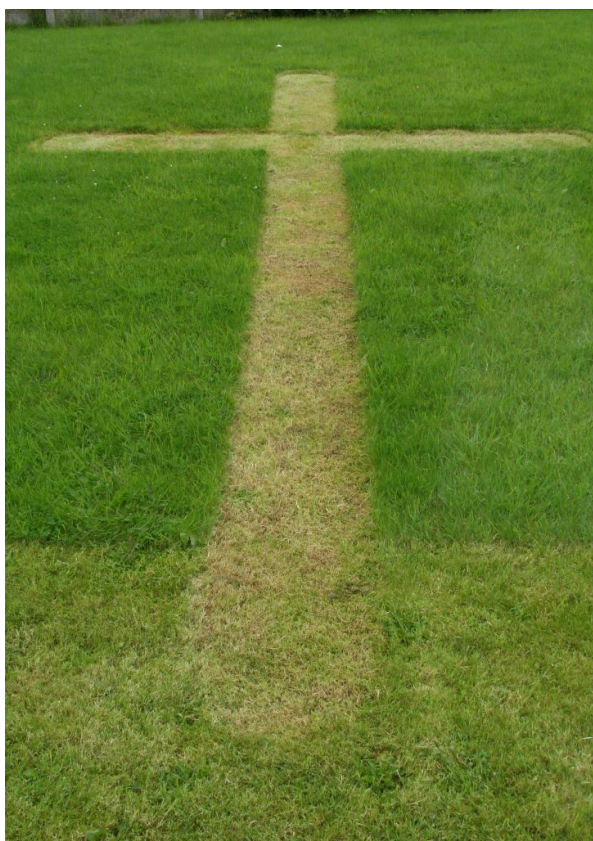


St Bartholomew's, Thurstaston with St Chad's Irby



MISSION AND ACTIVITIES IN 2012



A Word from the Rector

Dear Friends,

2012 is a year that many people will remember for a lifetime because of the significant events that took place:-

- Nationally: Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Diamond Jubilee; and the Olympic and Paralympic Games took place in London.
- Church of England: Whichever side of the debate regarding Women Bishops you are on, the "NO" vote on November 20th was a significant event in the life of the national church.
- Our Parish Churches: July 1st was a significant date for us as we celebrated our church community here in Thurstaston and Irby.
- Our Community: Following the painful decision to close St Chad's Pre-school, September 2012 was a significant time for our local community with the opening of Dawpool Pre-school which flourished within the first term and is a great asset to many local families.
- Individuals: My parents celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary and many of you will also have had significant life events during the year - Births, Baptisms, Weddings, Anniversaries or Funerals.

I wonder whether we can look back at 2012 and say "that was a year in which God truly blessed me." Whilst I was attending a church service during a holiday in November, God reminded me of the very basic fact that "he loves me" and that his love for me is endless and without boundaries and not dependent upon anything I have or haven't done.

For me personally, 2012 was a year of highs and lows. It was a year in which I sometimes struggled with my faith and at times felt too far away from God. The very basic truth that "he loves me" re-penetrated my heart and soul. It encouraged me in my calling and strengthened my ministry and is the reason why I will remember 2012 as a significant year in my relationship with God.

What about you? How significant was God in your life in 2012? Did you grow in faith during 2012?

On 1st January 2013, I walked Lily (my Labrador) on Thurstaston Hill at about 7.30am and the most amazing Rainbow was arched right across the sky, and I felt that God was saying - during the coming year keep focussed on me; trust me and I will be with you through all that is to come. This was built on when at Epiphany it seemed that God was inviting us to believe that this would be a year in which people from all areas of our community would be drawn into his light.

Will you join me, in a spiritual journey of discovery for yourselves, our churches and our community in 2013?

Let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.

We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.

Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1b-2a (NLT)

Revd Jane Turner

THE PCC AND ITS ROLE IN CHURCH LIFE

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for church finances, the churches and their contents and the churchyard. It has concern for the ongoing worship and mission of the church. It enables matters of general importance to be discussed by the minister and church members and its decisions may affect most areas of church life.

Financial Matters

The current financial crisis has been at the front of our minds throughout the year. PCC members were very aware that Parish Share is well over £1,000 a week and does not include salaries, repairs, maintenance and materials. Members were extremely grateful to all those who gave time, talents or money in support of the church and its mission. Mr Eden reported in November that it would be several weeks before the full effects of Giving Sunday became clear, but he said there had been a positive response.

In March, the PCC agreed to pledge part of the legacy from John and Evelyn Powell to the Open Door fund and had considered using another part to replace the dilapidated notice board at St Bartholomew's. Members were very pleased when ITPAS (Irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society) kindly offered to raise funds for a new notice board.

In some parishes, parishioners are personally liable for the costs of repairs to the chancel (CRL). We were required by the Land Registration Act 2002 to consider CRL by 12th October 2013. After thorough research, the Treasurer concluded that CRL did not exist in this parish. The PCC recorded thanks to Mr Eden for the time he spent investigating the matter.

Provision and Outreach for Children

The PCC is very aware of the importance of a Mothers' and Toddlers' group and a Praise and Play group are important. Help with Pre-School, Mothers and Toddlers and Praise and Play had been requested for many months without success, so members welcomed an offer from a PCC member to organise an event on Wednesday afternoons, provided help was available.

In March, the Council was strongly advised to verify that the Local Authority would not demand repayment of a proportion of the support funding that it had provided for the Pre-School. The conditions of the Planning Permission meant that the New Building could not be used for another Pre-School and we sought and obtained a change to them.

By May, we had been told that the LA would not seek to claw money back, and subject to written confirmation we were considering options that included improvements to safety at St Chad's which would also benefit the Pre-School.

Open Door

We were disappointed in January to hear that three grant applications had been rejected. One further application was outstanding. Mrs Lang and Mrs S Jackson undertook a sponsored swim and at the March meeting, we learnt that they had raised over £1,000. They were warmly congratulated by all present.

By June, we heard that our remaining application had been successful but the grant was considerably less than what we had hoped for. However, other possibilities had appeared including a recommendation for another application for Lottery Funding, while Mr Eden had sought a grant from the People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) "Dream Fund". It required support from another relevant local charity and he had approached ITPAS whose Chairman had been very supportive. Although PPL had been very positive and a grant of the entire amount required seemed possible, ITPAS later withdrew their support.

