market Place
- Friday 8th May Service to mark VE Day
- 10th to 16th May Christian Aid Week
- Sunday 31st May Pentecost Party in the Square
- September – Season of Creation
- Sunday 6th or 13th Dec(tbc) 4pm Carols in the Market Place

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity – Finance Report - David Wilson

Activity since last PPC meeting

Diocese Annual Report & Account 2018.

Fr Tom attended a briefing on the Annual Report & Accounts of the Diocese at Westminster on Saturday 2 Nov 19. The Accounts showed a slight improvement in the financial position of the Diocese but the Report reflected on-going concern at the reduction in income and the nature and extent of External Audit observations.

Parish Accounts for 2019

The Parish Accounts through to the end of November 2019 show an operating surplus of just over £23,500 thanks to receipt of the Gift Aid Tax Rebate and the proceeds of the Michaelmas Fair and with payments and other outgoings due.

Parish Budget 2020

The Parish Budget for 2020 predicts an operating deficit in excess of £4,000.

Michaelmas Fair 2019

This year's Michaelmas Fair raised just short of £6,500; a donation of £2,500 has been made from the proceeds to Diapalante, the selected OWG charity, and distribution of the Parish share is still to be determined.

Growing In Faith

Details are still awaited of the contribution of the Parish to the Diocese Growing In Faith Appeal,

which has now been completed.

Second Collections

There was little support for the proposal to reduce the number of Second Collections and we have decided, therefore, to continue “as we were” but limit the number of Second Collections to no more than two per month and to provide a fuller explanation of the purpose of each Second Collection in the Newsletter and Notices.

Hall Hire Agreement

We have been working with Trish and John (Chamberlain) to strengthen the wording in the Hall Hire Agreement pertaining to the safeguarding and fire-safety responsibilities of users,

Maintenance

Special thanks to John (Scott) for his work in inspecting and clearing out all the gutters and downpipes without which the Parish insurance cover would be invalid.

Poor & Needy Donations

Where we can, we are now making poor and needy grants using food vouchers rather than cash.

Parish Projects

The Finance Committee has continued to support and provide advice on the Parish Projects that are in planning or in progress including securing funding for the appointment of a Youth Worker (see Youth Ministry Report).

An anonymous donation of £37,000 has been received towards the cost of the Replacement Scout Hut.

Area of Activity GDPR – Trish Bonnett January 2020

Activity since last PPC meeting

- Parishioner Alex Pond is helping send out emails to parishioners to check the data on the database so this is now on going. It will be slow and will be done in three phases:
 - 1) Email everyone to check their data and update with responses. **Currently happening slowing**
 - 2) Issue data to parishioners after Masses so they can confirm or change their entries on the database, for those who have not responded to step 1.
 - 3) Send out to those who have not responded to step 1 or 2 with a reply paid envelope to get response.
 - 4) Delete all those parishioners who have not responded.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

- Website needs to be checked for any personal addresses and permission sought for them to be on the website, this includes any email addresses that are in the newsletter which goes onto the website.

Objectives completed from last report	Who
The Audit process is now on going.	TB
Objectives set	Who

Area of Activity Gender Diversity - As I am January 2020

Activity since last PPC meeting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other suppliers for Banner need to be investigated 	
Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
Pastoral objectives set in motion since last report	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
Pastoral objectives set	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate other suppliers 	TB

Area of Activity Health & Safety – John Chamberlain January 2020	
Activity since last PPC meeting	
CCTV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site survey carried out with Liz Wills for possible installation of CCTV surveillance system Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented further recommendations arising from the Jan 2019 H&S Survey by Precision Preparing for Precision's visit on 22nd Jan. Additional security light installed outside Scout Hut (requested by FUWU) 	
Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed	
See CCTV report circulated separately to PPC	
Objectives completed from last report	Who
Various repair and installation works completed.	JVC
Objectives set	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out Emergency Evacuation of premises before 20th Jan. Prepare evacuation procedures for use by Hall Users. Follow up with any CCTV plans agreed by the PPC 	JVC/TB JVC/TB/DW JVC/DW (funding)

