



# **Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2021**

Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup> 11.15 am

ZOOM Meeting,

## **AGENDA**

### **2021 Annual Parish Meeting – Election of Church Wardens**

Caroline Edwards has been nominated as Church Warden

Roger Gibson has been nominated as Church Warden

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### **APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) agenda**

#### **1. Opening prayer and welcome**

#### **2. Apologies:**

#### **3. Approval of 2020 APCM Minutes**

#### **4. Matters arising**

#### **5. The reports**

(i) The Vicar's Report

(ii) The electoral roll – revision

(iii) Annual report and Accounts

(iv) Financial report

(v) Annual fabric report –presented by churchwardens

(vi) Deanery Synod report

(vii) PCC Proceeding

#### **6. The elections and appointments**

(i) Election of 1 representative to Deanery Synod – for three years

(iii) Election of PCC members – 2 vacancies

(iv) Appoint independent examiner: Richard Place Dobson, 1-7  
Station Road, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1HT

**7. Date of next APCM (Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021)**

**8. Closing prayers**

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**Meeting of the new PCC to elect officers**



**PARISH OF GOSSOPS GREEN AND BEWBUSH, ST.  
ALBAN'S**

**MINUTES FOR APCM Held on ZOOM  
Sunday 25 October 2020  
11.15 A.M**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**PRESENT**

Revd. Ann Alexander, Cathy Bryant, John Bryant, Tsitsi Chikukwa, Brian Eastman, Mary Eastman, Caroline Edwards, Helen Ford, Keith Ford, Doris Gibson, Roger Gibson, Jenny Graham, Ken Graham, Revd. Lizzi Green, Rob Higson, Andy Hoare, Emma Humphrey, Bev Killick, Alan Magrath, Sarah Magrath, Meg Miller, John Richardson, Sue Richardson, Ann Routledge, Jane Sharpe, Madeleine Taylor, Barbara Zanleoni (27)

	Action
<b>1. ELECTION OF CHURCH WARDENS</b>	
Caroline Edwards and Roger Gibson were proposed and elected as church wardens. Rev Ann thanked Roger and Caroline for their excellent work leading the church during the past year and especially during the pandemic	
<b>2. APOLOGIES</b>	
Merle Martin,	

<b>3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS APCM</b>	
The minutes of the previous APCM held Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> April 2019 were approved.	
<b>4. MATTERS ARISING</b>	
None	
<b>5. REPORTS</b>	
<p><b>The Annual Report was circulated prior to the meeting. Additional comments were made as below:</b></p> <p><b>I. Vicars Report</b></p> <p>Revd Ann thanked all those who contributed to the report and all who have served the church so well in the last year and especially through the challenging times of the ongoing pandemic.</p>	
<p><b>II. Electoral Roll.</b> The revised Roll (closed September 27<sup>th</sup>) shows 80 people registered this year an increase of 8 people from 2019</p> <p><b>III. Finances</b> Thanks was given to Sue Richardson for her ongoing work as finance officer and especially for enabling the church to keep the books balance during the pandemic. Sue thanked Cathy Bryant and Jane Sharpe for their support and all those who counted the collection on a regular basis.</p> <p><b>IV. Annual Fabric Report</b> The inventory was checked 6-7 months ago before Coronavirus Lockdown</p> <p><b>V. Communication</b> Rob Higson gave an update on the printed report which shows that we now have 149 followers on the Facebook Page compared to 108 at the time of writing the report in April ( 2020) and 56 followers in April 2019. This is a</p>	

significant growth. There were also 131 “likes” in October 2020 compared to 100 in April 2020 and 55 in April 2019. Facebook now has 147 members compared to 134 at the time the report was written and 55 in April 2019. The group is very active sharing and taking action from other people and local organisations/groups. It has been shown how important our web site electronic communications, weekly e-bulletin and online worship are – especially during the pandemic.

Rev Ann thanked Rob for the excellent work he has done with IT/Web

Site/enabling and coordinating live services on the Web and Facebook. Rob also thanked Chris Cook who has worked to provide live streaming of our Sunday Communion Service. Due to the specification of the electronic equipment the live streaming has had a number of hiccups. New equipment is required, and funds need to be raised- this is being addressed through the PCC.

**VI. Building Development Group** Keith Ford, chair of the church Building Development Group asked that anyone who can assist with writing proposal for grant applications or who has knowledge of organisations who can provide grants for which the church would be eligible, please get in touch with him.

Thanks, was given to Keith and the BDG and Helen Ford and the fundraising

<p>committee for all the work they have and continue to do in this challenging period. Keith and Helen were also thanked for their work in organising and providing music and support for online services throughout lockdown to the present time.</p>	
<p><b>6. ELECTIONS</b></p>	
<p><b>Deanery Synod:</b></p> <p>Sue Richardson was proposed prior to the meeting and elected. Bev Killick was proposed at the meeting by Jane Sharpe and seconded by Cathy Bryant and elected by a unanimous vote. The parish has one further place which remains vacant. Revd Ann asked the meeting to consider standing for this important post.</p>	
<p><b>PCC Term of Office</b></p> <p>A resolution was proposed to address the ability of PCC members who are retiring at the completion of their term of office being able to stand again, immediately, if insufficient new members have come forwards to fill the available PCC positions</p> <p><b>Resolution:</b></p> <p>This APCM meeting agrees that where there are available vacancies for the next PCC, a retiring member (if they desire to do so) may immediately be proposed as a member to serve on the PCC for a period of up to three years</p>	

