



BROCKENHURST
PARISH CHURCHES
Sharing the love and life of Jesus

St. Nicholas' with St. Saviour's

REVIEW OF 2023

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

Wednesday 24th April 2024

7:30pm

Brockenhurst Church Hall, Wilverley Road

www.brockenhurstchurch.com

THE PARISH OF BROCKENHURST

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting held on Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 7.30pm in St Saviour's Church and on Zoom

Simon welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

39 church members attended in St Saviour's Church and 12 online.

Apologies were received from Peter and Vicky Wales, Maureen Phillips, Anne and Keith Nolan, Janet McDonald, Jan Campbell, Mary Richardson, Mary Robinson, Eileen and Deryck Arnold, Sarah Foulger, Bruce Tindell, Margaret Porteus, Jo Plummer.

Annual Meeting of Parishioners

1. Election of Churchwardens:

Jeremy Moss - proposed Mike Kelly, seconded Camilla Pearse

Joanna Plummer - proposed Jeremy Moss, seconded Sue Moss

No other nominations having been received, both candidates were elected unanimously. Simon thanked Jeremy and Joanna for offering their time and talents to this considerable role. They have been a wonderful support to him over the last year and have done a huge amount of work for the church, much of which has been demanding and is not seen.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2022 were approved. SN to sign.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising; no actions required as a result of this meeting.

3. Vicar's Report

Simon's Report is on page 6 of the Review of 2022 which has been previously circulated. He listed how much has been achieved, organised and picked up again since covid restrictions were lifted and thanked the leadership, hard work and creativity of so many people who have helped towards this. The APCM is not just about looking back - it should be an opportunity to look to the future. From his report, two things in particular come out:

1. The PCC is looking at a 10-15 year plan and has formed three committees to consult and advise on various challenges. These are: a) Relationships - how we can communicate better within the church and within the wider community. b) Worship - how this can be arranged to reach out to all. c) Buildings - how we manage maintenance and resources. A questionnaire has gone out to the church family and the village, the results of which will be considered by these three groups who will report to the PCC and advise on what actions we can work towards. These will be put

out to the church and the community and prayer is needed for guidance on a wider vision for the future of our church as a whole. We will have a Parish Away Day to reflect on the last four years and discuss these recommendations.

2. Mel Osborne, our Children and Families Worker, has done a fantastic job and we need to build on this to grow relationships with the children and parents from the three schools in the benefice: Brockenhurst, Boldre and South Baddesley. We are very proud of Mel for all she has achieved in the short time she has been with us. This is the key to a growing church.

4. Wardens' Report

Jeremy and Jo's report, page 7 of the Review of 2022, outlines the events, activities and new services that have brought life back to normal during the gradual easing of covid restrictions, making it a very busy year. New faces in our team have been welcomed: Clare Robbins as Parish Administrator, Luke Augustine as Ordinand, Stephen Bennett as Curate and Mel Osborne as Children and Families Worker. These have been supported by our 'retired' clergy, lay ministers, office volunteers and all who took on additional responsibilities, playing an increasingly important role since Simon has been promoted to Area Dean. Our thanks go out to them all. We have enjoyed new experiences such as a Lenten journey and compline series in Lent and an Advent Circle; Christingle, Carol and Crib services; also a Healing weekend with other parishes and denominations. A wide variety of events, all serving our community, have been hosted: Wednesday lunches, CAMEO, Holidays @ Home, Harvest Quiz, Newcomers party, Christmas lunch, 3 performances of 'The Screwtape Letters' and an exhibition at St Nicholas by Bournemouth University art students. Running and maintaining two listed buildings, with grounds, is managed by our dedicated site and grounds team who will rise to any challenge, often at short notice. We owe them our sincere gratitude. With concerns over maintenance costs and being aware that we are not reaching out to our local community enough, the wardens are overseeing a strategy group of PCC members and will keep the congregation informed of discussions.

Finally, a huge thank you was given to the eclectic mix of volunteers who give their time and energy to support our church family. Jo and Jeremy were thanked for all they do.

5. Treasurer's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022

The full Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2022 have been previously circulated as a separate booklet. These have been approved by the PCC and our independent examiner. An overall summary with charts is on pages 8 - 13 of the Review of 2022. No questions.

Simon thanked Peter Lay on everyone's behalf for the huge amount of work that has gone into preparing these reports which will now be sent to the Charity Commission and said that he has never known a Treasurer who has consistently produced such clear and regular reports. Applause. Thanks also go to Wendy Lay for "losing this time" with her husband.

6. Electoral Roll Report

Alan Wright, our Electoral Roll Officer, was thanked for managing this so efficiently.

There are 204 recorded on the Electoral Roll for the ecclesiastical parish as at 19th April 2023: 76 resident and 28 non-resident. This is a static figure compared with the last few years which is why we have to engage in growing our church.

7. Other Reports

All reports are on pages 13 - 26 of the Review of 2022 and are on the church website. Simon commented on each report and requested questions. He thanked the following leaders and their team members for their dedicated involvement covering all aspects of church life :-

Nathan Parnaby - Strategy Group: Regular meetings of the three sub groups set out in the vicar's report have taken place and good progress has been made in putting together a 10 - 15 year plan which will be discussed at the September PCC meeting.

Karina Curson - Parish Safeguarding: Safeguarding means creating a safe place in which anyone can come and be valued as a child of God; it is key to enabling a church to grow and thrive. Thank you to all who have co-operated and attended courses.

Tim Dodwell - Fabric & Grounds: We are well served by this team who do a huge amount of work. Question: What is the decision on the north roof of the chancel at St Saviour's since work has been suspended? Ans: It was found that poor quality materials had been used originally and we have had the roof made watertight on a make-do-and-mend basis. A permanent solution to re-roof the whole of the north side would be too expensive.

We have taken advice on improving the pathway at St Nicholas' which is a slip hazard in wet weather and difficult for wheelchair users. We would like to replace it with a resin bonded surface. This was initiated by a donation from a family with a disabled child and Simon is appealing for contributions towards the cost with the PCC giving 25%. Plaques with quotations from scripture could be laid in it at intervals as an aid to meditation.

Jeremy Moss - Digital: This team has been extremely busy with the website and St Saviour's audio-visual upgrade with services online. They give up their time to operate the system during services and on other occasions. Thanks also to John Pearson who has installed digital music at St Nicholas' which has been well received.

Pauline Brown - Church Music: We are grateful to Pauline and Mike Kelly who continue to play the piano and to the small band that has formed. Pauline is liaising with Martin Penrose, former choir director at Lymington, to bring together a special events choir for our two churches. Meanwhile, we have an excellent choir who sing at St John's Boldre for Matins and Evensong.

Jo Plummer - Children and Young People: Jo's work with the college students is going from strength to strength. As a church we are connecting with children in lots of different ways, i.e. Little Flames, even if we might not see them in church. **Mel Osborne** who joined us as Children and Families Worker in December is becoming well known in the three church schools by pupils and parents and is planning holiday clubs, assemblies and other activities. She would welcome volunteers for some of these so please do contact her.