Area of Activity Inter-Faith Relations
Activity since last PPC meeting
<p>The first NHIFF after the AGM was on Thur. 27th November in the Hitchin Friends Meeting House, where we heard from a DFID engagement representative (or some such...). And we discussed the idea of working with the NHDC to establish in the area a new woodland where faith communities could plant trees as communities and individuals whenever a special occasion needed marking, thus being part of the efforts to plant many thousands of trees every year as promised at the last elections.</p>

The Holocaust Memorial Day service planning meeting for Wednesday 8 January, 7 pm

The Holocaust Memorial Day service is planned for 10.45am on Monday 27th January ready for the service to commence at 11am to 12 noon, at Howard Park, LGC. This year's theme 'Stand Together'. Anyone attend this event from our parish? I will not be able to do go. Poster available.

It would be good to include representations of disabled people from our faiths, as well as Roma/Gipsies, and homosexuals/transgender as they too were victims of the Holocaust.
Who could be contacted in our parish, to invite such representations?

New date for Feb/March 2020 to be arranged for the suggested inter-faith sharing evening of the Pope Francis and Grand Imam sign in Abu Dhabi the amazing historic declaration of peace, freedom, women's rights entitled: ***Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together***, we still need to find a venue, and requires further planning. Fr. Tom and Ali Sheriff had agreed to be the main commentators. This will now need to be re-scheduled for next year, or cancelled.

"I renew my invitation for prayer and gestures of peace to combat hatred and violence"
Pope Francis

Objectives set	Who
	DME

Area of Activity Justice & Peace

Activity since last PPC meeting

The 42nd NJ&PN conference is already being planned; the theme is **"2020 Vision – Action for Life on Earth"** from the 17th to 19th July at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Soon it will be time to encourage parishioners to save and make themselves available to take part in this conference.

There is still an urgent call for churches at the national level and parishes at the local level to individually and better still in local groups, to make their own a *"Declaration of Climate Emergency"* and with that embrace an ambitious plan of action to halve the total CO₂ generated in the energy used by our parish site by 2030.

Operation Noah invited local churches to send a powerful and hopeful message at the start of the new year by participating in a joint divestment announcement on 6 January 2020, on the Feast of Epiphany! Information not yet available.

Peace Sunday – 19th January, on the theme: "Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation And Ecological Conversion" - Could it be read at all the Sunday masses? See:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20191208_messaggio-53giornatamondiale-pace2020.html

All Pax Christi resources should have reached the parish before Christmas.

The next networking day of the National Justice and Peace Network will take place on Saturday 8th February 2020 in Bristol, on the theme: 'Our Common Home - creative responses'. I suspect I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 23 February 2020 - the theme "Speak truth to power- Putting faith into action" <http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday/>

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

I am currently not coping with all my previous commitments and have not been effective and have not kept-up with J&P issues and events.

Could another parish person please take over from me as I am struggling to cope.

Objectives set	Who
	DME

Area of Activity Maintenance - JohnScott**Activity since last PPC meeting**

Credit as always - to all volunteers

Contractor .DM Music -
have loaned Mike an equaliser
and feedback suppressor for the sound system.
With luck - our unit will be repaired by the time
they need it back ...



----- snags addressed -----#

3012_1/ strengthen Fr.A's scooter ramp & provide non-slip surface (jvc)
2312_1/ Loan equaliser and feedback suppressor (ME + DMmusic)
1912_1/ Replace faulty cable for Trish music DI box (MikeE)
1912_2/ Emergency fix for Altar microphone plug (ME)
1912_3/ Diagnose fault automatic equaliser and feedback suppressor (ME)
1912_4/ Reset sound system & hearing aid loop (ME)
1712_2/ remove tree-leaves from design-award-winning turrets (js&pj)
1712_1/ busted kneeler (js & pj & jvc)
0712_1/ repair parish-house vacuum - detached hose (jvc)
0612_1/ emergency safety repair to big grey vacuum (JVC)
0212_2/ replace hall back door bellpush (js)
0212_1/ confiscate radiator knobs from hall (js)
2511_1/ prelim. muck-out NightingaleRd side gutters (js)
2411_1/ Samsung upright cleaner belt & blocked) (JVC)
1411_1/ ...bigger knob for Hall exit door thumbturn (js)
0911_1/ additional FUWU lamps on Hut (PhilippeJ & js)
0711_1/ emergency over ramp lamp in case of power cuts (jvc)
0511_1/ tamper-enabled thermostat in hall (js)
0411_1/ Christopher House gutter - downpipe blocked (js)
0111_1/ replace wash-up hot tap in hall kitchen (js)