<p>This was proposed by Bev Killick and seconded by Sue Richardson and passed with one abstention.</p> <p>This resolution may be reviewed annually but not later than the APCM 2026</p>	
<p><b>PCC Members</b></p> <p>Bev Killick (retiring 2022), Jane Sharpe, and Andy Hoare (retiring 2021) continue as members of the PCC</p> <p>There were six vacancies:</p> <p>Tsitsi Chikugwa, Robert Higson (retiring member), Emma Humphrey, Sarah Magrath, Madeleine Taylor, Barbara Zanleoni were proposed and elected. As this is 2/3 of the elected laity their term of office (2 or 3 years) will be determined by lot at the PCC following the APCM</p> <p>The safeguarding officer asked that the new PCC members who have yet to complete a DBS and on-line safeguarding training, pass their email details to him so that this can be addressed (safeguarding officer details are to be found on the church website)</p>	
<p><b>Independent Examiner</b></p> <p>Richard Place Dobson of 1-7 Station Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1HT was proposed and appointed</p>	
<p><b>7.DATE OF THE NEXT APCM</b></p>	
<p>The next APCM will be held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Following the Eucharist at 11.15 am</p>	

The meeting closed with prayer at 12.30 pm	



## **Vicar's report for APCM 2021**

### **Review of the year:**

Well, what a year 2020 has been! When the Prime Minister announced the first lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, little did we know then just how long this pandemic would last, nor how much it would affect our church life. Needless to say, most of the things I generally report on, such as average attendance, our normal worship activities and new or current outreach activities, our work in schools and the community, and etc. did not happen during this historic year.

However, although things were shut down there was a huge amount going on nevertheless.

Huge thanks must go to all who have been beavering away to look after our church buildings, our finances, our pastoral care of one another, and our use of technology to enable our worship to continue against all odds. If anything, I truly think that our church has gone from strength to strength, and has actually grown with new people joining us. These positive aspects and signs of God's love are what I intend to focus on in this report on 2020.

### **Technology and online worship**

We have had a steep learning curve with our use of technology in enabling worship to continue throughout the year. I do not normally name people in this report since there are so many who contribute to the myriad aspects of the life and ministry of our church.

However, I will say that we have been truly blessed by the ministry of those who have enabled our journey into online worship.

Our journey, through recorded services to our current live streamed services have meant huge demands on the time and the commitment of so many. Our webmaster, Facebook admins, our IT team, choir members, intercessors and readers have all played an important role and I would like to record immense thanks for the incredible teamwork that has enabled our online worshipping life to continue throughout the whole of this difficult year.

Thankfully, during a lull in the lockdown restrictions in October the parish community and many others further afield were able to rejoice with Rev. Lizzi Green on her ordination to the priesthood. This was an in-person service that was also livestreamed. It was truly wonderful to be able to have this service at St Alban's Church and have the opportunity to welcome Bishop Ruth.

And who knew when the pandemic hit us that Zoom would become a household name? Thanks to this amazing technology we have been able to have coffee meetings, online worship at times, prayer meetings, Confirmation classes for our youngsters, Harvest Supper and Cream Teas meetings, and various other occasions where church members were able to meet together. We were even able to hold a special Crib Service for Outreach3Way on Zoom which was wonderful and greatly appreciated.

## **Governance**

Our Wardens and Finance officer have worked tirelessly to ensure that the buildings have been maintained, bills are paid, dealt with the rentals of our hall and the Barn with the ever-changing regulations, risk assessments created and adhered to, and dealt with myriad other things needed to keep our buildings and the public safe. Several repairs were needed throughout the year both at the Barn and at St Alban's and these were dealt with swiftly and safely. I

would like to record huge thanks to our Standing Committee for all they have done to keep things going and to our PCC who have responded diligently to everything needed in terms of governance.

Thanks to Zoom, and the ministrations of our PCC Secretary, we have managed to hold several PCC meetings throughout the year as well as our APCM when we were able to appoint a large cohort of new PCC members. Very many thanks to all who have given their time willingly and generously in this crucial aspect of church life.

### **Pastoral Care**

The ministry of pastoral care shared among the church through 2020 has been truly life enhancing. So many people have taken care of others through phone calls, food deliveries, walks when Covid regulations have allowed, and doorstep visits. This is love in action and is at the heart of parish life. The fundraising team enhanced our pastoral care by delivering cream teas and the harvest supper along with setting up Zoom get togethers so that people could feel connected while enjoying their meals/cream teas. Many thanks too, to all the volunteers who helped deliver Christmas cards and also, the limited number of Christmas hampers provided by the Love Your Neighbour project.

### **Children's Work**

Although Junior Church had to stop during the pandemic, there has still been much going on. Junior Church resources are posted each week for families to do at home. The Summer Project was designed by our curate. Packs designed to support emotional and mental health through practical activities were delivered weekly by church volunteers throughout the summer holidays to 50 children aged between three and 13. The project was appreciated by everyone involved and was even reported on in The Church Times. Many thanks to all involved. Confirmation classes have taken place over

Zoom and in person groups when possible. We now have five children ready and waiting to be Confirmed in July 2021.

### **Building works**

The Buildings Development Group have met at various times throughout 2020. The group decided to focus their attention on getting a new heating system in the church so that more mission could take place and therefore would encourage the large funders we need for the full project. However, Covid regulations have prevented some of the necessary meetings needed on site. We do need more people on this group especially those who would help with funding applications. If you feel you can bring your gifts and talents to this area of church life please do speak to Keith Ford or Rev Ann.