John Pearson - Lyndhurst Deanery and Diocesan Synods: John's comprehensive reports are a vital link between the parishes and the diocese. He and Peter Lay are our Deanery Synod representatives with Simon as Area Dean. Martyn Taylor has stepped down after serving on the Deanery and Diocesan Synods and the

Bishop's Council for a period of over forty years. We will miss his knowledge and owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Diane Webster, Alan Graham, Mary Nicholson, Tony Foulger, John Pearson support **Simon** in the **Worship Team**. He thanked them and said it is a privilege to have colleagues he can trust and enjoy working with. Thanks also to Lesley the "rota queen", the admin team, sacristy team, readers, intercessors, welcomers, music makers, flower team, bellringers and all who contribute to our worship, including of course the congregation.

Liz Dodwell - Mission Team: This church does an amazing amount on Mission in terms of the charities we link with and speakers who come here. Thank you for keeping this as a priority in our hearts and minds - we need to be aware that we are a part of a bigger vision.

John Pearson - Prayer Ministry Team: We have tried to make healing prayer more accessible by having people come up during the communion service without saying anything and more people seem to be availing themselves of that ministry. We will think about having a healing service again, possibly across the deanery. The service led by a team from the Crowhurst Healing Centre was very well attended and there appears to be a need for this.

Diane Webster - Home Groups: These groups share friendship and support and, leading up to possibly joining one, we have had two Christianity Explored courses, one led by Diane at Homeford House, the other led by Sam Peard, Paul Pearse and Simon hosted at Sue and Jeremy Moss's house. Luke Augustin led one during Lent which was inspiring. Thank you Luke. New home group members are always welcome.

Clergy - Baptism Preparation: Do look at Rob Bell's Nooma video Rhythm <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNHoY18a78>. It is a very powerful tool to get parents to talk about why they're coming forward to baptism and what faith might mean to them. We have a joint session with parents and Godparents from Boldre, South Baddesley and Brockenhurst. We must thank Brenda and Phil Horner who previously ran this

Lesley Munt - Marriage Preparation: We have a joint Saturday afternoon session with the couples from Boldre, South Baddesley and Brockenhurst where they meet the clergy who will marry them; also Clare from the office and Jane and Sally from the Flower Guild. It is a fun, lively afternoon, fuelled by MU tea and cake. Many thanks to MU members.

Joyce Kolaczowski - Pastoral Care Team: 'Brockcare': What a report this is! It shows how much the Brockcare team does, organised by all its lovely volunteers. It is amazing the many different ways we reach out to many different people. It shows where our heart is as a church - loving and caring for those who are vulnerable. Thank you to everyone for the work this represents. You are truly valued by the community.

Martin Fletcher - Church Hall Team: Use of the hall, kitchen and meeting room by groups in the village as well as for church activities has gone up considerably. Thanks to Lindy for the arduous stocktake/springclean and Lesley and Lindy for their kitchen management. For the second year running an unannounced NFDC inspection scored 5 out of 5.

Keith Nolan - Social Team: We are so fortunate to have this small team which always comes up trumps for any event and we have had some memorable ones in 2022, including the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Thank you to them all. We are open to any Ideas for joint village/church events to bring the community together.

Camilla Pearse - Eco Church: This group reaches out to the wider community and young people to whom the environment is hugely important. As Christians we are stewards of God's creation. The report highlights how much has been achieved in 2022.

Ros Dennison - St Nicholas' Church Guardians: We have a wonderful team of people, many of whom do not come to services, but who value St Nicholas' church and its atmosphere and go out of their way to welcome visitors. Comments in the visitors' book show how much this welcome is appreciated. Of particular note is our Alan Mutter, the fount of all knowledge, who is famous on facebook and twitter!

Sue Hendry - Brockenhurst Care Cars: Thank you to all who are so kindly and graciously involved in organising and giving their time to help provide this service. This is again something that is a part of the whole community.

Jane Thatcher and Sally Hoy - St Nicholas' with St Saviour's Flower Guild: Jane and Sally give so much of their time to planning, buying and organising (even Jane's husband is involved in making stands, tube holders, etc). The team works with such joy. We are extremely grateful for their artistry which is admired by all.

Lindy Waight - Sanctuary Guild: They keep everything neat and tidy and washed and polished. That care does speak of holiness and value in all they do. Thank you ladies.

Lesley Munt and Joyce Kolaczowski - Wednesday Lunches: Since starting in 1988, 41,742 lunches have been served to our guests. What an amazing statistic. This is always a happy time with people chatting and the highlight of the week for some who live alone. We rely on our vounteer cooks and drivers for whom we give huge thanks. Also thanks go to Luke Chambers our caretaker who is so helpful and always cheerful.

Wendy Lay - Brockenhurst Mothers' Union: The report gives an impressive list of speakers and events. The MU does great work all over the world, particularly in Africa. This summer they will be hosting the MU World Wide President here in Borockenhurst.

8. Election of Deanery Synod Members - the following are standing for election:

Peter Lay proposed Rosalind Dennison, seconded Joyce Kolaczowski

John Pearson prooposed Bill Munt, seconded Pauline Brown

Wendy Lay proposed Joyce Kolaczowski, seconded Rosalind Dennison

All of the above were approved by the meeting and Simon thanked them for being willing to serve on the Deanery Synod.

9. Election of PCC Members - the following are standing for election:

Tony Foulger (second term) proposed Mike Morley, seconded Ann Morley

Pauline Brown (second term) proposed Wendy Lay, seconded Rosalind
Dennison

Elizabeth Dodwell (first term) proposed Gail Renny, seconded Rita Elson

Joyce Kolaczowski is standing down after serving two terms. Simon thanked her for her valued contribution to the work of the PCC over the last six years and for the considerable involvement she continues to have with Brockcare, Wednesday lunches and church life in general. Applause.

10. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Simon proposed that Lewis Ball is re-appointed and thanked him for the prompt and excellent service he generously gives to our church. Seconded Nathan Parnaby. All in favour.

11. Date of next APCM

Wednesday 24th April 2024

12. Open Forum

There are a few people each year we like to especially thank for the part they have played in our church life by presenting a small gift :-

Clare Robbins - our Senior Office Administrator. She deals with everything that is thrown at her with great goodwill and always a smile. She is a huge benefit to us all.

Karina Curson - our Safeguarding Officer. Her role has increased considerably and is a difficult job. She is patient with everyone and keeps us legal, decent and honest.

Steve Curson - He has retired as Parish Magazine editor after 16 voluntary years to give more time to the Acorn Chaplaincy.

Martyn Taylor - Martyn has served on the Diocesan Synod, the Bishop's Council and the Lyndhurst Deanery Synod over a period of forty years as well as committing himself to our parish as a Lay Minister and PCC member. We are greatly indebted to him for his knowledge and counsel and presence in our churches.

Peter Lay - our much valued Treasurer. Thank you for all your diligent work and for always answering questions promptly and understandingly. You are an incredible help to Simon and us all - and have been doing this for more years than you care to count!