Thanksgiving Sunday

In January, we decided that Thanksgiving Sunday should be an occasion when people could receive thanks from the Church and give thanks to God. We agreed that we would also

arrange a Pledge Sunday when people would be asked to review their giving.

In March, we agreed that on 1st July, the morning services would be combined into a 10.30 event at St Chad's to celebrate the activities of as many of our church-related organisations as possible and enjoy a "Bring and Share" meal. At 6.30pm that day there would be a Songs of Praise service at St Bartholomew's. In June, a suggestion that Pledge Sunday should be renamed Giving Sunday was welcomed.

Review of Christmas Service Arrangements

In January, the Rector reported that all Christmas services had been well attended and the midnight service had a good mixture from all congregations. In September, we agreed that the first Holy Communion of Christmas should begin at 11.15 pm on Christmas Eve at St Bartholomew's with another service at 10 am also at St Bartholomew's, both led by the Rector.

Easter Service Arrangements

The PCC was informed that the Egg Run would again be on Palm Sunday so an 11.15 service on that day would be impossible, but the Rector had been assured in writing that the police would not support an Egg Run on Palm Sunday from 2013. Following the extremely positive response to the Taizé service in the summer, the Rector proposed a Taizé service on Sunday 15th April which was fully supported by the PCC.

St Bartholomew's Reports

Reports on the churches are provided at most of our meetings. This is a very brief summary, as the churchwardens will give more detail in their reports.

The churchyard wall was damaged by lorries three times. The gutters, pointing and some roof tiles required attention. Stonework round the windows was not repaired when we expected because of the weather. The PCC gratefully accepted an offer by a member of the congregation to install free of charge new heating controls to reduce fuel costs by 25%. The PCC also thanked Dr Robson for painting the ironwork on the doors.

St Chad's Reports

Mr R Jackson informed the Council during the year of improved arrangements for maintaining the fire extinguishers and of work on the doors, locks, floor and damaged brickwork. Our hopes were raised in September when we heard that we might receive community funding of £27,000 to refurbish the kitchen and toilets. Regrettably, we were told at the next meeting that the Local Authority had withdrawn the grants owing to funding cuts.

Parish Boundaries

In March, a proposal to adjust the parish boundary with the parish of Pensby to remove an irregularity was approved unanimously. We still await a response from the Diocese.

Remembrance Sunday 2013

In 2012, at least 277 people had attended the Remembrance Service, and the numbers had caused difficulties. The Rector proposed changing to a three-part arrangement for 2013, which was discussed by the Council and approved unanimously.

Water Meter at St Chad's

Members were informed in June that another unusually large bill has been received and were very concerned about how so much water could possibly have been used. Mr Eden wrote to the CEO of United Utilities (UU) and UU promised to investigate further.

Caretaker for St Chad's

The PCC discussed the need for someone who could deal with minor problems at short notice; and the need for someone to be present at the beginning and end of booking to ensure that everything is left as expected. This would include informing hirers of any additional charge for cleaning. In September it was reported that a cleaner and a caretaker had been appointed.

The caretaker was a young person: all necessary permissions and authorisations had been obtained and insurance cover verified.

Rectory Garden

We heard in March that the owner of the property next to the Rectory had made several offers to the Diocese to purchase part of the Rectory garden. As he would proceed with the development within his own land even if the Rectory garden were not sold to him, disturbance from traffic was inevitable and the PCC agreed unanimously to support the principle of the sale provided conditions laid down by the Rector were met. (At the end of the year the owner of the adjacent property and the Diocese were still in discussion.)

Toilet Facilities at St Chad's

At the same (March) meeting, Mr Jackson reported that the disabled facilities were inadequate. The PCC agreed to use some of the proceeds of the sale of the Rectory garden to rebuild the toilets in the original building, with a proper unisex disabled facility including baby-changing resources. In May, the Architect told us that this would cost almost twice the expected proceeds of the sale and would require using half of the room that is currently the Pre-School store. Mr Jackson found another way to create a disabled toilet and access point and it was agreed to seek estimates directly from builders.

Review of Policies

Mr Studholme agreed to draft policies for health and safety and for HR issues, and Dr Turnbull agreed to draft a policy for child protection. There was strong general support for a comment by Mr Smale that the Diocese should provide model policies in all these areas. Policies and procedures for grievances, disciplinary matters and equal opportunities were drafted over the summer.

We agreed that anyone making a recurrent booking for children would either provide their child protection policy for approval or agree to abide by ours. Two references would be needed for those working with children and we agreed that only one of them should be from within the church. The PCC accepted the policy prepared by Dr Turnbull and modified following PCC discussions. The Council also unanimously endorsed the appointment of Mr Rob Wiseman as Child Protection Coordinator.

First Aid

The policy required that qualified first aiders should be available, and some had come forward. The PCC accepted an offer by Mrs Brenda Jones, a member of the Red Cross who worships at St Chad's, to provide basic First Aid training for up to 16 people.

GAP (Growth Action Planning)

In May, a report on progress for GAP Year 3 (GAP3) was tabled, with suggestions for targets for Year 3. Mr Roberts, Mrs Lang, Mr Studholme and Mrs Jones volunteered to form a committee to take GAP forward. They met in October and reported to the November PCC meeting. They proposed four specific goals: a Christianity Explored Course; Completion of Parish Policies; Improving Welcome and a Parish Photograph Competition and Calendar (2014). These received unanimous approval.

Future possibilities included Interactive Sermon Discussions and Harvest Trays to line church paths to encourage families to attend; developing Pastoral Care (ongoing from GAP 2); a Community Choir for specific events, Messy Church, a Christmas Tree Festival, a Community BBQ, Light up a tree (All Souls) and a Bedding Plant Sale.

Finance and Fees for 2013

The debate on the new structure for fees began at our meeting in September. After lengthy discussion, the PCC agreed arrangements that appeared to meet all the requirements but that would have to be confirmed in the light of experience.

Diocesan Environmental Policy

The Archdeacon of Macclesfield had written to us about Chester Diocesan Environment Policy that had been adopted by Bishop's Council. The PCC agreed unanimously to adopt the policy statement which was that:-

"We believe that we have a Christian responsibility to care for God's creation. Therefore we believe that this ought to influence all our thinking, our actions and how we exercise our faithfulness in every function and activity, by every person; 24/7 – all day, every day."