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed**Imminent/In-hand**

0/ waiting a firm quote for repair to ChristopherHouse ridge tiles

Objectives set**Who****Area of Activity Outreach – Trish Bonnett January 2020****Activity since last PPC meeting****Outreach**

- Supported Michael Mansi family and at the funeral and visited Brenda Walsh regularly during her long stay in hospital.
- Particular support given to a poor family in the area and a pastoral meeting was had to

discuss the level of support we can give to those who come to the door of the parish in need.

- A new lady has moved to Stagenhoe and have taken Fr Andrew in to anoint her and bless her. Will arrange a Mass for her as she has not been to a Mass in over a year. Also supporting David with a wheel chair assessment and his move to Anderson House – am liaising with Social Services.
- Had a Mass at Sloe Hill for Ida Bellamy with Fr Andrew – it was lovely that she could attend as she died shortly afterwards. Sloe Hill would be keen to have Masses occasionally.
- The Masses at care homes are now as follows
Week 1 Gosmore Wed 2.30pm
Week 2 Foxholes Wed 2.30pm
Week 3 Elmside Mon 11am
Week 4 Milford Lodge Tue 2.30pm
- Attended CTH AGM
- Supported Hamper project with encouraging parishioners to give chocolate logs – over 180 given for the 150 hampers. Charmaine received a number of messages from their clients thanking them for all the support they had received over the Christmas period and throughout the year.
Also we got supplies for the Somewhere to Go in the church hall. Congratulations to Liz Wills and the FUWU team for this wonderful initiative.
Christmas Day 30 guests and 34 volunteers from 8am – 6pm
Box Day 28 guests and 28-30 volunteers
New Year 25 guests similar numbers of volunteers
Food was donated from Audi, Lidl and M&S and between the volunteers and Irma all the fresh food was taken and saved from the brown bins. Christmas boxes and clothes were also given out.
Also at the children's crib service there was a collection of foods for the foodbank. So once again the parish has made huge efforts to support the poor and hungry.
- Frank Benucci and I are visiting Sr Ann-Marie on 31 Jan – 2 Feb. I will let parishioners know that they can send messages or cards with us for her.

Liturgy

- In Memorial service had about 80 people attend. It was very beautiful and many thanks to the choir for their support.
- Supported Mary Deuchar with her delivery of the service for the first Sunday of Advent. Again many more attendees than in previous years and hopefully has established a tradition where the parish are involved in its inception and delivery.
- Delivered the first Christingle service 13 attended so not bad for a start. Would like to include in regular Advent programme as focused on children.
- Helped with two Funday Sundays – Helen has just about stood down as the leader so at the moment Maeve and I are picking up the slack but really do need a leader. Also supported the Healing service. We need to move this to a different day from the Advent service as it is too much for one Sunday.
- Arranged and delivered the carol service which was beautiful and thanks again to the

choir, organist and all the young readers who so wonderfully sang, played and read at this service. Lots of people helped with the clearing up at the end for which I was very grateful.

- Support for Crib service and Vigil Mass.

Other support

- Supported Fr Andrew whilst in hospital and following his discharge.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives completed from last report

Who

Objectives set

Who

Complete survey regarding side chapel (still awaiting internal options)

TB

Prepare for the Year of the Word

Pastoral team

Area of Activity Property Working Group– Roger Hyde January 2020

Activity since last PPC meeting

Side Chapel.

Francis Weal and her assistant have been on site and measured the whole Church Area.

This she says will give her the best arena to work with.

February has been promised to present her ideas to the Parish Council and later others in the Parish.

Hopefully along with the design ideas an idea of costs involved.

One good thing to come from it is, we will have a plan of the Church area to work with in the future.

As soon as all is ready I will convene a PPC meeting possibly with the extra member of the Building team to discuss the way forward.

Scout Hut.