AOB Di Fletcher wanted to remind everyone that we have our ANZAC service at St Nicholas' on Sunday 23rd April at 3.00pm. We will have some very special guests including a gentleman from New Zealand whose great great grandfather was nursed here and a group of college students from Christchurch NZ who will be served lunch in the church. They will give out the service sheets and lay posies. Also attending in full ceremonial uniform will be members of the NZ Defence Force and Australian soldiers who are training Ukrainian soldiers on Salisbury Plain. Please make them all welcome. It will be a wonderful occasion.

Simon thanked everyone for attending, including those online and closed the meeting with The Grace.

VICAR'S REPORT for 2023

2023 was the Year of Sharing Our Faith – a time to explore and put into practice how we might better communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to the wider community we are called to serve – and it has been another year of much sharing. Some of this 'much' included:-

- A challenge issued to key groups within the church to think creatively about ways to reach out beyond church – several groups responded in ways that really did connect with those beyond our church walls.
- A Christianity Explored course that was truly life changing for some.
- A summer evening newcomers party.

- Youth work in Brock College.
- A Holidays@Home in the Caribbean!
- A warm hub with wonderful soups.
- A Titanic theatre production.
- A new Curate, Stephen, starting with us.
- Mel continuing to develop connections within our school and wider community through her work.
- The launching of a new outreach service at the school SO412.
- The PCC strategically exploring a 10-15 year plan around our buildings, worship and serving the wider community
- Another Advent Spiral.

This has all happened in addition to the more normal pattern of services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, community service, pastoral visits, building maintenance etc. that goes on - none of it would have happened without God's grace and the hard and generous work of so many of you - as ever, it seems unfair to focus on some for a particular 'thank you'. However, that is now what I would like to do.

Joyce and her Brockcare team (of which so many of you are apart) have been amazing. Thank you for your caring, loving and serving of others that has helped us to remain a community.

Jo and all she is doing at Brock College and at St Saviour's to challenge us to think about, and reach out to, youngsters.

Camilla and her team in their Eco work.

So much work behind the scenes organising us all, is down to Clare, Lesley and Mary in the church office. Thank you for being the 'glue' that's kept us all going in the same direction.

Mike and Pauline in their support and leadership of our music and worship.

Our expanding worship team (Diane, John, Mary, Tony, Luke, Mel, Stephen and Terence have been such supportive and wise colleagues - thank you for your patient guidance and willingness to be involved where and when you can.

The PCC and associated teams have been a joy to work with on a wide range of challenges - thank you all for your commitment, patience and generous giving of your time and talents.

And finally thank you to two very hardworking, caring, wise, and generous Churchwardens. Jo and Jeremy have been with me every step of the way through this year, and I know that I couldn't have faced the various challenges that came up without them. Thank you so much for being there.

Revd Simon Newham

CHURCHWARDENS' REPORT

What another busy year. Sometimes (especially in the colder, winter months) it is good to look back and reflect upon all that has happened.

Reading back over last year's report we reported that "we were not yet over the impact of covid" ... however we were happy to have the resumption of "indoor services, communion, singing aloud and seeing friends and family 'face to face' ". Today the only real vestige of that tricky time is that Zoom services are still available for St Saviour's church services (many thanks to the team). The emotional impact of that time of loneliness, isolation and fear (for some) will take longer to heal.

As wardens we are very aware of the strength of the team that is Brockenhurst Church. We are blessed by an eclectic mix of volunteers who selflessly give up their time and energy, often unseen. They provide such a great foundation and support. There's a team in the office, lead by Clare and Kelly, with an amazing squad of volunteers who ensure that the services run smoothly, the community is welcomed, the rotas are seamless, the divergent needs of the church family are met, and the heating comes on! A huge thank you to them, and all who support our church family. We now have two ordinands Mel and (until May) Luke. Mel continues to work in the three benefice Church Schools (one day a week each) and to establish links with the families in the communities – as well as train for ministry. Stephen was licensed in December.

Simon continues his tremendous work as Area Dean, providing wise guidance and support to Clergy and PCCs. During 2023 Simon gave extra support to Boldre and South Baddesley as they successfully sought to find a new 'House for Duty' Priest, on the retirement of Andrew Neaum, and we welcomed Terence Handley MacMath in the autumn.

Simon is a busy man and, as a church, we would like to say a huge thank you to all of those 'retired' clergy and lay ministers, as well as office staff and volunteers who, in addition to the regular weekly Sunday services (at both churches); Thursday communion at St Saviour's; nightly and daily prayer services; weddings; funerals; christenings and Compline services have stepped in to support Simon over the last year.

The whole church has been very encouraging in affirming our new SO4:12 family gathering at Brockenhurst Primary School. We were all aware of the dearth of young families attending Sunday services and out of much prayer and many discussions SO4:12 was launched in September.

Over the past year we have been host to a wide variety of events, all serving our local community. Some of these, such as CAMEO and Wednesday lunches, are regular – and well supported, although volunteers are always needed. Some are seasonal, such as the amazing Holidays@Home, set in St Lucia, complete with rum, games and fun; Harvest Quiz with Fish and Chip supper; Newcomers (to the village) Party and the wonderful Christmas Dinner. Sadly the support for our hosting of "The Titanic" production was less well attended than hoped, although enjoyed by those who were able to come. As a direct response to the rise in fuel and food prices and countrywide anxieties about heating our homes, Brockcare continued to offer a warm space and a free lunch in the warmth of the Church Hall, on a Thursday, which have been popular.

As an encouragement to our year of 'Sharing our Faith' we were all asked – in our various groups - to put on a community activity. These ranged from games afternoons, treasure hunts, walks, litter pickups and a pet service. It was really good to see our buildings and our gifts being used to serve our community.

Running and maintaining two listed buildings, with grounds, has continued to challenge our amazing site and grounds teams (as well as our budget). Mostly run by volunteers they have ensured that the churches remain safe, and we remain dry and warm(ish). As the buildings continue to age and the weather continues to challenge us, so it becomes more important for us to pray for and consider the longer-term solutions. As reported last year "With these (maintenance) concerns in mind, as well as the worry that we are not reaching out and connecting with our local community enough, the PCC set up a strategy group. Their explicit role was to plan 'our' church for the next 10 years, to create a vision for the whole church. A survey of members yielded some great thoughts and are a good base for discussion." The PCC are continuing those discussions, and the wider congregation will continue to be kept informed. For example it was decided to use one building, St Saviour's Church, once a month for both the 9:00 and the 10:30 communion services.

Finally, we wish Luke and Erica A and their family all the very best as he becomes a curate and leaves us for pastures new. His new parish are really blessed to get him!
Jeremy Moss and Jo Plummer

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 with the Independent Examiner's Report to Brockenhurst PCC is in a separate document accompanying this review of 2023.

Peter Lay, Treasurer

PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPORT

A Safeguarding Training Course was organised at Brockenhurst in September by the Parish Safeguarding Officer and delivered by the Diocese safeguarding professionals. The course covered training in the Basic and Foundation Levels of Safeguarding, Awareness of Domestic Abuse and PCC Training. It was attended by 23 volunteers from Brockenhurst Church from a range of church roles: Pastoral Visitors, PCC Members, Office Volunteers, Welcomers and Refreshment Helpers. Other attendees included volunteers from the Benefice and other Charities.