Christmas Fair Arrangements

The PCC thanked Mrs Deanne Wiseman, Mrs Viv King and Mrs Sharon Perlaki for making the arrangements for the Christmas Fair, with many helpers. Following the meeting, Mrs Deboorder offered to run a children's craft table for "Santa comes to Irby" on Friday 7th December when the Christmas lights will be switched on. Many community events, including singing, dancing and a barbecue had been planned.

G J Barley

Honorary Secretary of the PCC

TREASURER'S REPORT 2012

This is my fourth and final Annual Report for Thurstaston PCC. I am still going to be around in the background, although my continuing ill-health necessitates me handing the reins to others. Unfortunately, no-one has stepped forward so we have had to implement a Plan B. In order to implement the changes, we have just changed our accounting system from software to web-browser – it seems to work well and gets around the problem I was most worried about, that the PCC accounts were held purely on my computer with no-one else able to access the system. We now have three people able to access and work on the accounts, on any computer anywhere in the world.

In my first report for the 2009 Accounts I preached Doom and Gloom, and have done ever since! 2012 was no different, although we did receive two exceptional sums of money. The first was an £8,000 legacy received in February 2012 from the Estate of Evelyn Powell Deceased. The PCC has discussed various ways of spending the money, with the only firm commitment to replace the public notice board at St Bartholomew's Church, although no action has been taken to date.

In July 2012 our Pre-School finally closed, with surplus funds charged to the Account as a management fee for all the work the PCC has incurred over the years – quite considerable in 2012! Dawpool Pre School has taken over as a commercial enterprise, utilising our premises at St Chad's. To float off Dawpool Pre School the PCC agreed to lend them £1,000 with repayment in about 3 years' time but to rank after a loan of £4,000 from the Chester Diocesan Board of Education is repaid. We had incurred some expenditure to the internal fabric of St Chad's in order to meet OFSTED requirements, with just over £3,600 eventually taken as the management fee. £3,000 of this has been Designated should Dawpool Pre School need extra funding, subject to business case being presented to the PCC for consideration. The offer expires in July 2014 when the funds will revert to the General Fund.

The legacy was similarly Designated with both funds put on one side but as overall parts of the General Fund. The alternative choice was to withhold Parish Share. That said, I had to arrange with the Chester Diocesan Board of Finance to reduce our Parish Share by £10,000 for cash flow purposes until our annual claim for Gift Aid was submitted at the end of the financial

year. HMRC Charities turned around the claim within 7 days! The £10,000 Parish Share underpayment is to be collected by Direct Debit in February 2013.

There has never been a year in my treasurership when income has exceeded expenditure. We have reduced expenditure in a number of ways, for example:-

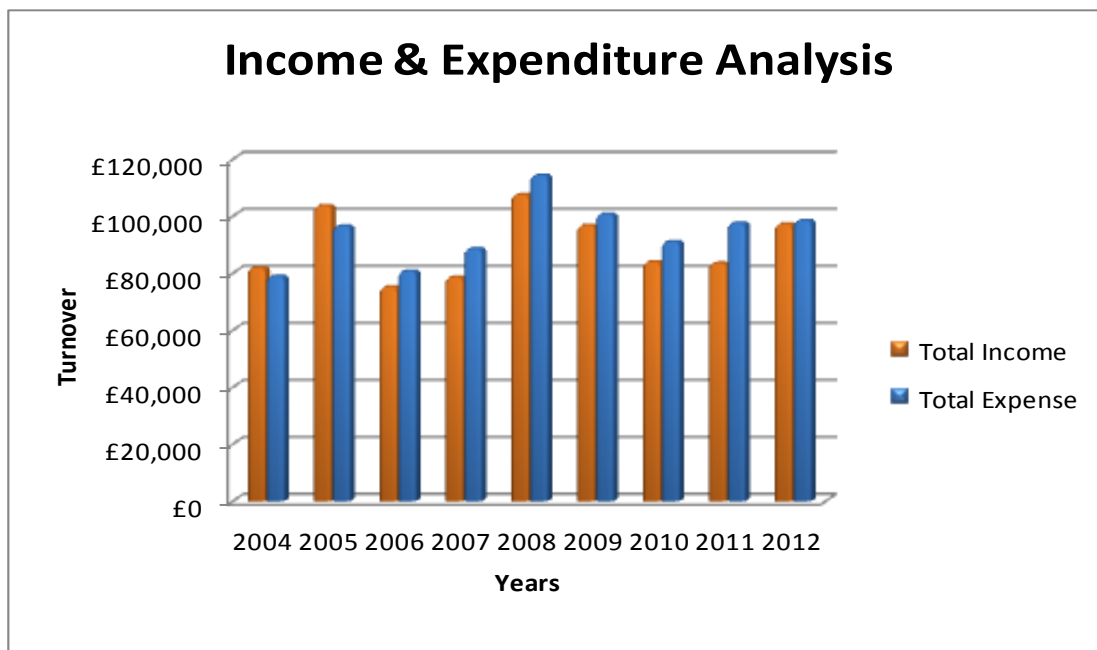
- In 2011 we purchased lawnmowers and strimmers so that volunteers from our congregation could keep the grass tidy at both churches. The graveyard at St Bartholomew's is the most difficult to maintain and was the most costly when we employed a professional gardener.
- We no longer employ contract cleaners to keep St Chad's clean and tidy. We have a fantastic team of Sarah Lee Wilkins who takes pride in cleaning the building; and Georgia Brady who is caretaker.
- The employment of Georgia ensures all taps are turned off so as to save on water bills. We had a major problem with some huge water bills – 2009 was the worst! I became increasingly dissatisfied with the attitude of United Utilities' staff, so wrote to the Chief Executive Officer, which brought amazing results. We had had a temporary meter installed, which like its original leaked water. I refused to pay for leaking water! Following a phone call in December 2012 from a senior member of staff at United Utilities, our water bills had been analysed since 2009. This January we received a refund of £1,994 – result!
- I used the services of energy consultants and have switched electricity accounts for both churches to Scottish & Southern Energy. The rate at which we are charged is fixed until September 2014. Gas at St Chad's is now looked after by E-on on a fixed rate deal expiring in July 2015. We continue to get our heating oil for St Bartholomew's from Emo Oil.