### **The Future**

It is difficult to put firm plans in place with the uncertainties of this pandemic. Social distancing and various other safeguarding regulations will no doubt affect parish life for some time to come. However, among the difficulties we have found many blessings.

Through the use of social media and the internet we have connected with many new people and enabled many of the housebound to participate in the worship of this parish. We have added quite a few new families to the congregation through this outreach too! We have also had the opportunity, as a church community to have not only an ordination take place at St Alban's, but also the opportunity to see our Churchwardens sworn in.

The networks of pastoral care and the active outworking of God's love have always been strong in the parish but this gift has grown to even greater strengths. As we emerge from this pandemic there will be a plethora of Post Covid mission needs and concerns that, I have no doubt, the parish will respond to lovingly and prayerfully.

Bless you all for being such a wonderful community in the household of God. Let us pray that God will continue to bless all our endeavours and guide us as we continue to serve the neighbourhoods of Gossops Green and Bewbush.

***Rev'd Ann Alexander***

## **THE ELECTORAL ROLL**

The revised roll shows 80 people listed on the electoral roll.

3 people were added since 2020, and 3 people were removed (sadly 3 of our much loved congregation members died)

The summary total shows an increase of 8 on the Roll initiated in 2019 and no increase since 2020.

***Alan Magrath (Electoral Roll Officer)***

## **PARISH ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS**

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

At the bank 31.12 2020 - £35,344 as opposed to £46,172 - 31.12. 2019

We have, as no surprise, been affected by Covid 19 in the past year.

Parish budget for 2020 for income was set at £69,710 actual £58,990

For expenditure. Budget was £73,830 actual £69,817

Reserve account reduced by £10,807

- Our Parish Share has been paid £26,000 as agreed with the Diocese
- The pre-school was able in the main to keep open for keyworkers children. The dance school was only back for a few weeks in 2020 before we went into lockdown again & the Elim Church although unable to open have continued to support us and carried on paying their rent each month. A big thank you to them.
- This reduced income by just under £5,000 at St MM

- We needed to spend money on equipment upgrades for our live streaming during this time.
- There has necessary maintenance in St Albans Hall and the Barn Church. However, we have managed to pay all our bills.

The Finance group has not met in 2020 however now things are slowly returning to normal we will try to meet in 2021

### **Moving forward**

Parish Share for 2021 has been agreed to remain at £26,000 we agreed that an extra payment would be made later in the year should our finance enable us to.

We should bear in mind this in no way reflex's the amount requested.

Our income budget has been set at £64,270 for 2021

Our expenditure budget has been set at £62,966 for 2021

We need to look prayerfully at our giving over the coming months try to rebuild after a horrible year so that we can move forward as a Parish and to the great challenges we have over our buildings.

Thanks, Jane Sharpe, for her work at banking, and to Cathy Bryant for dealing with the envelope scheme.

***Sue Richardson (Finance Officer)***

## **WARDEN'S FABRIC REPORT AND INVENTORY**

### **ST ALBAN'S**

Due to minimal use of the Church and hall during the pandemic, there was little need for repairs or unscheduled maintenance.

The inventory at St Albans has been checked and it is up to date and correct.

The fire extinguishers were checked.

The patch in the Lady Chapel's ceiling was repaired and repainted.

A new handrail was installed at the hall and the ramp was repaired.

The lightning conductor was checked.

## **BEWBUSH**

Anti-slip treatment was carried out to the floor of the small hall (used by the pre-school playgroup).

The fire extinguishers were inspected and serviced.

An emergency repair was carried out to a water leak.

A heater was replaced in the small hall.

A close boarded fence was installed around the playgroup area.

In addition, the terms and conditions for the hire of the Barn were confirmed by the PCC and a Barn Management Committee was set up.

***Caroline Edwards and Roger Gibson. (Church Wardens)***

## **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT**

Our Deanery Synod representative for 2020 was Merle Martin (Merle's Term of Office would normally have ended in May 2020 but was extended to November 2020 as a consequence of the Covid pandemic). Sue Richardson and Bev Killick were appointed as Parish Representatives at the October 2020 AGM. A third representative may be appointed but no candidates came forward last year.

The Deanery Synod met 3 times in 2020

The February meeting focussed on a presentation from Christians Against Poverty the debt counselling Charity. This was given by Fiona Straszynski (E.Grinstead Debt Centre Manager) and Rob Pudney (Crawley Debt Coach).

The March meeting proposed as 'Wellbeing day' for the Deanery led by Canon Rebecca Sawyer (had to be cancelled)

The June meeting was a virtual ZOOM meeting where it was announced that Archdeacon Fiona was very ill at the beginning of the year and because of this regrettably had to retire. The meeting a virtual cheese and wine reception, focussed on the Deanery churches response during lockdown. The appointment of the Broadfield Parish Nurse was covered in a following document.

The September 2020 (ZOOM ) meeting focussed on Diocesan finances and the budget for 2021. Lesley Lynn, Chair of the diocesan Board of Finance & Gabrielle Higgins, Diocesan Secretary made presentations. The focus was on addressing potential shortfalls in Diocesan and Parish finances due to the Covid pandemic. An update was made on Deanery finances.