During the year, seven DBS checks were completed for a range of roles, including Worship Leader, Children and Families Worker Assistant, PCC member and Pastoral Visitor.

A previous Safeguarding concern, not relating to the church, was followed up with the Diocese Safeguarding Manager. This resulted in successful action being taken by external professional agencies.

The annual Safeguarding Review, carried out in February, confirmed that Confidential Declaration Forms would be issued every 3 years prior to renewal of a DBS check.

The Safeguarding Dashboard Action Plan reported to the PCC in September identified Risk Assessments and Role Descriptions as areas for improvement. These have been followed up with Lead Officers for Activities involving Vulnerable Adults and Children.

Report by Karina Curson, Parish Safeguarding Officer.

FABRIC AND GROUNDS TEAM

St Saviours Church

No significant problems have arisen with the maintenance of the church building. Consideration of how to deal with the church roof and heating have been put on hold while long-term planning for the future of the building is resolved.

In the church hall mould appeared on the internal walls of the church office and creche. This was eventually traced to a water leak in the disabled toilet outside the church office, also causing damage to the floor of the toilet. With the leak repaired the mould has not returned after drying out and repainting. It is planned that the toilet floor will be repaired shortly.

A gate-post and some fencing in Wilverley Road was damaged by a hit-and-run driver and was repaired during the summer

In the churchyard the metal toolshed in the shrubbery which was blown away in the gales has been replaced with a slightly smaller one which is anchored to the concrete base.

Co-operation with Greener Brockenhurst in connection with the area of 'set aside' and the stumpery has continued.

Voluntary working parties have cleared gutters and done much trimming and tidying-up work in the churchyard to supplement the professional mowing and hedge-cutting.

St Nicholas's Church

Further investigation into the peeling paint in the chancel ceiling indicates that this is not an urgent problem although repainting will be required in due course. Repair to the flaking render on the north side of the vicar's vestry has been deferred until 2024 due to the intended contractor being injured. Likewise with the repainting of external woodwork.

A pane in the leaded window above the west door has fallen out onto the cill and will need to be dealt with by a specialist glazier.

An appeal for funds to resurface the footpath from the main gate and round to the disabled entrance by the choir vestry raised over £14,000 which is expected to be sufficient to cover the cost of the work. A faculty for this has been granted subject to our obtaining planning permission. The planning authority is concerned about possible damage to roots of the ancient yew nearby and has called for an arboricultural report and more details of the method of work.

The sloping area of the 'old' churchyard has now been formally closed and responsibility for its maintenance passed to the Parish Council on 1 February 2024.

They in turn have passed this on to the New Forest District Council. Future mowing/trimming of the retained area immediately round the church will be undertaken by the same contractor as at St Saviour's.

Thanks are due to the whole of the Fabric and Grounds Team for their support during the year, to those who joined in the working parties, in particular Martin Fletcher for his work in organising them and undertaking many other tasks, to Richard Elliott for undertaking the management of the St Nicholas' Footpath Project and to Paul Pearse for the organising and supervision of building maintenance work.

Report by Tim Dodwell

CHURCH MUSIC REPORT

For those of us who love music, the state of our church music is rather dispiriting. Reading through last year's report, I could write the same again, as nothing has

changed. We are still not able to pay for an organist and apart from at Christmas, the two organs have not been played for our services.

At St Nicholas, the 9am services, continue to use digitally produced music, whilst at St. Saviour's, Mike Kelly and I play the piano for the 10.30 services when we are available. A small, but keen group of instrumental players have resumed playing with Mike on the second Sunday of the month.

One notable exception was the St. Nicholas Carol service, when Martin Penrose trained a choir of 15 or so people to sing at this service. We were able to sing three pieces of Christmas music and Martin's organ playing, also contributed to the lively singing of the congregation.

Music is at the heart of successful churches, so let us hope that we can work together to improve our current music and enhance our worship. I would love to write a different report next year!

Report by Pauline Brown

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WORK

This exciting ministry has three strands and for reporting purposes they are thus divided. Please excuse any cross over with Mel Osbourne's report.

A huge thank you for all your faithful prayers about this growing ministry.

Brockenhurst C of E Primary School:

Simon continues to deliver occasional assemblies, but most Wednesday's Mel delivers these. The three foundation governors (Vicky Wales – Chair of Governors, Simon and myself) continue to visit the school (and pre-school) regularly, not only in an official capacity but also as readers/helpers/volunteers. Several other members of the congregation volunteer on a regular basis: reading, gardening, accompanying trips, supporting Mel's initiatives and as midday lunch supervisors; more are always needed.

The amazing Mother's Union continues to organise the very successful and well received 'Little Flames service', every half term. Using puppets, drama, costumes, stories, silliness and songs the youngest children in the school are treated to a bible story, prayers, some refreshments and a craft activity. The 'Busy Badgers', pre-school and school are all invited and sometimes we have welcomed children (and their helpers) from Highfield nursery. Additionally, up to about 20 parents/grandparents attend. They all seem to really enjoy it and the feedback has been positive.

Brockenhurst College Christian Union:

It is so exciting to see how God is working in this ministry with the young people in college.

The Christian Union meets every Tuesday lunchtime in the Autumn and Spring terms. The group size and dynamic changes, weekly. We have welcomed 14 young people (there are currently 19 on roll) but usually 6 attend on a weekly basis. Because of the shorter time (from 90 minutes last year to 35 minutes this year) the sessions are mainly around questions – from 'What is the Holy Trinity?' to 'How do we hear from God?'. We also usually eat snacks and always pray together.

Simon came in for a 'quiz the vicar' and he has been asked back.

During the summer term the students are expected to attend revision sessions – or have exams – or exam leave, so we have decided during the summer term CU will be a drop in only.

The college is very supportive of this ministry and has already asked us to continue this next year. We had a 'stall' on enrichment day, during college enrolment in September.

Families and young people in church:

Praise be – we still have 5 children on a regular basis in church. The four youngest are offered (and usually take up) the crèche, whilst the elder child is given a variety of craft activities. On 'feast days' – including Mothering Sunday and the toy service – a small group of volunteers run a craft and storytelling session for all the families who attend.

The exciting new SO4:12 service (based in Brockenhurst Primary School) is covered in Mel's report.

A huge answer to prayer continues to be Mel Osborne who took up her post on just over a year ago.

A huge thank you to all of those who have been involved in all the activities for Children in Brockenhurst Church. Long term it would be great to include them more in our services and for them to be a visible part of our Church family.

The main concerns remain:

1. Supporting very young families in Church.
2. Utilising the teams for children's work here and CU in college.
3. All those unchurched children and young people in our village and how we reach them.

Please continue to pray for all our children and young people.

Report by Jo Plummer

LYNDHURST DEANERY AND DIOCESAN SYNODS

The Parish of Brockenhurst seeks to participate fully in the life of the wider Anglican Church through our roles in the Deanery and Diocesan Synods. In addition to being a part of the governance of the Church, these provide a perspective on the issues facing other parish contexts and provide information on emerging initiatives.