Having set a target of £8,000 extra income from our 2012 Planned Giving campaign, we only achieved about £3,000 although the full effects will not be realised until 2013. However, we will continue to have an excess of expenditure over income in spite of all our best efforts. Prices for everything are rising, even Parish Share which saw another increase of 3%. Indeed, Parish Share has increased by almost 15% since 2009.

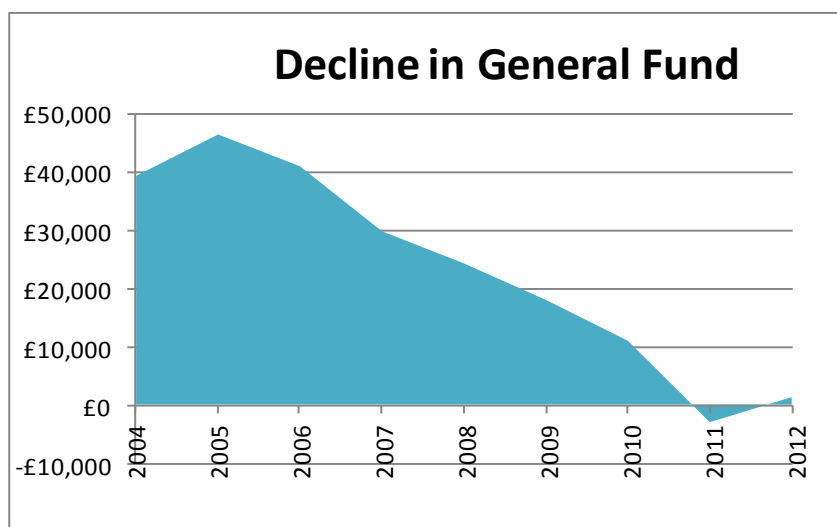
We learned a valuable lesson in 2012, in that the current economic conditions are having a real impact on the spending powers of many of our church congregation. Money is tight and becoming tighter – people are losing their jobs with others going on short-time. We simply cannot expect church giving to increase in such difficult times. We are now facing a real threat to paying our full Parish Share in 2013, and of course we have the problem from 2011 when we could not pay £10,400 – it still remains outstanding.

The graph on the next page helps show the imbalance over the years of expenditure against income. Not since 2005 have we seen surplus funds. 2012 saw the Designated Funds impact upon the General Fund, thus providing a cushion against our increasingly precarious position. Of course, these Designated Funds could be drawn upon within the next few months, although I think the money set aside for Dawpool Pre School is now fairly safe. Dawpool Pre School's finances have been assisted by the PCC by allowing them to operate rent-free for their first two terms. Rent terms are due to commence at the start of the Summer Term of 2013.

Also, the PCC had set aside £4,000 for Open Door, but failure to attract major outside funding has put the whole project on hold for the time being, whilst other avenues are being explored – see the Open Door report below.



I cannot overemphasise the importance of working capital which, in our case, is now virtually non-existent. I have already mentioned the need to withhold some Parish Share pending receipt of Gift Aid money. The graph below shows the decline in our General Fund from a positive £46,000 in 2005, dropping to minus £3,000 in 2011, and creeping up into the black to



£1,265 in 2012. This was only possible because in 2011 I had set aside £6,500 for Quinquennial repairs to St Bartholomew's Church, and £5,590 was drawn to cover the new guttering. We still have work to be done by the stonemason and we had overlooked the architect's fees, where just over £900 has been paid in January 2013. I dare say there will be some additional architect's fees to cover the

stonemason's work. Of course, strip out the Designated Funds and the General Fund would be minus £10,000.

I am able to recover VAT for work done to the church fabric only, through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWG). There is a 12-month time limit, therefore the longer the stonemason delays his work the less likely I can include the VAT element of his bill. As the minimum future VAT claim is £1,000 we will have to pay his full invoice value without any chance of recovering the VAT element (expected to be £400 - £500).

Mentioning the stonemason, we have been the victim of a spate of unknown vehicles hitting the churchyard wall close to the side gate in Church Lane. Each time a claim is submitted to our insurers we have to pay an excess of £250 and the insurer never pays VAT. We cannot recover VAT from the LPWG because the Scheme only covers church fabric. All damage has now been repaired with additional cost paid out of our meagre reserves in February 2013.

Insurance costs to both St Bartholomew's and St Chad's have increased, with the full effects now being seen in 2013. Insured values have also increased, as shown within the financial statements.

I now turn to Open Door. We benefited from continued fund-raising from our congregation. In conjunction with Wirral Rotary, Burns Night raised £220 for us. The staff at Birkenhead Land Registry raised £114. Sally Lang and Sally Jackson raised a total of £890 through their sponsored swim efforts. We had hoped that the Garfield Weston Foundation would match-fund all the money raised since the inception of Open Door over ten years ago, but perhaps due the economic climate they could only give us a grant of £5,000.

I discovered, quite by chance, that the People's Postcode Lottery had money available for projects in Greater Manchester and Merseyside via their Dream Fund, to enable community groups to fulfil their dream. I actually submitted a draft proposal which had to be limited to one side of a sheet of A4 paper and sent by email: this received outline approval, asking for a full application to be submitted. We were required to submit as a lead charity working with a local community group – ITPAS seemed to fit the bill due to our common objectives of working with English Heritage Listed Buildings. However, ITPAS felt unable to support us as they are generally opposed to any alterations to listed buildings, especially a Grade 2 Star listed church building.

The concept of an extension to the church has become a step too far. We are short by at least £90,000. The PCC is now exploring alternative ideas, in conjunction with both the local authority and diocese.

Finally, I have enjoyed my voluntary work as Honorary Treasurer. I will be retained as a sort of volunteer consultant for as long as my health permits, to handle such business as submission of Accounts and Annual Return to the Charity Commission, the annual Gift Aid claim, and possibly to compile future annual church accounts, but without a written report. Thank you to my wife, Ruth, for those endless hours working on the accounts in my converted loft. Thank you also to John Roberts with whom I have worked closely on a number of issues; to Roger Jackson to authorise and release internet payments from our bank account (and to sign cheques as required); and to Richard Turner who as Independent Examiner has the annual chore of confirming the accuracy of my figures within the financial statements.