***Alan Magrath (PCC Secretary)***

### **PCC PROCEEDINGS**

The PCC met 6 times in 2020. The initial meeting planned for March 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid 19 lockdown. Meetings were held in May, June (2), October (2) and November on ZOOM. Minutes for all meetings have been published and approved. Significant use was also made of the ability to use email resolutions; 15 were used in 2020 (these were formally, minuted at later PCC's).

The standing committee met 6 times in February, March (last face to face meeting) May, July, September and November (Remote - ZOOM Meetings). The standing committee meets to address PCC business between PCC meetings. The members are the Clergy, two churchwardens and the Finance Officer. An additional PCC member may also attend but none did in 2020. Any significant decisions were referred to the following PCC meeting for approval.

The PCC uses a rolling agenda to ensure all necessary reviews are addressed through the year and a standard meeting agenda to ensure all current business is appropriately addressed.

At the beginning of the Pandemic there was no legislation in place to allow virtual meetings to be granted the same authority as face-to-face meetings. This was authorised in (September 2020 when bishop Martin signed the appropriate instrument allowing this to occur)

The last AGM was held in October 2020 – moved due to the Covid Pandemic. Church Wardens were appointed at the Parish Meeting

preceding the APCM PCC Officers were appointed at a PCC meeting following the meeting. The PCC would like to appoint a Health and Safety representative, but no candidate has been found.

***Alan Magrath (PCC Secretary)***

## **SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The Parish is committed to implementing all safeguarding policies and practice guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults issued by the House of Bishops and have adopted the *'Promoting a Safer Church; Safeguarding Policy Statement.'*

As advised last year, the C1 course (which is a requirement for anyone working with children or vulnerable adults) continues to be available on-line. All of our Junior Church volunteers who are still outstanding, have been sent requests for this to be completed. There is also a C0 course which is a basic introduction, and this is also to be completed by all who will be registering for the C1. Regrettably there has been little uptake on this again this year. Thankfully, all new PCC members have completed these excellent courses.

Having recently re-done the C0, C1 and C2 courses I have found them to be amongst the best safeguarding courses that I have undertaken, and certainly the best that the diocese has offered.

This C0 course can be completed by anyone who is interested in what the church is doing about safeguarding and I can send anyone a link if they contact me via email:

[safeguarding@stalbansgossopsgreen.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stalbansgossopsgreen.co.uk)

Everyone is up-to-date with their DBS clearance.

I have recently "attended" two C2 sessions that have been held on Zoom. These live sessions are so very good, and I would say better than the version offered in person face-to-face, as there is no hiding on a zoom conference call! The C2 level course is currently just for clergy and safeguarding leads.

***Andy Hoare (Safeguarding Officer)***

## **HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT**

H&S Notices and H&S Policy for both St Albans and the Barn Church were reviewed and are currently up to date. Risk Assessments have been completed, as necessary. Fire Extinguishers (for both St Alban's and the Barn Church) have been inspected and Fire Notices have been reviewed. Accident books have been completed, as necessary. With the exception of the Covid 19 virus, there have been no significant H&S concerns during the year.

Our thanks are due to Andy Hoare who has been our effective H&S officer for several years but who resigned in April 2020. We would like to appoint a new H&S representative for the Parish. In the interim the Church Wardens have overseen any situations that could cause a safety concern for the Parish and have ensured that any necessary preventative action was taken.

In 2020 due to the Covid 19 Pandemic the church has been closed for significant periods of time either as a result of Government regulations or due to the PCC deeming the safety issues, as a result of the virus, as too high a risk to parishioners and clergy to allow common worship to continue. When the church was open, and deemed safe for worship, Risk Assessments were carried out to minimise risk to our clergy and congregation. Measures were taken to ensure that the Parish complied with all relevant Government and Diocesan regulation and guidance. As a result, the number of worshippers was reduced to allow adequate social distancing, communion in only one kind was administered, and appropriate hygiene safeguards were maintained (e.g the use of Antiviral hand gel on entering and leaving the church).

***Alan Magrath (PCC Secretary)***

## **BUILDING DEVELOPMENT GROUP (BDG)**

A small team is working on plans to upgrade our buildings which are now showing their age and are not fully accessible. The vision is for the church to be used by local clubs and organisations and be at the heart of the Community in Gossops Green. In the long-term, this will not only bring more people to St. Alban's, which will hopefully make them feel part of our 'family' but will also provide some much-needed funds.

An early decision was to conduct the upgrade in two phases: the first phase focussing on the church, and the second phase the church hall. The plan for the church includes:

- building a new accessible entrance in the north-east corner of the church near the bell tower
- rendering the church tower to prevent further ingress of water
- providing an accessible toilet in the area of the current entrance
- installing a 'hide-away' kitchenette at the back of the Lady Chapel
- installing a new heating system

Due to the cost of running the current heating system (~£70 / night), this has been the focus over the last few months as a modern efficient system will potentially save a significant amount of money and will ultimately pay for itself. Unfortunately, due to lockdown, we have been unable to hold meetings with the architect and contractors as planned. Hopefully as the restrictions ease, this work can progress so that we can have a new heating system for when winter comes around.

The tower has significantly deteriorated over the winter and is in urgent need of repair. However, progress has been slow over the last year as all the members of the team have other commitments.

Anyone who has time and can help applying for grants or advise on building matters will be very welcomed by the team. If you haven't got the time or skills, then we ask for your prayers to guide us with the important decisions we have to make and for how we are to obtain the necessary funds.