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year in different church buildings: it co-ordinates both the Church Tent at the New Forest Show and our collective relationships with Rwanda. A small deanery group travelled to Rwanda to strengthen our links and the 2024 Lent appeal is focused on funding Rwandan clergy to visit the Deanery. At last year's APCM, Wendy Lay joined Peter Lay and John Pearson to become the third lay PCC representative to the Deanery Synod. Peter has also agreed to act as Deanery Treasurer. The Reverend Simon Newham continues to offer the Deanery leadership as Area Dean.

The Diocesan Synod also meets three times a year to review and approve/reject major diocesan decisions. John Pearson is one of the Deanery representatives to the Synod. There have been gradual but major changes to the relationship between the Diocese and its Synod since the departure of the Rt Revd Tim Dakin in 2022 and the recent installation of the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen as Bishop of Winchester. The result has been the establishment of a strong foundation for future development and growth.

The Diocesan Synod mirrors the structure of the General Synod with separate meetings for Bishops, Clergy and Laity as well as the unified Synod meetings. The House of Laity is currently exploring how lay skills can be best utilised within the Diocese, together with how we can support the education, Children's & Family, and Eco activities so important to the mission of the Church. To this end, the House of Laity is looking to co-opt additional members with expertise and interest in any of

these areas to enrich the development and focus of the Diocese. Anyone interested in understanding more about these opportunities can contact John Pearson.

Prepared by John Pearson

WORSHIP TEAM

2023 was our Year of Sharing Our Faith in which we had various speakers addressing us on the ways in which others have shared their faith with them and ways in which can share our faith with others.

Various speakers joined us through the year – either live or via Zoom – including from CMS, Christian Aid, SAT 7, and the Bible Society.

Worship continued throughout the year using both live and digital formats - a huge thank goes to Pauline, Mike, John and the digital team led by Jeremy for making all this possible.

We ended the 'Open' service believing that it had run its season and instead launched SO412 in the Primary School with the aim of connecting with the children and families that aren't present in church in a location they are familiar with.

Once again we managed a full Holy Week and Easter programme including a pilgrimage to South Baddesley via Boldre on Good Friday and a dawn Easter Day service with bonfire, bubbly and bacon butties at St Nicholas'.

The grounds of St Saviour's was adorned with a marvellous array of community painted Easter Eggs.

Daily Morning and Evening Prayer continued online; housegroups continued; we had a well attended ANZAC service; Remembrance Commemorations returned to St Saviour's followed by the War Memorial with St Saviour's grounds once again being festooned with crocheted poppies; there was another moving and well attended service of Remembering Loved Ones Departed; worship continued in the schools and Nursing Homes; we worshipped together across the Group at Choral Evensongs and at an Advent Carol Service.

And finally, we ended the year with a range of Christmas services which were back up to pre-covid numbers!

Throughout the year we have continued to serve the wider community as evidenced by the 8 weddings, 2 baptisms and 22 funerals we have taken.

Our worship team has expanded with Stephen (our Curate) joining us in January and Mel (our Children's and Families' Worker) starting as an Ordinand in September.

Each one of them is doing a fantastic job and are a delight to work with as well as teaching me some new things!

As always, I have been particularly impressed and encouraged by you, the wider congregation, for the constant support and participation - thank you for being there, and continuing to be there, as a worshipping community and for your willingness to embrace new technology and new forms of worship. It has been so encouraging.

None of the above would have been possible without those who so generously give of their time and talents in preparing and leading our worship, and so my final word is to express my thanks to Diane, Alan, Mary, John, Stephen, Mel and Tony – supported of course by our wonderful Admin Team (particularly the Rota Queen, Lesley), Sacristy Team, readers, intercessors, welcomers, flower team, bell-ringers and all of you who contribute to our worship. I know that some of you feel that you haven't *done* as much as you could – but involvement in the running of worship in church is not just about *doing*, it's also about *being*, and each one of you has been a support and encouragement to me and others. Thank you!

Simon Newham, Vicar

MISSION TEAM

Our giving to Mission from the church continues to be a mix of direct payments to nine charities; collections in church for special events or services (such as Christmas); appeals for emergencies or special items and personal giving. In 2023, as a church, we have supported the Church Mission Society, Tearfund, the Bible Society, Jerusalem & the Middle East Church Association (JMECA), Gateway Club, Friday Club, Rwanda (Kigeme), SAT-7, the Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship and A Rocha (for the environment). On our Mission Sundays and on other occasions we have had special collections for SAT 7, the Bible Society, JMECA, Christian Aid, Mission to Seafarers and Basics Bank. In October we had a very special visit from our CMS Mission partners, Lea and Petra in Brno in the Czech Republic. Our Christmas giving was shared between our church, the Children's Society (at our Christingle service), Oakhaven Hospice and Embrace the Middle East. Our 'treasure trail' round the village continues to contribute to our mission fund having raised up till the end of '23 over £700.

Prepared by Liz Dodwell

PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM

Prayer Ministry continues to be offered on the first and third Sunday of each month at St Saviour's during the 10:30 service. The team prays with others that God may show His grace and love through healing and by restoring wholeness and balance in any aspect of life. Prayer can be sought by anyone for their own situation or the situation of anyone known to them. Prayers can take two forms according to individual preference: after the service, team members are available to understand the challenges faced and pray with you; during communion, people can find team members at either side of the church who will offer a non-specific prayer of blessing that enables them to be assured of God's presence whilst ensuring complete privacy.

I am grateful to the small team of individuals who volunteer to minister in this way - we could not provide this service to others without their support. At times when the team are not available, situations for prayer can be sent by prayer@brockenhurstchurch.com: all requests will be treated confidentially.

Additionally, the church website provides ideas and approaches to prayer to support your prayer pattern and a wide range of circumstances that people experience in life: we thank Sue Moss for her tireless work to co-ordinate prayers on the website.

Our team has shrunk slightly in recent years and, should it shrink further, we may have to consider whether it remains viable. If you discern that God may be calling you to join the team and pray with others, do talk to Simon Newham or John Pearson. Please pray that God will continue to support the team to fulfil His purposes through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Report prepared by John Pearson

Creative Prayer Report

Since just before Christmas 3 permanent prayer tables were created. These are situated in St Saviour's on the South wall where on Sundays we have teas or coffee after the service.

They usually form a meditative activity, an exploring activity and a creative activity. They are changed roughly every 2 weeks. They are there for anyone, from children to adults to explore. I try to take into account the time of year, and the school holidays where more family activities can be used.

It is hoped that these tables will encourage people to be prompted to pray in different ways and that parents can interact with their children developing their prayer.

Report by Lindy Waight

HOME GROUPS

The total number of people in Home Groups has risen slightly and although the number of groups has reduced (7) they are generally in very good health, meeting at different times and days of the week. Three gather in the Meeting Room which has proved a great asset. One in Woodpeckers. Each group chooses its own topic and three have been studying Romans using material from the Bible Society.

Mel Osborne and Stephen Bennett will be starting a new group in March and would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to join them. The groups are a wonderful way to explore faith and discipleship and to build prayerful fellowship. New members are always most welcome and the Vicar and I can give more information.