Christopher J Eden
Honorary Treasurer

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S REPORT

During 2012 we held almost 300 services of worship at either St Bartholomew's or St Chad's. Of these, 231 were regular Sunday worship (139 at St Bartholomew's and 92 at St Chad's), whilst 30 were special or festival occasions (20 at St Bartholomew's and 10 at St Chad's). The remainder were occasional services (weddings, funerals, and baptisms) at St Bartholomew's, which is a popular venue for the weddings of those who have a qualifying connection with or live within the parish. Overall 24 weddings or blessings of a civil ceremony took place at St Bartholomew, and 16 children were baptised.

In August the parish church was also the venue for the annual "St Bartholomew's day" which was again well supported, and in December the Dawpool School Christingle service was held when all the pupils and teachers, and final year parents, took part in an amazing evening of children singing and prayer.

Our thanks and gratitude must go to all those who prepare the parish church for these occasions and help them to take place. In particular the sacristans, servers, sidespeople,

scripture readers, intercessors, those in the cleaning teams, and of course Elaine Jones and Daphne Amlôt who use their considerable artistic gifts to decorate the parish church with flowers, and Joyce Ratcliffe and Jon Oliver who undertook the roles of vergers and assistant vergers. Thanks and gratitude must also go to Craig Vickers our organist, and Michael Jones and Sam Jackson who have deputised when necessary, and to our team of bellringers under Richard Turner, the Tower Captain during 2012. Of course none of our services would take place without our worship leaders and preachers, so our immense thanks and gratitude to the Revd Jane Turner our Rector, to Alan Jones our Reader, and to Joe, Simon, David, Ian, and Julian our assisting clergy.

The churchwardens are responsible for the maintenance, state, and security of the church buildings and in this respect Roger and I tend to focus on the different locations with Roger paying closer attention to St Chad's and the St Chad's complex of buildings and grounds, while I focus on St Bartholomew's and the church grounds at Thurstaston. That said we both bear joint responsibility for all the church property and grounds and work together in this respect.

The church and grounds of St Bartholomew presented a number of challenges in 2012. The boundary wall was damaged by unknown vehicles which resulted in insurance claims, and lighting cables and connections were replaced in the Bell Tower. The most significant work was the complete replacement of the surface water disposal system (all the gutters, gutter brackets, and downspouts) which was found to be in a dangerous state of deterioration at the quinquennial inspection in 2011. Late during 2012 we installed a new thermostatic remote control unit for the heating system which has helped to stabilise the erratic air turbulence problems and created a warmer and more comfortable building, and should lead to a saving of fuel in the long term. Gratitude and thanks must go to Dave Furlong of Mole Engineering who provided and fitted the equipment at his own expense, and gave freely of his time.

As usual all of the routine maintenance tasks were addressed. The annual overhaul of the boiler, the examination and testing of the lightning conductor, the examination of the fire fighting equipment, and the inspection and testing of the safety bolts on the steeple (one bolt was replaced and another repositioned) were all undertaken by expert contractors.

Finally our gratitude and thanks must also go to all those who carry out routine maintenance at St Bartholomew; to Jon Oliver, Archie Peat, Sally Lang and the gardening team and to other individuals who have stepped forward when needed to carry out necessary work or maintenance.

John Roberts
Church Warden

ST CHAD'S REPORT

For several years this church has been shut for maintenance for a couple of weeks in August. This year we reduced this to one! It was from Monday 6th to 11th August. The main projects were, (i) re-varnishing of the floor, (ii) replacing the wood fascia at the entrance under the cross, (iii) cleaning out the gutters and down spouts.

We are indebted to Archie Peat, Sam and myself for (i); for (ii) it was Dr. Chris Turnbull with help from Archie and myself; for (iii) thanks are due to Mike Rostock. Other work included finger guards to the doors of the extension part of the building. For ongoing work of cutting the lawns we thank Archie Peat, and for looking after our lighting, Jon Oliver.

St. Chad's is well used. Throughout the year, with only a few exceptions, there has been a service on Sundays at 09.30. While these take place there has been Junior Church for the children and young people, in term time, held in the New Building. On Wednesdays we hold a

service of Holy Communion at 10.15, all are welcome. For the smooth running of the services we are indebted to our Rector – Revd Jane, to the retired clergy, our Reader, the sidesmen, the Sanctuary cleaners, the flower arrangers, our coffee makers, the readers of scripture, the prayer leaders, our organist, and those who occasionally take his place.

On Sunday 18th March we had a notable service when the Bishop of Birkenhead, Bishop Keith Sinclair visited our parish and preached the sermon. I would like to think that he was made to feel very welcome, for we did appreciate his being with us.

On two Sundays in the year, 18th March and 2nd September, Taizé services were held, led by Sam Jackson, who has now visited the monastery of Taizé twice. The services were well received, and attracted about sixty people plus some children, and were open to our friends from Irby Methodist.

St. Chad's is used on other days as well as Sundays. On Good Friday there was a Walk of Witness. Starting at St. Chad's, we processed through the village of Irby stopping at notable points for a prayer, eventually ending up back in the church where the service ended followed by hot cross buns and coffee. On 14th May the PCC had a service of Holy Communion followed by a social gathering, and on 1st July, there was a celebration of our Church Community.

For a couple of years now we have been fortunate in having a Harvest Supper, and this year, on the evening of Saturday 29th. September, we once more had one organised by Dr. and Mrs. Chris Turnbull and Mrs Karen Robson helped by Dr. Peter Robson and daughters.

The building of St. Chad's is regularly used by church affiliated groups, such as Mothers' Union, EMU, Guides, Rainbows and thanks to Carol and Alison, on Thursdays, Tots and Tinies.

Early in December, the hall and the New Building at St Chad's hosted the Christmas Fair; this was a most enjoyable occasion. Our enormous thanks for this go to Julie De Boorder, Viv King, Deanne Wiseman, Kali, Sharon Perlaki and her husband Steve who sourced a great many of the prizes for the raffle - thank you Steve. Thanks are also due to Mike Rostock for that excellent Santa's Grotto and to Al King and Rob Wiseman for providing the tasty food and drink outside in the gazebo erected on the grass by the front door. We should not forget all the other helpers on stalls - thank you everyone.

Groups from the community who hire the hall for their use are the Army Cadets, Irby Artists, Merry Widows, and Weight Watchers just to mention the ones that come to mind.