***Keith Ford (Chair Building Development Group)***

## **MISSION OUTREACH AND WORSHIP**

### **CHOIR & MUSIC REPORT**

As the Coronavirus took hold, and we were all affected by lockdown in March 2020, services had to be adapted to allow them to be broadcast online.

To begin with, Hannah Ford did a sterling job of singing one or two hymns to Keith Ford's piano accompaniment for each service, and Jo Browse recorded a version of the Gloria sang by her and her family.

Gradually the Ford family became skilled in editing and mixing recordings and members of the choir started to join in singing the hymns. Hannah would record first and this would be sent to the members of the choir who were able to record themselves singing along to her. This was then sent back to Keith and Helen Ford, who mixed the recordings and sent them to Rob Higson to be included in the online version of the service recorded in advance by Rev Ann, and later the live streaming.

As we became more familiar with this, the number of choristers contributing and the number of hymns increased, and we sang in harmony. The technique involved us listening to a metronome for a dozen beats before the opening phrase of the music, and this enabled Helen to mix the recordings she received and synchronize us into a single recording.

We continued to do this throughout the year, even when the church was open to services with a limited congregation, since singing was not permitted in church. However, Keith was finally able to get into church to play the organ to accompany us.

At the start of the second lockdown, the services were streamed live so people could follow them on Facebook in real time or access them online at a later date. When the services went out live, the process of including hymns evolved again. The edited music tracks were sent to Chris Cook who played them at the correct part of the service. He

had to add the lyrics on the screen before the service, a task that Helen eventually took over.

All these hymns have been stored on St Alban's hard drive so this will allow for future access, which will be useful, for example, for when the Fords are away. We may also be able to create a cd which we could use to raise funds for the church.

At Christmas time we managed to record carols for an online carol service, which involved a lot of recording and time spent mixing, but was well worth it as the service was much appreciated by those who tuned in. Being online it could be accessed by people around the world who had heard about it from parishioners.

We have missed so much of our worship together over the past year, and sadly singing has been one of the strict taboos to prevent coronavirus being transmitted through droplets. However, being able to sing and listen to hymns in the online versions has mitigated the loss somewhat, and we are very grateful to the Fords, Rob Higson, Chris Cook, Jo Browse, and members of St Alban's choir, all of whom were involved in ensuring that music continued to help us in our worship through this challenging time.

***Meg Miller***

### **COMMUNITY MORNING**

For the first few months of 2020, each Thursday we still had a lively morning with between 16-20 people attending each week. Ron McRae was very faithful lifting heavy tables and notice boards for us and was available to lead health walks, weather permitting. May Jobe baked very popular scones for us. We were always available for new people to drop in and make friends.

Because of the Covid 19 Pandemic the Community Morning ceased operating in March 2020. We look forward to resuming activities when the Pandemic is under control.

Plans for the future include: a relaunch with a rebranding as **The Community Café** with an expansion of activities available and also, hopefully, a Hearing Aid drop-in clinic.

***Madeleine Taylor / Merle Martin***

### **COMPUTER GROUP REPORT**

The group fulfils the purpose for which it was set up i.e. to be a group where anyone can socialise and learn the basics of using a computer, smartphone and tablet rather than a place of more formal learning.

During lockdown the group has not been able to meet however it has been commented many times how much the Computer Group is appreciated. This is particularly true during the pandemic since the knowledge gained by the participants has helped many of them to stay in touch during Lockdown.

### **GOOD FRIDAY CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP REPORT**

There was no Good Friday Workshop in 2020 (or in 2021) due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

***Andy Hoare*** (One of the activity leaders)

### **JUNIOR CHURCH**

There has been no face-to-face Junior church in the past 12 months due to the pandemic. However, we have not neglected our younger congregation. During the summer holiday 2020, some Sunday School leaders helped in distributing materials for a 6 week long summer art group, coordinated by Lizzi. Also....

I have been pasting onto our Facebook page weekly a link to Sunday School material with reference to the liturgical readings. This has been provided by the "Together at Home – Church Resources" Facebook group.

I have assisted the Curate in the Confirmation classes, at first these were face-to-face but recently have been held by Zoom. (Please see Lizzi's report for full details.)

All Junior Church leaders are up-to-date with their DBS checks but many are still yet to complete the excellent Safeguarding C0 and C1 on line courses.

**Andy Hoare** (One of the Junior Church Leaders)

[safeguarding@stalbangossopsgreen.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stalbangossopsgreen.co.uk)

### **CONFIRMATION GROUP/ PAWS 4 THOUGHT / MISSION PROJECT**

During the pandemic we have had to find new ways of enabling our young people to grow in their faith. A fortnightly confirmation group, led by Rev. Lizzi and Andy, has been meeting via zoom and in person and the young people are looking forward to their confirmation in July.

We have also been offering a weekly Bible Story on the parish facebook group (Paws for Thought) , with a rota of people taking turns to tell the story - it's been just as popular with adults as children!

Finally, we undertook a mission project to support children's emotional health across Crawley, with 50 families taking part, which was very well received.

**Rev'd Lizzi Green (Curate)**

### **MOTHERS UNION**

Our branch of Gossops Green & Bewbush Mothers' Union has been quite active over the past 12 months despite the Covid 19 Pandemic. In the main we have not been able to meet in person, the committee have kept in touch with branch members through monthly mailings or emails. During July and August we had a series of Tea & Cake gatherings, each with a few members attending, and only very few were not able to attend at least one. This, as well as supporting branch members locally, and being an enjoyable socially distanced gathering, also managed to raise £383 for the Diocesan AFIA (Away From It All, caravan holidays) project.