Report by Diane Webster

BAPTISM PREPARATION

During the last year we had six baptisms with associated baptism preparation sessions to which parents and Godparents are invited. These sessions are based on the Rob Bell Nooma video *Rhythm* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FNHoYI8a78> which generates some very interesting discussions and is well worth taking a look at. The sessions are held in the meeting room at St Saviour's over tea and cake and participants are encouraged to both think carefully about the commitment they are making in baptism and to ask questions about the Christian faith and the difference it can make in their child's (and their own) life. We go through the service together explaining what the different symbolic acts mean and how they will be invited to participate in them. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in our Sunday worship prior to the baptism. Local parents are also encouraged to keep in touch through the 'Little Flames' services for the under-fives which are run by the Mothers' Union. Thank you to all who have helped with these sessions.

Report by Simon Newham

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

At the end of January 2023, we ran our annual joint Marriage Preparation afternoon with Boldre and South Baddesley and 19 engaged couples (4 from Brockenhurst; 13 from Boldre and 2 from South Baddesley) attended the session held in the St. Saviour's Church. After a fun introductory session based on which road sign most described their relationships and thoughts of marriage, Simon explained the Christian understanding of marriage and why we feel marriage preparation is so important. Simon then talked on various topics and aspects of marriage (barriers to talking; conflict resolution; financial management; personal style and habits; children and parenting; spiritual beliefs etc) and couples were given worksheets to discuss with each other. After a break for tea and cake provided by members of the Mothers' Union, Simon went through the Marriage service itself and the couples were

introduced to those who would be involved with their wedding - the clergy taking the ceremony, Sue Lynes the Verger, Sally Hoy, from the Flower Guild, and Clare Robbins and Sally James, the administrators who would be sorting the forms and formalities. Before leaving, as a gift from the Mothers' Union, each couple was presented with the book 'Growing Together' - a marriage preparation book written by Andrew Body.

Report by Lesley Munt

PASTORAL CARE TEAM – 'BROCKCARE'

As ever, this has been another busy year for pastoral activities in the Parish (May '23 – April '24)

Pastoral Visiting: Our Pastoral Visitors (PVs) continue to make a huge difference in the lives of many individuals across our village. They offer support to those who find themselves isolated or bereaved or sick, or to those who need a bit of practical help with shopping, for example. Visits enable vulnerable people to remain part of the fabric of our community and much is gained on both sides of the equation. Inevitably, two or three long-standing PVs have 'retired' over the past year, but new PVs have come forward to join the team which is very encouraging, and means that this vital work can continue to flourish.

Wednesday Lunches: These continue to be such an important means of outreach to the elderly and vulnerable in our village. (See Lesley Munt's report on Wednesday Lunches elsewhere).

CAMEO (Come-And-Meet-Each-Other): This Thursday morning gathering over coffee, tea and biscuits remains an oasis for those wishing to meet with old friends each week, or for those who drop-in on a more irregular basis. The same wonderful welcome awaits all-comers. Heartfelt thanks go to a dedicated team of helpers who deserve credit for their ongoing commitment to making CAMEO a friendly place to be, week in, week out.

All-4-One: Various get-togethers and activities over the year have been arranged. Contact has been maintained with an array of people across the village who find themselves alone for a variety of reasons. Individuals are encouraged to join others for shared experiences.

The Sunday Club: This self-help group for those who have been widowed, has gone from strength to strength. The group, overseen by Diane Webster and others, meets for afternoon teas, occasional Sunday Lunches in the Hall and for other get-togethers. Attendance has been very encouraging and the Club clearly fills a 'need' within the parish.

'Holidays@Home': In early September we enjoyed a virtual trip to 'The Caribbean' with 25 invited guests. H@H is tremendously popular and thanks to a dedicated team of organisers, cooks, drivers and other helpers/supporters we all have great fun. The various speakers and activities were themed appropriately, as was the food which is always a highlight of our adventure. We even managed to arrange Caribbean weather!

The '**Service of Remembering Loved Ones Departed**': This moving service was held at the end of October. It provides comfort to those mourning the loss of loved ones and was well attended. Following the service there was an opportunity for pastoral visitors (and other church members) to speak with those who had been bereaved. Tea and cakes were kindly provided by the Social Team, and were served in the Church Hall.

Christmas Day Lunch: Twenty-four guests attended the Christmas Day Lunch (2023) in the Church Hall. Roger Drake cooked a wonderful feast and it was much enjoyed by all those present. Ros Dennison hosted the event, and was ably supported by Judy Cook, Elaine Chester and others. Guests sang a few carols and were provided with small gifts to take home. A few Christmas Day Lunches were delivered to those who were unable to join the event in the Hall. The cost of all the drinks for this special lunch was covered by an anonymous donor, and the residue of that generous donation went into Church Funds.

Lighter Lunches on Thursdays/Winter Warmer Soup Lunches: Following last year's successful Soup Lunch programme which ended in March 2023, 'Lighter Lunches on Thursdays' were organised from April – July to replace them. They proved to be very popular. Thanks go to Liz Dodwell and a small team of helpers who ran the 'Lighter Lunches'. We are grateful to Roger Drake who very kindly came along on most Thursdays to make delicious soup and cakes for our guests over the winter period. Woodpeckers Care Home provided soup for us on the few occasions when Roger could not, and we wish to thank them for their generous support in this way. We are grateful to all volunteers who made these activities possible.

There are many, many volunteers working across the range of Brockcare's activities. They willingly give of their time and talents to 'make things happen'. They deserve a huge 'thank-you' for their efforts. Their care reflects Jesus' love and compassion. Thanks are also due to Mary Robinson for helping with some of Brockcare's administrative tasks.

Please contact me or the Church Office if you would like to join the Pastoral Team, or would like more information about what we do.

Report by Joyce Kolaczowski

CHURCH HALL TEAM

In 2023 the rise in the use of the hall post Covid continued, particularly the Meeting Room (formerly the Youth Room). This part of the 2016 hall extension, comprising nearly a third of the floor area, had little use from its opening in 2016 until 2020. So, it is a delight to see many bookings, not only from clergy and committees, but by house groups as well. Commercial lettings of this room have increased for organisations, trusts and committees that want to hire a small room with no frills for a meeting. This premises or facility is not available elsewhere in the village. Some other new lettings have started in the main hall as well as previous regular bookings continuing, a few of these started early in 1988, when the hall was opened. As always, I am indebted to the faithful hall committee members of Keith Nolan and Lindy Waight, as well as of course Kelly Cooke for stores ordering and keeping the bookings up to date, for not only the hall but both churches as well. Clare, Lesley

and the office volunteers are also very helpful in keeping in touch about any defects or repairs needing urgent attention.

Report by Martin Fletcher Chairman Church Hall Committee

SOCIAL TEAM

1. We held a "bring your own" Coronation Picnic after Church on Sunday 7th May with about 50 people sitting in the sun and singing to Liz Dodwell's scratch band.
2. The Newcomers' Evening on 23rd July (20 Newcomers) and Alan's Harvest Quiz (80 people) both brought village people into the Church and went well. The Social Team have ideas for minor changes to them for the future.
3. The other regular items such as the Bereavement Service and Carol Services went to plan.