St. Chad's New Building has been used continually by a pre-school group in term time. St. Chad's Pre-School was kept going up to the end of the school year in July, thanks to the hard work of Claire, Suzie and helpers. Special thanks must also go to Jayne (Oliver), who was the longest serving member of staff and who despite numerous changes (in staff and Ofsted regulations) over the years remained dedicated to serving the community though cheerfully caring for the children in pre-school. In September we were pleased to see Dawpool Pre-school open with – up to the end of the year – very promising results.

This is a summary of most of what has taken place at St. Chad's throughout the year. Nearly all of it required an input from you our parishioners without whom not much would have happened. I am sure the parish looks forward to an eventful year to come.

God bless you all.

Roger Jackson
Church Warden

DEANERY SYNOD REPORT

The Rural Deanery of North Wirral encompasses representatives (the number for each parish is proportionate to each parish's electoral roll numbers) from each of 14 parishes in Wirral excluding Wallasey (which includes Moreton/Leasowe) and Birkenhead (which includes Woodchurch and Rock Ferry).

It meets four times a year under the chairmanship of the Rural Dean, Revd Gillian Rossiter of St John Baptist Great Meols, and the Lay Chair who was Margo Clarke now retired and is now Lesley Young who took over leaving a gap of secretary which is yet to be filled, as no one has yet volunteered for this role. It has a Mission and Standing Committee which discusses and manages deanery synod finance and discusses and plans the deanery meetings.

It receives reports from General Synod which included issues of Gay Marriage, Church Schools, Manifestation of Faith in Public Life e.g. wearing of crosses at work and Admission of Women to the Episcopate. It also receives reports from and elects representatives to Diocesan Synod which discusses and regulates the finance arrangements of the diocese for example deciding on a 2% increase in Parish Share with 95% collection rate (last year 93%) leading to a deficit of £158,000 (last year £400,000, which was made up from the pastoral account). Bishop Keith's visit to Aru Diocese Republic of Congo was also discussed.

About 50 people attend meetings of the Deanery Synod, which rotate around the various parishes in the deanery. During 2012 they were as follows:

- 11th June at St Mark's New Ferry, where there was a Presentation by Revd Jenny Bridgman and discussion about how to encourage more young people to take up the vocation of ministry in the church, as about 50% of clergy in Chester Diocese are due to retire in the next five years.
- 4th September St John Baptist Great Meols, where Mission in the deanery was discussed. Interesting facts presented were that Thurstaston is the second smallest parish in the deanery (after St Andrew's West Kirby) but has the second highest proportion on the electoral roll (after St Bridget's West Kirby).
- Thursday 22nd November 2012, where there was a talk from Bishop Keith of Birkenhead and a discussion of the sad General Synod decision on admission of women to the Episcopate.
- Monday 11th February 2013 at St Michael's Newton, where there was discussion of individual churches' Mission initiatives. Some parishes eg St Mary's Upton and St Peter's Heswall seem to be much more active with various initiatives aimed at children and young people – for example inter-church football matches seemed a great success.

Future meetings of relevance for 2013, which will be described in the next annual report, are:

- Tuesday 30th April 7.30pm Meeting of Churchwardens with Archdeacon at St John the Baptist Great Meols
- Wednesday 8th May Archdeacon's visitation at St Nicholas Wallasey
- Pentecost (tba) Deanery Songs of Praise at Heswall
- Monday 22nd May 7.30pm Deanery Synod Lay Forum at Holy Trinity Poulton Lancelyn
- Tuesday 3rd September Sharing Good Practice - parishes' work to support churches outside the UK
- Thursday 21st September Deanery Synod.

Chris Turnbull
Deanery Synod Representative

ELECTORAL ROLL REPORT

This year in accordance with the requirements of the Church Representation Rules the previous Electoral Roll was closed and a new roll created. The new roll consists of 205 members from 133 households, and includes 16 members who were not on the previous roll.

John Roberts
Electoral Roll Officer

CHARITIES SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



LEPROSY MISSION

This year, we have substantially increased our giving to the mission, thanks to our marking World Leprosy Day in January, when we raised £189.29, and the money collected from your boxes, £312.57, almost double the amount raised in 2011.

Your gift will be used to bring healing, hope, and dignity in Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world. There is still much to be achieved.

With the prayerful support and generosity of supporters like you, we can sustain, build on, and develop the work of the Mission, to change the lives of more people. If you wish to have information as to how you can help the Leprosy Mission, please contact me on 648 1827.

Pat Hulme



THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Jean Heath, Elaine Kavanagh (648 1721) and Barbra Kozar (648 3512) co-ordinate collections and fund raising for the Society in the Parish.

In the spring, as part of the Society's national house-to-house collection for children, our Parish of Irby and Thurstaston raised £1172.02 of which £167.16 was gift aided.

With children, for children, with you

We are grateful for the help we receive year after year from our collectors, but we need new collectors to maintain the roads we cover at present. Ideally we would like to be able to extend the collection to all the roads in the Parish, to enable us to increase the amount we send to the Society.

We would be delighted to welcome anyone with a few hours to spare during the collection fortnight, which falls between 13 and 27 April in 2013. Please contact one of the co-ordinators if you are able to help in any way.

During 2012 the house boxes, which people keep in their own homes and are emptied annually in the Autumn, produced £781.92. Sadly, Mrs Ellison and Mrs Johnson, two of our long-standing box holders and supporters, died during the year.

We would like to encourage the idea of keeping a box at home. Small change, in the form of pennies alone, can amount to a couple of pounds over the course of a year and the more people who hold a box, the better the support for the Children's Society. Again, please contact one of the co-ordinators if you would like to become a box holder.

The annual 'Thank You' coffee morning in St Chad's in October, which is open to all and also aids box collection, raised £80.58 from donations and bring-and-buy items. This was well attended and it was lovely to see a number of children at the event this year.

The Christingle Service in early December at St Chad's raised a further £101.81 for the Society.

Jean Heath (648 6015)

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

JUNIOR CHURCH Jan to Dec 2012

Junior Church meets at St Chad's during the service at term time, excluding Family Service days. Presently there are two groups: Sparklers age 2½ to reception class and Starblazers school years 1 – 5, those in Year 6 having joined seniors.