At Christmas we supported the Diocesan Shine a Light project, where we made stars to deliver to children from the parish and to a local

Bewbush Pre-School, this was to give support, hope and outreach. Some members have attended Zoom meetings and services with participants from across the Diocese which has given us a real sense of unity and belonging.

In November, some members took part in the global “No more 1 in 3” initiative to raise awareness of gender-based violence.

For Mothering Sunday some members took part in the Make a Mother’s Day initiative, where funds were raised for different projects such as UK Parenting Courses and Adult Literacy programmes, or Small Business plans for women in parts of Africa.

Many members have been putting their handiwork skills to use by making stars at Christmas, knitted and crocheted hearts to give away to the lonely and isolated, or to send to family members we haven’t seen this year. Other members have been making masks, scrubs bags and scrubs outfits to give to local NHS workers in hospitals, clinics and dental facilities.

In June we took part in the Diocesan food collection for FSW (Family Support work), over 4 weeks, which was very successful, and locally our branch members have continued to collect one food item each a week, which is then collected and donated monthly to our local FSW worker. Thanks to Merle Martin and Jane Sharpe for organising this.

I would like to thank my truly wonderful fellow committee members without whom running the branch would have been very hard this year. So thank you to treasurer Jane Sharpe and secretary Ann Routledge. With their help we have managed to get the mailings put together and distributed; also Christmas, Easter, Birthday, Get Well and Condolence cards out on time. We have had committee meetings (face to face and zoom), and the branch is solvent and all Diocesan and district subs and donations paid.

Our membership is currently 22. We have 2 new members who joined this year (Tsitsi Chikukwa and Annitta Nalabwama, and one member who rejoined after some years of lapsed membership, Bev Killick). We heartily welcome them, and look forward to when they can be formally welcomed in church. We are always open to new members.....anyone can join....you don't have to be a mother, or married or even a woman. Membership is open to absolutely anyone. New would-be members who would like to be part of this great global organisation please form an orderly queue!

***Sarah Magrath (Branch Leader- Gossops Green and Bewbush)***

### **SATURDAY PRAYER**

We completed 8 years of Saturday prayer in 2020, continuing to pray (as part of the wider daily prayer of the church) for our Mission, Growth and Renewal of St Alban's Parish and communities.

This year has been interesting. From April we held our meetings on ZOOM with two outdoor, socially distanced meetings in the garden at "Monks Hood" and one in the church before we reverted to our ZOOM meetings.

Our Fellowship has been even stronger in this year. About 10 of us, currently, continue to gather for prayer on each second Saturday of the month at 9.30 am and there are two or three who join us in prayer at home, should they be unable to join us physically or on ZOOM. We would love some more of you be with us to strengthen out prayer life together. Please do come.

Thanks to everyone who has joined us in prayer this year. New prayer leaders are always welcome; please let me know.

***Alan Magrath***

### **YMCA CHAPLAINCY**

As you will understand during lockdown I and the other chaplains have been unable to attend the YMCA to cook and chat with the young people, However, since December I have been able to provide a dinner once a fortnight. I am enjoying being able to do something

for them in this difficult time, and have had great feedback, that although they cannot gather together to eat, they are enjoying having some home cooking again and are happy to know that we have not forgotten them! I try to send in meals they might not be able to cook for themselves, and include family favourites and traditions like pancakes, Christmas and Easter treats too. I'm looking forward to the time when we can go and share some time with them again.

Below are some comments from one of the young people about the Chaplaincy.

*"Without Chaplaincy, it would have taken me much longer to find the confidence to speak to others. When I first moved to the Foyer I didn't speak to anyone for the first 2 weeks. I don't know why, but Chaplaincy seemed like a safe place to introduce myself.*

*Chaplaincy was a space where I felt comfortable, it helped me with my ability to talk to strangers, a place where I could get things off my mind and chest, every week, and gain outside views, different points of view, and outside advice – including from the other young people attending Chaplaincy, who then became my friends. It gave me the chance to talk to other people in a place I feel comfortable – rather than a random person in a place I don't know. And thanks to the Chaplaincy and the volunteers, I am where I am now.*

You can see the full comments on their website

<https://www.ymcadlg.org/what-is-chaplaincy-at-ymca-downslink-group/>

New volunteers will be welcome.

### ***Helen Ford (YMCA Chaplaincy Team)***

#### **Caring4CarersInCovid**

Since the first lockdown I have been sewing scrub bags, face coverings and other items for friends and family. In the summer I joined a sewing group of volunteers across Sussex (from Crawley to East Grinstead, Forest Row and beyond) called Caring4CarersInCovid, together we have now donated over 30,000 items including scrubs, scrub wash bags, face coverings, lavender sachets, ear savers and care items such as hand creams, lip balms etc. to NHS workers, care homes, schools, homeless charities and more across Surrey and Sussex and beyond. Madeline has kindly been knitting hearts, and

crocheting ear-savers for the group too.

We continue to respond to requests and nominations sent to us and are always happy to receive donations towards these, many friends have given me fabric and ribbon and also hand creams and lip balms etc. I have an Amazon wishlist if anyone would like to donate some items:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/137ESA72YXOQG?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/137ESA72YXOQG?ref=wl_share)

***Helen Ford***

### **WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS**

St. Alban's Website, Facebook Page/Group and e-bulletins have played an increasingly important role during the pandemic. It is evident from so many positive and wonderful comments over the last year, that these channels have contributed to helping many during an incredibly challenging period, where at times, many, if not all of us in some way, have experienced isolation from normal everyday interactions, including with family and friends.