Very little news to be told here. After repeatedly progressing reports on any progress nothing was forthcoming.

Belatedly I had an email from Alison to say she had met together with Keely and would report back soon. I had a second email Christmas week to say they will return to work on the 6th and will phone me prior to our meeting to give an update so I may inform you all.

Area of Activity

Sacramental Preparation – Susanna Hawksley

Activity since last PPC meeting

Baptism

A date for the new course has been set. Enquiries trickling in.

Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

There is one session for preparation for the sacrament of Reconciliation still to take place, then

the children will receive the sacrament on Saturday February 1st. The usual patchy attendance on the part of some parents has meant extra admin and instruction. I think Jesus had a bit of that going on – not so much the admin but...

Confirmation

At my last count we had 26 registered but I am expecting a couple more late arrivals. It's a large group! The course begins on 7th January, with the parent information evening. This year, I have asked parents to come to 5pm Mass, where, for the duration of the course, there will be brief instruction about Mass, as it takes place. In this way, I hope to address the lack of understanding about the Mass that is prevalent among that age group. I'm hoping the congregation won't find it too intrusive. I'm sure I'll be told, if it is! The date for the Confirmation itself is Saturday 16th May at 6pm Mass.

Marriage

When the new baby is safely here (due any minute!) I expect Jonathan will have a moment to pencil in a new date for the next marriage course. I imagine he's focused on other things just now.

RCIA

Althea will be received and confirmed and Kathryn and Sady will be confirmed on 2nd February at 10:30am Mass. They are the last people in the group actually preparing for sacraments, at the moment; I do have a faithful crew who continue to come, which is lovely. I will need to consult with my replacement about going forward.

My Job

I think this might be the last sacramental report that I do for the parish. We offered my post to Robert Hitchcock and, at the time of writing, the process has entered that lacuna which is HR. We will keep the parish updated when things become firm and clear. The parish has been generous and far-sighted in making available a good long hand-over period, so I won't be out of circulation for a while yet. Watch this space! You have no idea how much I enjoy writing these reports; I'll miss it tremendously. Well, that's not true but I'll miss you lot.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

Objectives set

Who

Area of Activity Safeguarding – Trish Bonnett January 2020

Activity since last PPC meeting

- Maria and I looked at all the status of DBS checks and have an ongoing plan for updating.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed

- Review the facilities hire contract to ensure that we have got all the safeguarding and policy requirements in place for our facility users.

Objectives completed from last report

Who

Objectives set

Who

- Review hire contract
- Promote Educare training to all group leaders and catechists in the parish. Strongly encourage them to register and do modules.

TB/DW
TB

Area of Activity YOUTH Teresa Pernak

Activity since last PPC meeting

Son Seekers have run two successful youth events since the last PPC meeting.

1. One was on the **Advent Party Funday Sunday on the 1st of December 2019** with 35 Children attending at the event including 4 new children. Advent and Christmas spirit inspired everyone, children and adults, which resulted in delightful atmosphere.
2. The next one was the **Epiphany Funday Sunday on 5th of January 2020**. 33 children participated in the event including a new family with 4 children. The event proved again to be successful. All children and their parents enjoyed the activities in lovely, calm and relaxing atmosphere.

On both occasion numbers of helpers were very low so a special thanks to all volunteers involved.

The next Son Seekers events before summer holidays are:

1. Funday Sunday on 1st of March 2020 - First Sunday of Lent
2. Funday Sunday on 31st of May 2020 - Pentecost Sunday

Other matters:

1. The application for funding from the Cardinals Appeal, for 3 years funding for a Youth Worker is in progress. Helen Bailey and David Wilson with Trish Bonnett's input have been fruitfully working on the details in the application form.

We have got passed the first phase and the next stage is consideration on the 15th January 2020. If this brings a positive outcome, we will be able to employ a youth worker who will take over the running of Son Seekers and hopefully get more parents involved. Helen will send us an update once Stewardship Committee reply to our application.

1. On Saturday 25th January from 8:30 - 10am our Church is hosting the next **Youth Forum meeting** chaired by Kieran Murphy from PHASE. This is a great opportunity to find out what other churches in Hitchin do for their young people.

Suggestions for change/improvement/issues to be addressed