We have continued with our new home grown rolling three-year programme which we started last year, using some material from Click resource books, other resource borrowed from Revd Jane or books from our own stock. Planning is still a 'heads together' process and very much a term or two at a time. Particularly successful were our 'Church Family' sessions. This was a new venture and involved members of our church family coming into Junior Church and showing us what they get up to. These were done with all groups joined together over three sessions and averaged at 20 children attending. We heard all about prayers (intercessions) and made a prayer tree, investigated the church registers, tried on Revd Jane's robes, played hand bells and percussion, did some gardening – planting primroses and finally heard all about sacristan duties with a practice with blackcurrant juice and wafers. Several parents commented on how they also enjoyed these sessions too.

There were lots of activities this year: a Pancake Party with party games and pancake eating, an Easter workshop making Easter crafts, a Jubilee Party playing games, decorating biscuits and making crowns and to finish our summer term, a picnic in Royden Park with impromptu games, lolly ices and good company.

St Bear-tholomew's Day was also as popular as ever. Junior Church leaders, helpers and their friends and families all helped to provide stalls and refreshments. Many brave bears launched off the tower and the three nearest to the marker received prizes and chocolate gold medals.

The two special services that the children prepare and take part in, joined by the seniors, are the 'Book Giving Service' and the 'Christmas Production'. The book giving service this year was themed around the message "Pass it on" with a play and prayers by Seniors, a song by Sparklers and a pass it on whispers game by Starblazers.

The Christmas Production was an adaption from a story book and it was about a robin that had to find Christmas because it had taken his tree. Starblazers did some great acting with some smashing home grown costumes, seniors helped make and place props and narrating and sparklers gave us a lovely song.

Many thanks to the Junior Church leaders and helpers (and their friends and families) without whom nothing would get done and who have given their time so generously. Thanks to the Reverend Jane for her advice and support and thanks to everyone who meet together with me whenever I have to plan anything, and who have supported me and shared the load.

God Bless,

Julie DeBoorder.

SENIORS AND 14+

At the very beginning of the year, the Seniors at St Chad's continued to meet twice a month being led by either Karen Robson or Janet Trigg. Not long into the year Chris Smale joined the

team and Karen took more of a 'back seat' owing to extra commitments she was involved with. Although involved in the organisational issues, Karen was not involved with Sunday delivery.

Attendance remained sporadic, with one or two regular participants. During the year it was agreed that Seniors would meet only once a month and that a more 'relaxed' approach would be beneficial. To this end it was decided to introduce toast, juice and videos to the group. Attendance has been higher, with about five or six attending and the young people seem to appreciate this approach.

It is felt generally that the young people appreciate the difference in this more comfortable arrangement to meetings, and the perception it is not 'Sunday School' but a more of a 'youth' group approach.

Karen Robson and Janet Trigg.

WELLSPRING

Wellspring is a monthly Prayer Group (open to anyone in the parish) which was launched in May 2011. We meet in the Rectory on the third Thursday of each month from 8-9pm. It is good to have people from across the congregations coming together to pray, with each month approximately 6 to 8 people attending. We pray for individual members of our congregations and for events and issues within the life of the parish.

Revd Jane Turner and the other members of the group.

BELLRINGERS' REPORT

2012 has been another busy year for the Bell Ringers at St Bartholomew's. The band now numbers 19 with two new young ringers joining us in 2012. The year started with a 'Christmas' meal out in February attended by most of the band and enjoyed greatly by all.

2012 included many major national and local events that had requested ringing as part of these celebrations and I am pleased that we were able to take part in a number of these.

Quarter peals were rung in March for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II (first quarter of a six bell method by a tower band), in April for the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic (first quarter peal for the Rector) and in October for Wirral Branch quarter peal fortnight. There was a Peal attempt in June for the Queens Diamond Jubilee that unfortunately came to grief after two hours of good ringing and a successful peal of Cambridge Surprise Minor in 2 hours 32 minutes in November for the 125th anniversary of the Chester Diocesan Guild. There were also three minutes of ringing at 08:12 on Friday 27th July rung as part of the 'All the Bells' project marking the start of the Olympic Games.

In October the band went on a ringing outing to Cheshire, ringing at Dodleston and having a meal in the local pub. After this we travelled to Pulford where we unfortunately were unable to ring. The trip out was enjoyed by all involved and we hope to repeat it in 2013.

In October the tower also hosted (on the simulator and at St Chad's) a Listening skills course run by the Central Council. 20 ringers from Cheshire and Liverpool attended this excellent course and had a very enjoyable day.

At the end of the year Richard Turner announced his retirement from the post of Tower Captain, a role that he has undertaken for the last 45 years. Our grateful thanks go to Richard for the many years of dedicated service he has given in this post, for keeping regular Sunday service ringing throughout this time, teaching most of our current band to ring and leaving a flourishing tower for his successor. Peter Robson has taken on the role from 2013 and plans are in place for celebration ringing to mark Richard's achievement as well as a presentation

and meal in the New Year. A report detailing Richard's achievements has been made to the PCC and an article will be written for the Ringing World magazine.

Peter Robson
Tower Captain

MEN'S BREAKFAST GROUP

The Men's Breakfast meets on Saturday mornings, at 9am on alternate months. We meet at Aroma Cafe in Irby, thereby supporting a much valued local business. Attendances have gradually increased over the past few years and the Men's Breakfast provides an informal setting for members of the Church to chat and share in fellowship, while enjoying a hearty breakfast and good company.

This year a Wirral Men's Breakfast group has been formed, and complement our own breakfast group. I would personally like to thank everyone who has attended the Men's Breakfast in the past twelve months for their support and valued company.

Matthew James

GARDENING GROUP

Following the great changes of last year, the Gardening Group continued to work on the second Thursday of each month to keep the garden looking neat and tidy. However this year we decided not to work in November, December and January owing to the usual bad weather which made work somewhat difficult. We have received many pleasant compliments regarding the garden, which is very satisfying.

Sally-A Lang

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

2012 has flown by and we have held several social functions in the parish, all of which were greatly enjoyed. Our annual St Beartholomew's Day was, as always, a great day attracting a good number of people, some of whom have no connection to the church and do not live particularly locally, but they attend every year. Everyone enjoyed watching the brave toys as they jumped (or were they pushed?) off the tower.

As ever, the Harvest Supper was a great evening with delicious food, good company and fun entertainment. The young (and not so young) also enjoyed decorating the paper tablecloths with artistic designs in crayon.

The Christmas Fair was a great success with a new committee bringing fresh ideas to the table. There was a great festive atmosphere, everyone enjoyed themselves and a huge amount of money was raised.