With lockdowns and limitations on attending our Church building, the Web and Social media have given us a platform to start and continue with online worship, including our transition from pre-recorded online services which started in April 2020, to our livestreamed services which started in September 2020, allowing as many people as possible to continue worshipping collectively. Also introduced recently was our 'Paws for Thought' online feature, which are online Bible Stories for Children, read by Rev'd Ann and Rev'd Lizzi as well as various other members of the congregation.

As the situation improves and things become safer, hopefully more will be able to return to worship within the Church building. However, livestreamed Services are hopefully here to stay. As we look to improve the tech behind them, we can continue to make our services accessible to even more people, through the web and Social media, ensuring as many people as possible feel the love and light of the lord as we continue our worship together.

## Stats

### Website

Below are website hit figures from April 2017- March 2021.

As always, I would encourage input of appropriate content from others for the website (whilst adhering to policies).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2017				1,045	400	419	317	314	526	771	449	638	4,879
2018	377	400	739	514	544	431	629	350	615	453	467	713	6,232
2019	472	382	590	579	336	461	296	280	327	405	446	436	5,010
2020	344	343	439	362	847	739	640	549	554	500	549	788	6,654
2021	629	547	531	195									1,902

April 2017 was when we launched the new style website and so why figures were particularly high that month.

#### Facebook Page

12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 55 Likes (56 Followers)  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2020 100 Likes (108 Followers)  
23<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2020 131 Likes (149 Followers)  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 148 Likes (175 Followers)  
(Followers being key, as you can like a page, without following its content).

#### Facebook Group

Feb 2019 = 113 members.  
April 2020 = 134 members.  
Oct 2020 = 147 Members  
April 2021 – 157 Members

I included 2 figures for 2020, so that you can see how numbers grew during the pandemic.

### e-bulletin

With the introduction of the e-bulletin at the end of March 2020, the website and Facebook, has also been key in allowing us to increase subscription to our weekly newsletter.

As of 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021, we have 61 subscribed to the weekly e-bulletin.

***Rob Higson (Web Administrator)***

## **CHARITY SUPPORT AND FUND RAISING**

### **THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY**

Last year was a bit different regarding the Children's Society Boxes. We have 17 people who have a box. We take them on for life rather

than just a shorter period of time. This is because it is a major way of funding for the Society. It was harder this year as most of us found we didn't have much change because of Lockdown (and the shops being closed etc). So, we had to have a variety of ways to manage the money. Some put paper money in their box, some gave me a cheque and yet others asked to pay bank to bank. The Children's Society responded to all of these. Of course, they all came in at different times. I ended up with 2 thank you posters. The first one was for £265 and the additional one meant we had sent in total just under £300. Despite everything we did very well. Hopefully more people will have a box to help with the work of helping young people experiencing difficulties at home or at school causing them to run away not get their homework done etc. Project workers can be contacted and give the youngster much needed help. Thanks to all who help in this way.

Our curate, Rev'd. Lizzi, has also been involved with the children's society, helping to produce their Lent course, as well as taking part in the Radio Sussex breakfast show to talk about her own experiences of poverty. In July, she will be guest speaker at a seminar hosted by the Children's Society and the Trussell Trust focussing on holiday hunger, and she is also helping to produce some prayer resources for the charity.

***Merle Martin***

## **FAMILY SUPPORT WORK REPORT**

This year in the Diocese Family Support Work (FSW) have developed a close relationship with the Mothers Union and the two charities now share an Office space at FSW HQ in Brighton. Locally during Lockdown Becky (our local FSW worker) was sometimes based at her home in Horsham and supported her families by phone. Many have felt the need to ring her for support. When the rules were relaxed for the pandemic Becky was able to walk with those who had the greatest need. She also has a base at Christ the King in Broadfield

Community Church where the vicar Howard Schnaar has allocated her a room to use.

During 4 weeks in May/June the Mothers Union worked with FSW to organise a massive collection of food across the diocese to fill the depot in Brighton, as at the beginning of Lockdown donations from Parishes dwindled to nothing. Since then our MU Branch at St Alban's have continued to support Becky locally by members buying and extra food item a week. Jane Sharp helps me to collect the contributions and Becky collects them at my House at the end of each month. I am extremely grateful for the continued support.

Becky and I also worked together to get a home furnished at very short notice for a family who were suddenly able to move into a house. All help is so welcome so anyone can continue to give me a food item per week.

***Merle Martin***

### **FUN & FUNDRAISING**

Lockdown meant it became very difficult to raise funds, however we held 2 virtual Cream Teas, which combined with the sale of facemasks brought in some much needed funds for the church.

Sadly, the long-awaited Auction of Promises has been deferred again, although if someone feels able to take this on in a virtual form please do step forward!

We do not know yet what the rules and possibilities will be for future events like a Summer or Christmas Fair... but we do hope that we will be able to get something arranged eventually so watch this space!

If there are any members of the congregation who would like to join our happy band of fundraisers in any way please let us know. Also, if you have any ideas of new events that we could try...in these challenging times... or for the future please do share them with us!

We are in need of new inspiration and encouragement!