We have a small but willing and competent team and I thank them for their enthusiasm this year.

Report by Keith Nolan

ECO CHURCH

Summary

As a church, we continue to be committed to taking our environmental impact and use of resources fully into account in our work, worship, teaching, and programmes. We also work to increase awareness of environmental issues in our church congregation and village community, working towards us all enjoying simpler, greener lifestyles.

As a framework for this work, we joined the Eco Church movement back in Jan 2020. We were awarded our Silver Eco Church Award at the end of 2021 and have been working towards Gold since then.

Activities and Progress over the past year:

- Easter 23: As a lent initiative, the Eco Church team encouraged the St Saviours congregation to think about a Lenten car fast, with a particular call to walk / cycle / car share to church if at all possible
- April 23: 12 primary school aged children came down to help sow wild flower seeds etc in the wild garden in St Saviours (organised by the Making Space for Nature Team, Greener Brock).
- September 23: Eco church organised an ecumenical Walk for Creation – a lovely 3 mile walk in the forest with readings, meditations and prayers
- October 23: Eco Church planned the Harvest Festival Service. The Brownies were involved and there was a strong message around thinking about the environmental impact of what we choose to buy to eat.
- October 23: The Making Space for Nature Team (Greener Brockenhurst), held a community 'Bulb planting event in the wildlife area of St Saviour's grounds for a spot of eco therapy, planting bulbs, spreading wildflower seed and cutting back brambles
- October 23: Eco Church & Greener Brock hosted an event to get together to make squares for a New Forest-wide community patchwork quilt as part of our support for New Forest Friends of the Earth in the national United for Warm Homes Campaign.
- November 23: We were delighted that the PCC decided to make the changes below, each of which will significantly contribute to reducing our carbon footprint
 - move after service coffee at St Saviours into the church building, thus saving heating the Hall

- Move the 9:00am service (usually at St Nicolas) to St Saviour's once a month, thus saving heating of St Nicolas once a month.
- November 23: An environmental lifestyle survey was sent out to all members of the church on the electoral role. 46 parishioners responded.
- December 23: A summary of the results on the environmental lifestyle survey was uploaded to our church website. This survey will be an annual event.
- January 24: A new team of people with relevant experience was setup to look at options in relation to moving St Saviours away from gas heating. It was agreed that a first step would be to procure an environmental energy audit for the church and church hall
- January 24: A new compost bin was installed in the grounds of St Saviours
- February 24: Following the PCC approval, St Nicolas has been registered for Eco Church. The Eco Church team is in the process of carrying out the baseline Eco Church survey
- February 24: Input of church energy usage data to the Church Energy Footprint tool to enable us to look at our carbon footprint and compare to previous years, setting targets for reduction. Interestingly, it seems to have increased over the year. Further investigation into the cause of this is required.
- Throughout the year: Ongoing environmental awareness raising articles in the monthly Parish Magazine and well as weekly "Eco tips" in spotlight.

Throughout the year: Close involvement with and support of the work of Greener Brockenhurst.

Report by Camilla Pearse

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH GUARDIANS

The Parish Church of St Nicholas welcomed many visitors from all parts of the world in 2023. Many are strangers to the area following published 'walks' and discover the church often by happy accident. Thus varied are the reasons for entering St Nicholas.

Some enter seeking a place to pray or find peace, experience the atmosphere of an ancient building, others are looking for the 1000 year old yew tree, whilst others have a family connection, baptism, wedding or funeral memories and like to reminisce.

People researching family history are looking for records of graves, hoping for further detail to enter on the 'family tree' can discover a numbered grave map produced before the inscriptions faded due to weathering and we have a corresponding file with alphabetical lists of all the family names on the graves in our upper graveyard.

Visitors from New Zealand with possibly a WWI hospital connection see the exhibition boards and the 2016 NZ window, then realise that the church has other beautiful stained glass, notably four windows in the chancel depicting the four seasons.

It is important that we recruit more volunteers, we need to have an afternoon presence in the summer months. Guardians are able to highlight the many aspects and features of this ancient church and by selling merchandise we contribute to church funds.

Report by Ros Dennison

ST. NICHOLAS' with ST. SAVIOUR'S FLOWER GUILD



We have 17 talented ladies helping with the flower guild and after an appeal for more help we gained Jane Quin and Jan Clarke, who are both experienced flower arrangers and have been a great asset to the team. We would welcome more help, running both churches can be very busy at times and the more helpers the better. Novices will be given encouragement and training and if you are new to the village with a talent or interest in flowers we would love to hear from you.

We are trying to be more environmentally friendly with our flower arranging. Using the old methods or chicken wire, pin holders and water and glass tubes, we try to use as little green foam as possible switching to the bio degradable type and Agra wool plant based foam whenever possible. Hopefully a new invention of completely compostable foam is just around the corner.

Thank you to everyone who supports the flower pot collections and makes donations to the flower guild. We are very grateful and thankful. We hope you enjoy our flowers in church.

The teams first group arranging was for Easter and the bright beautiful spring coloured flowers were used at both churches.

Report by Jane Thatcher and Sally Hoy





THE SANCTUARY GUILD

We continue to manage very well with just 4 members: Ros Dennison, Lizzie Tindell, Marion Burden and myself, Lindy Waight; with the help of Tricia Hilborn who does the washing and ironing of the altar cloths.

Our duties are basically to wash and look after all the linen used for Communion at both St. Saviour's and St Nicholas' and prepare for Communions, clean the silver and change the Altar Frontal as and when required.

We would like to make you aware that we carry gluten free wafers and anyone wishing to use these instead of the normal ones please let the presiding clergy know before the start of the service.

Once again, I would like thank Tony Foulger who has often stepped in and helped us out at St Nicholas' especially around Christmas time; also Jeanne Craene who has made and donated 2 silk liturgical red cushion covers for the altars at St Saviour's.

Report by Lindy Waight

WEDNESDAY LUNCHES

Since last year's APCM Wednesday Lunches have continued to thrive, with a regular high attendance. During the year, we have welcomed several new guests and now have 35 on our register which is nearing the maximum we can comfortably accommodate.

We continue to offer lunches on the first 4 Wednesdays of each month, in school term time only, and are managing to maintain the cost at £5 for the two-course meal followed by tea or coffee.

I reported last year that Christina Simons and Josephine Page had kindly taken on the leadership of the 4th Wednesday team but sadly, for health reasons, Josephine has had to step down. Thankfully Christina is willing to continue, but with extra help with shopping and cooking the main course, and Woodpeckers Care Home have very kindly offered to provide the dessert each month for which we are extremely grateful.

At the end of the summer, Jill Meakin retired from her role as Team Leader of the 2nd Wednesday Team and Jean Wright has very kindly taken on this role - thank you Jean.

We know how much the weekly lunches are appreciated by all who attend and I am very grateful for the help given by all our volunteer cooks and drivers and especially Joyce who so admirably organises the transport rota and keeps in touch with our guests (even when she's supposed to be on holiday!) and Sue Griffiths who deputises when Joyce is not around. I would also like to thank Luke Chambers, our caretaker, who sets up and clears away the tables for us each week - such a great help as we are all getting older and, in some cases, less able.