Thank you to everyone who has helped in any way with social functions in 2012. These events give us a chance to meet socially and they bring people to us who may otherwise not come to church, and relationships can be formed as a result.

In addition to our regular events, we have a quiz night to look forward to in 2013, which I hope will be well supported. I am sure it will be a great night.

If you have an idea for a social function that you are prepared to run, please let me know.

Patsy Brady (648 4379)

CHURCH RELATED ORGANISATIONS

MOTHERS' UNION

As usual we had an interesting year of meetings. We began the year with the Epiphany Communion Service led by Revd Jane. In February we had the AGM followed by a 'Mosquito Drive', Angela Klabou told us about some of the lesser known aspects of MU and after Easter we had a happy and jolly 'sing-song' with Simon and Geoff. We heard about Revd Margaret Fletcher's trip to Buckingham Palace and David Casement took us on a trip to Samoa. 'From Spit to Microwave' was the title of June Lancelyn-Green's hilarious talk and Margaret taught us how to make Christmas cards. We ended the year with the Carol Service.

Many of our members attended the Diocesan Festival at Chester Cathedral, the Deanery Festival at Barnston, Quiet Afternoon at St Bridget's, MU Wave of Prayer, Women's World Day of Prayer and services with our Prayer Partners and our friends at Irby Methodist Church. 16 of us went to the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton to see a performance of 'Joseph'. There was also the EMU 'Tea and Toast' and the MU Coffee Morning at St Nicholas.

Thank you for supporting the Coffee Morning in September. Thanks too to all our members who give to and support the monthly sales table, as well as giving in the 20p boxes. Once again we have been able to give to MU Charities at home and abroad, and to our own church. Thank you for your generosity.

Sadly Elsie Broomby and June Johnson, two of our oldest and longest serving members, died in 2012. We shall miss them.

My grateful thanks to the committee members, Eleanor and Ken – Treasurers, Beryl – Minutes Secretary and tea lady(!), Margaret – Card Secretary and sales table, Joyce – Speaker Secretary, Pianist and who writes to our link branch in Australia and Sandra – our tea lady! My thanks also to all our members who come to our monthly meetings, support special events and take part in the meetings. Thanks also all who bake, knit, buy, give and above all pray for our branch and for all the work of MU – an ever expanding organisation in a needy world.

How swiftly time goes by! Having completed six years, January 2013 was my last meeting as Branch Leader. This was also our last meeting as a Deanery Branch. From now on we will all become Diocesan Members but we will continue to meet each month at St Chad's.

My thanks to all our members for their prayers, help and support over the past six years.

God Bless

Susan Burns - Branch Leader

EMU January – December 2012

Our branch of EMU (Evening Mothers' Union) meets monthly during the school term at St Chad's, usually on the last Wednesday of the month at 8.00pm. We would love to welcome new members. Please come along and give it a try. We have a varied programme to suit all tastes.

In January 2012 we held a 'Tea & Toast, Bring & Buy' at St Chad's, raising £117.50 for the Worldwide Fund. We also had a New Year meal out at Gustos in Heswall which was attended by 13 people. In February we sweated through a Zumba taster evening followed by our AGM when we welcomed Wendy Wolstencroft as a new member. Revd Jane gave us a verbal 'Through the Keyhole' in March when we all got an insight into the work of a rector. In April we had a visit from Flame Radio (Christian & Community Radio Station) when we learnt all about the different talents of the many volunteers. May was a relaxing evening of 'Aloe Vera' products by Persis Peters. We had a very moving talk by the Prison Fellowship in June.

We started the autumn term with another meal at Gustos. October was Card Making with Sally. We decamped to the Rectory in November for a jewellery evening with Jane Young followed by a short early AGM, when we welcomed Viv King & Deanne Wiseman as new members.

Chris Rostock – Branch Secretary

1st THURSTASTON GUIDES ANNUAL REPORT 2012

We have once again had a wonderful year, and maintain a full unit of 30 girls!

During the year, we have

- undertaken many challenges
 - Six of our Guides have this year completed their Baden Powell Challenge – Well done!
 - On Your Marks – Linked to Olympics 2012 on themes of Sport, Culture and Values
 - Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Challenge
 - NW Region “Up High” Challenge
 - NW Region Wallace and Gromit Inventor’s Challenge
- achieved some interest badges (Performing Arts, Fire fighter)
- had some fun special interest nights
 - Beady Beady came and we made gifts for Mother’s Day
 - End of Summer Term Fun Night at Hadlow with 1st Upton Guides (Chester)
 - St Andrew’s Evening - Scottish Dancing with tutors from Irby Dance Studio
- done some community and fund raising events
 - RNIB – sponsored event organised by BP guides
 - An evening litter-picking on Thurstaston Beach
 - Children in Need – we raised £104.50
 - Helping out at St Chad’s Christmas Fair
- taken part in District Thinking Day event
- A weekend away at Ashley with 1st Patricroft Guides in March during which we did two challenge badges – one based on Madagascar and the other on BGIFC (British Guides in Foreign Countries)
- and Two Sleepovers in November, including a trip to Awesome Walls for older Guides
- as well as going to the theatre to see Pantomime in January and the Gang Show in March.



We have not managed a Camp this year, but are very much looking forward to taking part in Giggles 2013 (International Camp in Settle North Yorkshire)

Revd Jane Turner, Sarah Barr, Gaynor Vaughan, Ellie Randall and the Guides!

2nd IRBY RAINBOWS

2nd Irby Rainbows have had a fun filled 2012, gaining several interest badges, visiting Irby library and having fun developing crafting skills. During warmer months we enjoyed playing in the St Chad's garden and re creating our own Olympics! We've also participated in Church Parade and Remembrance Sunday Services.

We have three adults working towards their Leader in Training qualification. We've also had two regular guide helpers, and two others as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. They've been a great help!

We are looking forward to a busy 2013, with some new girls to join us, and we wish our best wishes to the girls who'll move on to the next stage of their Guiding lives!

Karen Fearn

TOTS'N'TINIES

We started Tots'nTinies in May 2012. It is a happy, friendly group, attended by Mums, Dads and grandparents with children from babies up to school age.

Most weeks we have about 18 children. A number of people who attend have said that this group is the best they have been to!

We would still be grateful if anyone would like to help at the group (Thursday morning) even if not every week. Tasks include setting up/tidying away, welcoming people/chatting and helping in the kitchen.

Allison Youds