***Helen Ford (Meg Miller, Jane Sharpe, Kerry Lavington, Jenny & Ken Graham)***

## **LINK TO HOPE SHOEBOXES**

I recently got an update letter and Thank You posters from Link to Hope.

In spite of the difficult times we are in, they were able to send 20,768 boxes out to Eastern Europe this year. In addition to the many shoeboxes people filled and sent, others donated to the appeal and also many items were donated for the boxes direct to the warehouse.

As you can imagine the countries supported are having a terrible time with little or no access to healthcare. Project managers have had to be very careful about giving out shoeboxes so photos are limited, and obviously a team was not able to go out from the UK to deliver the boxes. The website and Facebook pages do have updates and some photos for people to see. I would encourage people to check these out.

Although they do not know how it is going to work out, they are planning to run the appeal again in 2021. They are also promoting the Bags for Education appeal, aiming to equip as many children as possible with a bag full to bursting with stationery items that enable them to go to school. This frees up families on very low incomes to spend their meagre finances on essentials such as food, medicines and clothing, but ensures the children are not at a disadvantage in their education.

There has been some discussion on social media which has debated whether sending boxes of items is the best way to support these communities, it would be useful to hear people's opinions. Certainly, we do need to be more aware of what we send, not including unnecessary packaging, particularly plastic items.

Our local hub at Worthing has had lots of problems this year, the building has been in a very dilapidated state for some years, the roof finally gave in to the weather this year and needed costly repairs.

This in addition to a limited lease prompted them to look for new premises, which they finally found. However, the new site needed a great deal of work before they could move into it. Volunteers spent much time helping get the site ready and just as they were about to do so they had a fire!! Here is the latest Facebook post from 3 weeks ago:

“Moving into our newly renovated head office is on hold due to a fire at the premises yesterday!! Fortunately, it was in the fuse box which was closed but we have smoke damage throughout the property which has permeated everything. So sad that after 18mths of trying to get things done bit by bit, we are probably going to have to replace lots of it. We were moving in on the 6th April but not to be now. Problem is our old premises lease runs out on the 14th April - eek! On the positive no one was hurt, things can be replaced but people can't. Now we wait (and try to remain as calm as possible while silently screaming!)”

Please hold them all in your prayers as they try to move forward.

***Helen Ford***

## **OPEN DOORS**

As a church we continue to pray for the persecuted church as part of a continuing wave of worldwide prayer. We have now become a Connected Church with Open Doors which means that we will:

- Hold at least one church service for persecuted Christians each year (This will be on 17 October this year)
- Pray regularly as a whole church for persecuted Christians.
- Engage with emergency appeals as and when they are launched (this would be on an individual basis)
- Share petitions that call on our political leaders to support persecuted Christians

Many of the congregation continue to make regular contributions to Open Doors Worldwide Mission (thankyou).

Because it was a ZOOM meeting, we were able to attend the launch of Open Doors World Watch report in Parliament in January. This was attended by nearly 100 MPs including our own MP Henry Smith. Fiona Bruce MP also attended, making her first speech in her new role as Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief. She commended Open Doors supporters on our continued advocacy.

Open Doors are running a new campaign to highlight the double vulnerability Christian women face to persecution because of both their faith and their gender. A letter has been sent to the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab MP, and Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss MP asking for specific help for our Christian Sisters. 48 MPs have signed the letter and another 13 have themselves written to their ministers seeking their support.

Please continue to pray for and support our Christian Brothers and Sisters who continue to be persecuted in this awful time of the Covid Pandemic. For further information go to: [www.opendoorsuk.org](http://www.opendoorsuk.org))

### ***Alan and Sarah Magrath***

#### **OPEN HOUSE**

Open House continues to support and give shelter to homeless people during the pandemic. They are currently unable to accept physical donations but appreciate any money donated in this difficult period. Please refer to their website.

<https://www.crawleyopenhouse.co.uk/>

If you are able you can take part in their sponsored Hundred For The Homeless challenge. During the month of May walk, cycle, run, swim or row 100 miles, or do 100 of anything you choose if you would prefer. Plant 100 shrubs, knit 100 items, make 100 pots of jam, write 100 letters ...Open House are aiming to raise £10,000 through this challenge that's around 100 people raising around £100 each for those less fortunate than themselves.

### ***Merle Martin***

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gossops Green and Bewbush, St Alban's

**Trustees 2020-21:**

**Ex Officio:**

Incumbent: Revd. Ann Alexander (Chair)

Curate: Revd. Lizzi Green (from June 2019)

**Wardens:**

Mrs Caroline Edwards

Mr Roger Gibson

**Secretary:** Alan Magrath

**Safeguarding officer:** Mr Andy Hoare

**Elected members:**

Jenny Graham (Until October 2020)

Sarah-Jane Higson (Until October 2020)

Beverly Killick

Andy Hoare

Jane Sharpe

Tsitsi Chikukwa (October 2020)

Barbara Zanleoni (October 2020)

Emma Humphrey (October 2020)

Madeleine Taylor (October 2020)

Sarah Magrath (October 2020)

Robert Higson (Re-elected October 2020)

**Deanery Synod:**

Merle Martin (until November 2020)

Sue Richardson

Bev Killick

**Treasurer:** Mr James May

Registered office: Ifield Parish Office 1 Lychgate Cottage Ifield Street Ifield  
Crawley West Sussex RH11 0NN

**Independent Examiners:** Darren Harding ACA FCCA DChA

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