If anyone is interested in helping, either on a kitchen team or with transporting our guests, please get in touch with myself or Joyce. The 2nd & 4th Wednesday kitchen teams could especially do with an extra pair of hands or two.

Report by Lesley Munt, Wednesday Lunch Co-ordinator

BROCKENHURST MOTHERS' UNION

2023's theme was Transformation – Now!

BRANCH MEETINGS

In January we held our Wave of Prayer Service followed by our AGM. Our speaker at our meeting in February was going to be Luke Augustyn, our Ordinand, but he was ill. However our Curate Stephen Bennett told us his story instead. In March Douglas Marcuse spoke about Psalm 84, and in April John Littlewood, the Headteacher of the

Primary School, told us of his life in education. In May Revd. Lee Davis (from St John's Church Hythe) talked about "Twinning Toilets". In July Sue Ingram and two of her colleagues told us about "Counselling Together". In October we had a speaker from Emmaus, the charity in Winchester working with the homeless. Unfortunately Mel Osborne our Children and Families Worker (and also now an Ordinand) was ill and could not give her talk in November, but she was able to tell us her story at our Christmas social. Our November meeting was led by Revd Canon Diane Webster who stepped in at the last minute, organising a discussion on abuse and how to recognise the different aspects of it. This made us more aware of the different forms it takes and to be observant. It fitted well with the 16 days of activism. It was a very successful afternoon and all credit to Diane.

MOTHERS' UNION SERVICES

Corporate Communion

These have been held on the third Thursday each month at St Saviour's.

Deanery Lady Day Service at Milford on Sea

The service took place on Wednesday 15th March, and four of our Branch attended.

Cathedral Prayers

On 3rd May Lyndhurst Deanery led the prayers. Only Brockenhurst Branch attended, along with some trustees and Margaret Swadling (a Deanery Member).

Festival Service at St Lawrence Church, Winchester

I attended this service on 20th June. It was led by the Rector, Revd Karen Kousseff, and the Bishop of Basingstoke.

Holy Communion Service at Milford on Sea

Anne Dow and I attended this on 20th September.

Deanery Carol Service at St Nicholas

We held this service on Tuesday 12th December with members from Hythe and Milford on Sea. Revd. Simon Newham was officiating and Revd. Canon Diane Webster led the prayers.

Little Flames Services

Six services were held in 2023, with the School Reception class and the Pre-school attending. We have also had children from the Pre-school at Brockenhurst College. Liz Dodwell has been encouraging families at Busy Badgers to attend.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

MU Information Days

Tuesday 14th March at St Gabriel's Church, Popley. No one from our Branch attended.

10 July at Hedge End. Four members attended. There was a speaker from Christchurch about her visit to Kinkiizi in Uganda and providing Highcliffe Branch's period bags for girls. AFIA is being more focused to individual families, information about the Better Together clusters, and the Cathedral offered MU a Charity Chalet for one day at the Christmas Market, to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. *Thursday 9th November at Weeke, Winchester.* Four members attended. There was news regarding the Annual Meeting in York, further information about the Better Together clusters, and we were told there are no volunteers to provide cakes for the RAF Odiham family event in 2024.

Mothering Sunday

As usual members came together to make posies for Mothering Sunday, and arrangements were taken to the nursing homes in the village. Members read the lessons and led the prayers at the Sunday services.

Summer outing

Despite the hot weather again, several of us went to Lepe Country Park and enjoyed a fascinating afternoon led by a very knowledgeable ranger.

School Fete

Members helped with the fete in June.

Tea Afternoon

In August we held our members' tea afternoon, when we made our "Little Bags of Love" to be given to parents of the children joining the YR class at the school.

Board Games Cafe

As our outreach event we decided that our Festival, Frocks and Fun event would be too onerous for us, so we decided to have a Board Game Café. It was very well attended, so the Committee have decided to have another one in February 2024.

16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence

This year members took many leaflets to the station, but they ran out by 9am. We used our new banner for the first time. On 29th November I had an hour at the MU chalet at the Christmas Market, but I found it was ignored by most people passing the chalet. MU has started a new "Rise Up against domestic abuse". Please look at <https://www.mothersunion.org/riseup> to find out more.

Busy Badgers

MU members and others continue to provide refreshments for the parents and toddlers' weekly sessions.

Crafts

Members and others have knitted and crocheted poppies for Remembrance Sunday, prayer Blankets for children being christened, and other items.

Marriage Preparation

On 28th January 2023 22 engaged couples met at St Saviour's church. Fifteen of them were from Boldre, three from South Baddesley, and four from Brockenhurst. The Vicar explained the Christian understanding of marriage, and then tea and cake was provided by our members. Each couple were given the book "Growing Together" as a gift from the Mothers' Union.

VISIT OF THE WORLDWIDE PRESIDENT

On 9th August Sheran visited Winchester, joined the cathedral prayers and laid flowers on Mary Sumner's grave. She then went to St Mary's Alresford to plant a tree. The next day she visited Highcliffe Branch for lunch before coming to Brockenhurst. We were very excited that Brockenhurst Branch was chosen to provide teas for Sheran Harper, her party, and many other MU members and leaders, on 10th August.

FUNDRAISING

We have raised money from our Gift Swap 4 Coffee morning, sale of MU cards, cream teas for visitors and other donations. Altogether we sent nearly £1370 to MU for Overseas, Relief Fund, Britain and Ireland, Summer of Hope, and Literacy.

Sweet Tubes

Our new Treasurer Maureen provided sweet tubes for every member at the Christmas social. We hope they will be returned filled with coins.

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership has not dropped this year.

May I thank all of you who provide tea, coffee and cakes for our meetings, and those who assist at Little Flames services, and all who read and intercede at our

communion services. Thank you to those who have assisted with the cream teas and ploughman's lunches for visiting branches, and other events.

Thank you Liz Dodwell for organising Busy Badgers helpers; Lindy Waight for maintaining the prayer chain; and Jenny Noyelle for keeping us in touch with Kigeme and the Mothers' Union there. Thank you Jean Taylor for keeping the photographs of our activities; Diane Webster for ordering and selling MU cards, diaries and other items, and Lesley Munt for supporting baptism preparation and cards.

Committee

My heartfelt thanks go to all the Committee members: Maureen Phillips our Treasurer, Geraldine Angel, Esther Browne, Joy Mullin, Gill Coombs, Sue Lynes (who has organised our excellent programmes, and who suggested we should have our own Branch banner). Special thanks to Lesley Munt. What would we do without her?

THE FUTURE

In 2023 we changed our day and times of meetings and our corporate communion. It has been a success, with more members and visitors attending. The Committee has now decided to change the meeting time to 2.30pm, to enable the Thursday lunch team to clear up before we arrive.

The theme for 2024 is still TRANSFORMATION-NOW!

Report by Wendy Lay, Branch Chairman

CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL

The Electoral Roll as at Annual Meeting in 2023	204
The new Electoral Roll as at Annual Meeting in 2024 (Resident: 170 Non-resident: 28)	198